

YOUNG SCHOLARS ACADEMY
Child Development Center
&
Houston Independent School District
Charter School

FAMILY HANDBOOK

2011-2012

Revised 08/16/11

The staff of Young Scholars Academy is dedicated and experienced in providing a safe, nurturing environment so to meet your child's early care and education needs. We welcome you and hope that it will be a growing experience for both you and your child

www.ysafe.org

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Anella Coleman, Head of School
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”A Letter To Our Families”

Thank you for choosing Young Scholars! Your family is now a part of our family tree. As a member of the family, don't be shy! Know that our doors are open anytime!

As we work to meet your child's early care and education needs, I want to tell you a little bit about the myself.

I am wife to Kenneth, mother of daughter (Tayhlor) and son (Morgan), daughter to Ruby and Raphael (father deceased), eldest sister to four siblings (Jewel, Rachel, Raphael and Joaquina), sister-in-law, aunt, cousin, just to name a few. You will find that my commitment to family and old-fashioned family values is an intricate part of my life.

Each staff member of the Young Scholars Academy family, better known as my “adopted” family, is unique in their own way. Each member of our staff will use their special gifts to ensure a firm, but nurturing and enriching environment for your child.

Your Family Handbook is divided into five (5) sections:

- I. General Operating Guidelines
 - Administration
 - Healthy Environment
 - Safe Environment
 - Educational Environment
 - Parental Involvement
 - Financial Commitment
- II. Child Development Center Policies
- III. Elementary School Policies
- IV. Special Programs
- V. Appendix

Please take a moment to read and reflect on the guidelines and policies presented in this handbook.

Hopefully, you will gain knowledge, understanding, and appreciation for our commitment to the family.

If you should ever have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to let me know.

Sincerely,

Anella

Anella R. Coleman

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GENERAL OPERATING GUIDELINES

ADMINISTRATION

GENERAL INFORMATION

Young Scholars Academy is located at 1809 Louisiana, Houston, Texas 77002. Our child-care hours are 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Our elementary and middle school hours are 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Our Evening Care hours are 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. (Reservations required for evening care.)

PARKING

Young Scholars presently leases the parking lot at the corner of St. Joseph Pkwy and Louisiana for families. Parking is limited, thus, please follow our parking guidelines when utilizing the parking lot. Parent which desire to lease a parking space for the day must pay the daily rate and receive an additional parking permit. Spaces are limited.

PHILOSOPHY

Empowering families through family-centered programs.

Knowing the importance of a positive family-centered environment, Young Scholars Academy philosophy is grounded in this belief. We provide opportunities for social, emotional, physical and intellectual development in a —family-centered setting. Our curriculum is designed to stimulate growth of the —whole child through a balance of guided and self-directed activities. Each child is given the opportunity for individual development and exploration through an environment that is —creative, — stimulating, and —nurturing.

MISSION

To provide high quality, family-centered early care, education and work readiness opportunities in a safe and nurturing environment that promotes student success.

GOALS

Young Scholars Academy offers opportunities for each child to grow intellectually, emotionally, and socially while becoming aware of their surroundings and abilities. This is accomplished through carefully planned activities, which stimulate the child's natural curiosity and aids each child in the development of an excellent foundation for creative learning. Each age group, from infants to eighth grade, youth participate in family-centered activities.

OBJECTIVES

Young Scholars Academy creates an environment that fosters the development of the whole child. Children develop in the areas of trust, self-confidence, curiosity, sensory-motor skills, social-emotional skills, initiative and persistence, language, problem-solving, creativity and imagination, reasoning, and critical thinking.

MEMBERSHIP

Young Scholars Academy serves children from infants (6 weeks) to eighth grade. Admission of exceptional or handicapped children is decided on an individual basis as qualified staffing is

available. This facility does not permit discrimination because of race, color, sex, age, special needs, or national origin.

STAFF

All the teachers at Young Scholars Academy are qualified and are experienced in handling all aspects of your child's development and education. Staff's education is an on-going process. Our staff's credentials range from Child Development Associate Credential to Master's Degree in Family and Child Development. Elementary school teachers are certified or in pursuit of certification. Additionally, elementary/middle school teachers are either Gifted and Talented certified or in pursuit of becoming G/T certified. Professional staff is required to acquire at least 40 hours of training per year.

LICENSING AND ACCREDITATION

Young Scholars Academy Child Development Center is licensed by the State of Texas under the Department of Family and Protective Services. Our elementary and middle school programs are offer through our charter school with Houston Independent School District. Young Scholars is a four-star Texas Rising Star facility.

PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships include Houston Independent School District, Collaborative for Children, Houston Public Library, Workforce Solutions, One-Stop Business Center and many others.

HOLIDAYS

Young Scholars Academy Child Development Center observes the following holidays: New Years, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Break—December 27 through January 3, 2011.

Young Scholars Academy Charter School makes available a school calendar on the first day of school.

CONTACT US

Young Scholars:713-654-1400 or 713-654-1404

Fax: 713-654-1401

<http://www.ySAFE.org/School2/Contact/Contact.php>

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HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

PUBLIC CONDUCT

Young Scholars is committed to providing an orderly, respectful environment that is conducive to learning. To create and maintain this kind of an environment, it is necessary to regulate public conduct on school property and at school functions. For purposes of this section of the Code, "public" shall mean all persons when on school property or attending a school function--parents, students, teachers, HISD personnel. The restrictions on public conduct on school property and at school functions contained in this Code are not intended to limit freedom of speech or peaceful assembly. Young Scholars recognizes that free inquiry and free expression are indispensable to the objectives of Young Scholars. The purpose of this Code is to maintain public order and prevent abuse of the rights of others.

All persons on school property or attending a school function shall conduct themselves in a respectful and orderly manner. In addition, all persons on school property or attending a school function are expected to be **properly attired** for the purpose they are on school property.

Prohibited Conduct

No person, either alone or with others, shall:

1. Intentionally injure any person or threaten to do so.
2. Intentionally damage or destroy school district property or the personal property of a teacher, administrator, other district employee or any person lawfully on school property; this includes graffiti and arson.
3. Disrupt the orderly conduct of classes, school programs or other school activities.
4. Wear clothing on school grounds or at school functions that are obscene, advocate illegal action, appear defamatory, obstruct the rights of others, or are disruptive to the school program.
5. Intimidate, harass or discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, marital status, or disability.
6. Enter any portion of the school premises without authorization or remain in any building or facility after it is normally closed.
7. Violate the traffic laws, parking regulations or other restrictions on vehicles.
8. Possess, consume, sell, distribute or exchange alcoholic beverages, or controlled substances, or be under the influence of either on school property or at a school function.
9. Possess or use weapons in or on school property or at a school function, except in the case of law enforcement officers or except as specifically authorized by the school district.
10. Loiter on or about school property.
11. Gamble, as defined by Texas State law, on school property or at school functions.
12. Refuse to comply with any reasonable order of identifiable school district officials performing their duties.
13. Willfully incite others to commit any of the acts prohibited by this Code.
14. Violate any federal or state statute, local ordinance or HISD Board policy while on school property or while at a school function.
15. Smoke in school buildings, on school grounds, or on any school property.
16. Walk dogs on school property

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Young Scholars requires that each child have immunizations completed upon entrance to the center/school. A child must submit a report on current physical examination within 12 months upon enrollment. Papers are included in the registration packet and must be filled out, signed by your doctor and returned to Young Scholars Academy within this period. No child will be enrolled without an immunization record.

Because Young Scholars Academy is concerned about the well-being of all children in our care, it is important that everyone take precautions to prevent the spread of contagious illnesses.

WHEN TO KEEP YOUR CHILD AT HOME

Certain symptoms in children may suggest a communicable disease. Children who have the following symptoms should be kept home until a doctor has decided that the symptoms do not indicate a communicable disease, the child is no longer contagious, or the symptoms have gone away. A doctor's statement is required upon returning.

FEVER — oral temperature of 100.2 degrees or higher, especially when accompanied by other symptoms such as vomiting, sore throat, diarrhea, headache and stiff neck or undiagnosed rash.

RESPIRATORY SYMPTOMS — difficult or rapid breathing or severe coughing...child makes high pitched croupy or whooping sound after they cough...child is unable to lie comfortably due to continuous cough.

DIARRHEA — an increased number of abnormally loose stools in the previous 24 hours. Observe the child for other symptoms such as fever, abdominal pain or vomiting.

VOMITING — two or more episodes of vomiting within the previous 24 hours.

EYE/NOSE DRAINAGE — thick mucus or pus draining from the eye or nose.

PINKEYE — The child may return 24 hours after the treatment has begun.

SORE THROAT — sore throat, especially when fever or swollen glands in the neck are present.

STREP THROAT — The child may return 24 hours after treatment has begun. SKIN

PROBLEMS — RASH — skin rashes, undiagnosed or contagious INFECTED

SORES — sores with crusty, yellow or green drainage which cannot be covered by clothing or bandages PERSISTENT ITCHING or scratching of body or scalp

CHICKEN POX — All pox must be crusted over and no fever present before the child returns to class.

APPEARANCE, Behavior, unusual color — Child looks or acts differently: unusually tired, pale, lacking appetite, confused, irritable, difficult to awaken...yellow eyes or skin, gray or white stools, dark or tea colored urine. These symptoms can be found in hepatitis and should be evaluated by a physician.

LICE — The child may attend after treatment and when all nits have been removed.

RINGWORM, SCABIES — The child may attend when treatment has begun.

If a child becomes ill at the center/school, we will move the child to a supervised area, preferably, away from the other children. We will notify you or whomever you have indicated we should notify immediately so that you may pick the child up. When you are contacted and told your child is ill, we require you to make arrangements to pick them up immediately. If you know this is a problem, please make sure your next two emergency contacts will be available to pick up your child.

Let the staff know within 24 hours if your child has a communicable or childhood disease such as measles, chicken pox, mumps, strep throat, scarlet fever, head lice, scabies, impetigo, pinkeye, or ringworm so we can alert the other parents to be on the lookout for possible symptoms in their children. Parents will be notified immediately if their child has been exposed to an infectious or communicable disease and of what symptoms to be aware of. The center/school reserves the right to determine when a child, who has been sick, can return to the center.

TREATMENT AND MEDICATIONS

Young Scholars Academy utilizes the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services to assist in developing our policies and procedures. All staff members are required to maintain current CPR and standard first aid. First Aid practices will be used to address cuts, scratches, bruises, etc. No child will be given prescribed oral or surface medication without parent and/or physician permission. Non-prescribed medication to lower a child's temperature will be allowed if parent authorization is on file. Other non-prescribed medicine, diapering products, sunscreen lotions, and insect repellents will be given with parental permission and administered according to the manufacturer's instructions, unless there are written instructions for their use provided by a licensed physician or dentist. Medication must be its original container and have a legible label with the child's name and current prescription information. Non-prescription drugs must have the child's age and appropriated dosage listed on the container. If it is not listed we need a written and signed notice from a licensed physician or dentist with the correct dosage.

In order for staff to administer medicine, the parent/guardian must request and complete Request for Administration of Medication form and give it to secretary. The form is maintained and available to the child's parent(s)/guardian(s). Any expired or unused medicine will be returned to the child's parent or discarded.

Medication is only administered by Young Scholars designated staff at 11:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.

EMERGENCY CARE FOR YOUR CHILD

If your child should become seriously injured you need to be notified immediately. There is a release statement on the Enrollment Application in the registration packet which you are required to sign. This gives us the authority to get medical attention for your child in the event of an emergency. It includes your authorization to administer syrup of ipecac. By signing the identification and emergency information form you grant permission for the staff to take whatever steps may be necessary to obtain emergency medical and dental care if warranted. The steps may include, but are not limited to

1. Attempt to contact parent or guardian
2. Attempt to contact parent or guardian through any people listed on the form.
3. Attempt to contact the child's physician or dentist.
4. If Young Scholars cannot contact a guardian or the child's physician we will do any or all of the following. Expenses incurred will be borne by the child's family.
5. Call paramedics/ambulance
6. Accompany the child to an emergency hospital

If the emergency is such that a child's life is determined to be in danger, 911 will be contacted first before attempting to contact a parent or guardian.

SYRUP OF IPECAC

By signing the syrup of ipecac form you authorize the staff to administer ipecac syrup if necessary to induce vomiting. Ipecac syrup will be administered only on the advice of the poison control center or licensed medical personnel. You do not have to grant authorization for your child to attend Young Scholars.

REST PERIOD

For infants, toddlers preschoolers and pre-kindergarteners, a quiet rest time will be daily. Children will be encouraged to rest for approximately 2 hours. After the 2-hour period of quiet rest, an awake child may read, play or participate in the various quiet activities offered.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS AND DRESS

Children under the age of 6 years should have a complete change of clothing to keep in his/her cubby/backpack. Items should include shirt, pants, socks, underwear and disposable diapers/pull-ups if applicable. Each season present its own challenge for parents and school staff regarding clothing. We try to teach the children responsive habits such as hanging their coats on hooks, stuffing mittens, hats and scarves into sleeves, etc. Parents are encouraged to label clothing, especially those items which can easily be misplaced or forgotten. Young Scholars is not responsible for lost items.

Children should be dressed appropriately when coming to the center/school. Dangerous and restrictive clothing should be avoided (clogs, open-toe shoes/sandals or long dresses). In addition, toddlers, preschoolers, and school age children will participate in "messy" activities such as painting. Although we do take precautions to prevent clothes from getting damaged, accidents do happen. Therefore, we recommend clothing that will not present a problem to you or your child. You may choose to bring a paint shirt to leave in your child's cubby. Young Scholars Academy is not responsible for stained or ruined clothing.

BLANKETS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Please provide a blanket/bath towel from home for rest time if your child wants one. Blankets must be taken home and washed weekly, preferably, Fridays. Blankets which appear to be unsanitary for child's use will be discarded, no exceptions. Blanket/Bath Towel must be able to fit into a large Ziploc bag. If it's too large for the bag it will be sent home. Please label these items with your child's name. Young Scholars is not responsible for lost items.

OTHER REQUIRED ITEMS

Young Scholars Academy does not provide the following items. Formula, disposable diapers, wipes, diaper rash ointments, insect repellents and medications. If your child needs any of these items, please bring them from home, as needed, labeled with your child's name.

KITCHEN

Parents are prohibited from utilizing any part of the kitchen facilities unless the certified cook is present in the kitchen. Due to limited space, Young Scholars is unable to store food, party favors, etc.

MEALS

Young Scholars provides home-style, nutritious meals for children 12 months and above at a nominal fee. Parents are responsible for providing meals for children under 12 months old. Breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack are available for children 12 months and above, based on the following schedule:

Infant Breakfast Schedule Extended Optional Day Program - 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Breakfast will be served by infant staff from 6:30 a.m. to 7:00 a.m.

Infant Breakfast Schedule Regular Day Program - 7:15 a.m. to 5:15 p.m.

Breakfast will be served by infant staff from 7:15 a.m. to 7:45 a.m.

MEAL COUNT - Parents must notify school when child is going to arrive after 9:00 a.m., in order for meal preparation. (Parent must accommodate for lunch if school receives call after 9:00 a.m.)

Parents of infants are welcome to bring your baby before or after your baby's feeding schedule, based on your family's financial contract on file, but parent must serve baby's breakfast. Under no circumstance can a baby be dropped off before or after feeding schedule without being fed by parent.

Transition-To-Preschool (12+ months to 35 months)

Breakfast - 7:30 a.m. – 7:50 a.m.

**Lunch – 10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Snack - 3:15 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

School Program (Pre-K 3 to 8th Grade)

Breakfast - 7:30 a.m. – 7:50 a.m.

**Lunch – 11:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. – Pre-K

**Lunch – 11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. – K/1st

**Lunch – 12:00 p.m. – 12:30 p.m. – 2nd -

5th Snack – 3:15 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Note: BREAKFAST - Children who arrive with breakfast after breakfast is over must be accompanied by parent to gallery area to finish breakfast there. Breakfast in the gallery must be over at 8:30 a.m. (Parents must provide meal and supervision for child during this time.)

**Note: LUNCH - Lunch is served according to your child's class schedule. (Parents must provide meal for child and supervision of child if Young Scholars mealtime is over.)

Our ability to individualize diets is limited. If, for medical reasons, your child should require a special diet or has a food allergy, please discuss this with your child's teacher and school secretary. A signed statement from your physician is required as well. The appropriate staff will be notified of any special, prescribed diets.

Families in our school age program should note, Free and Reduced Lunch applications required to be completed by all families, are used to qualify for Title I dollars only. We do not receive funding for meals. All children 2 years and above are welcome to free breakfast served by

ARAMARK. Meals are provided by ARAMARK and Young Scholars. Lunch is available through ARAMARK or Young Scholars for a nominal fee for families that do not qualify for free or reduced meals. Children which qualify for free or reduced lunch will be assessed based on qualification. Payment for meals is required in advance. Children are not allowed to share meals with classmates or staff whether from home or school.

We ask your cooperation when supplying snacks for birthdays and special occasions. Snacks or treats to share with other children must be store bought, nutritionally based, prepackaged, and pre-approved by the director or appointee.

Unless your child's diet requires and documented by physician, please do not send high sugar foods and drinks with your child to school.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

SOLICITATION PROHIBITED

No person shall solicit, conduct business or raise funds in any areas of Young Scholars Academy campus (including parking lots) without the principal's written permission. Solicitation shall be defined as any effort to sell goods or services or to raise money on behalf of any company, club, society, religious organization, political party, or similar organization and/or the distribution of any materials such as leaflets or flyers for those organizations. Questions regarding this policy should be directed to the principal.

SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN

In order to consistently ensure a healthy, safe, and enriched learning environment for children in care and school, staff, when counted in ratio, are —accountable for each child's care. This includes appropriate visual and/or auditory awareness, physical proximity, and knowledge of activity requirements and each child's needs. The teacher must intervene when necessary to ensure children's safety.

Staff counted in ratio have been instructed to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Schedule a parent-teacher conference to discuss child's/student's development; parents are welcome to talk to teacher about child's daily progress, if discussion is no longer than 2 minutes and if state required supervision (ratios) is met; discussion which requires more than 2 minutes, requires a scheduled parent-teacher conference; children's naptime is used by teachers to prepare for afternoon activities, etc. thus, parents are encouraged to minimize disruptions during this time.
- Direct questions regarding field lessons, accident/incident reports, health alerts, medication, lost items, etc. to front desk staff or on site manager
- Discuss special events/activities with child's teacher if teacher is able to secure appropriate supervision for the children; if additional supervision is not available, you may leave a message at front desk for the teacher to call you.
- Request that parents provide volunteer time according to Parent Involvement/Volunteer Policy. Parents may secure a copy from the front desk staff.
- Encourage parents may view a copy the —supervision of children policy posted on the parent board.

- Classrooms must not be used as social gathering places by employees, volunteers, or parents, except when hosting planned events. Events must have been approved, in writing, by principal.
- The doors to the Preschool/Pre-k Classrooms must remain closed except during fire drills, transition to library/outdoors/restrooms. All employees, parents, and visitors are encouraged to utilize the hallway for accessing Infant/Preschool/PreK classrooms.

VISITORS TO YOUNG SCHOLARS

The building principal or designee is responsible for all persons in the building and on the grounds. For these reasons, the following rules apply to visitors to the schools:

1. Anyone who is not a regular staff member or student of the school will be considered a visitor.
2. All visitors to Young Scholars must report to the visitor's reception area upon arrival at the school.
3. Visitor's are required to sign the visitor's register and will be issued a visitor's identification badge, or visitor's sticker, which must be worn at all times while in the school or on school grounds. The visitor must return the identification badge to the issuing office before leaving the building.
4. Visitors, including former Young Scholars personnel, who desire to visit our school building or secure belongings shall do so only with the permission and escort of appropriate administrative staff member. HISD Charter School Administrator is not required to utilize an escort.
5. Visitors attending school functions that are open to the public, such as parent-teacher organization meetings or public gatherings are required to register as well.
6. Parents or citizens who wish to observe a classroom while school is in session are required to arrange such visits in advance with the appropriate building administrator, so that class disruption is kept to a minimum.
7. Teachers are expected not to take class time to discuss individual matters with visitors.
8. Any unauthorized person on school property will be reported to the principal or principal's designee. Unauthorized persons will be asked to leave. The police may be called if the situation warrants.

All visitors are expected to abide by the rules for public conduct on school property contained in this Young Scholars Visitors Code of Conduct Policy.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and the Houston Independent School District require that all staff, parent volunteers, and any other volunteer a Criminal History Checks. Parent and Other-related volunteers must complete a criminal history check before volunteering for any school/center related activities.

PLAYGROUND – S.P.A.R.K. PARK

Young Scholars was the recipient of a \$90,000 grant to build a family park for the downtown community. Staff and Families are encouraged to help keep it sparkling!

TOYS AND JEWELRY

Please leave toys at home. Some items are not age-appropriate and become a health and/or safety hazard for children. We cannot assume responsibility for toys, jewelry, pocket change, or other materials brought from home. Children are discouraged from wearing hair barrettes, as they fall off and become a choking hazard. Any item which can become a distraction for teacher's supervision of the —whole class is discouraged.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

A child will be released to only those individuals with written authorization from the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the child. Authorization forms are signed at the pre-admission interview, and updated each year after, or whenever needed. Picture ID's will be required from individuals picking up any child from YOUNG SCHOLARS that the staff doesn't recognize as someone on your pick up list.

BABYSITTING

While we understand that our parents require babysitting services from time to time, Young Scholars employees are discouraged from providing babysitting services for Young Scholars families. If an employee chooses to provide the service, it must never interfere with employee's scheduled work hours. Parent/Guardian is required to complete a Babysitting Release Form. In order for Young Scholars to release child(ren) for —baby-sitting services, parent must include employee on Enrollment Form, Authorization for Pick-up Section. The form must be on file at all times. Additionally, the parent must sign and have witnessed a Baby-Sitting Release Form. The Baby-Sitting Release Form releases Young Scholars Academy from any future claims, as well as from any liability arising from release of any child for babysitting services by a Young Scholars employee.

WHEN A CHILD BITES

Growing teeth and hands often find their way into trouble. Toddlers often bite and hit with little regard for the consequences of their actions. Listed below is our discipline approach for biting:

1. We use voice and facial expressions, to show that biting is unacceptable behavior. We speaking very firmly, looking into child's eyes. If necessary we may hold the child gently by the shoulder, saying, "I do not like it when you bite people." For a child with limited language, we say, "No biting people." Sometimes we add, "You hurt him. He's crying, " to point out how the biter's behavior affected the other child. We help the child who bit understand that there are alternatives. "You can bite this cloth (food, biting toy, etc) but not people.
2. We help the child who was bitten. We keep ice packs on hand to place on the bite. If the skin is broken, we wash it well with soap and water. If the parent desires, the parents can have the bitten child seen by a physician. We encourage the child who has been bitten tell the biter. "You hurt me."
3. If one child's biting continues after several weeks of repeating these techniques, we implement the following intervention:
 - Meet with the parents to discuss possible reasons and solutions.
 - Stay closer to the child and implement techniques determined by the parents and yourself.

Give positive attention for acceptable social behavior. Show the child how much we care by greeting him warmly and giving positive attention during the day.

- Give the child a favorite toy to carry around.
- When the child bites we intervene immediately. We remove the child from the situation, We move the child to another area and tell the child he/her she cannot play in the area where the biting took place for a while.

If the child continues biting or bites viciously, we suggest that the parent seek professional help.

How parent and staff handle the situation makes a difference! Children can learn that adults are there to help them learn new positive ways of interaction.

Please be sure to read articles in the appendix section on understanding why a child bites.

MANDATED REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

By law, any employee of YOUNG SCHOLARS who knows or has reason to believe that a child is being neglected or physically, emotionally, or sexually abused, shall immediately report the information to Children Protective Services (CPS).

PETS

The center may have pets on site if in compliance with the minimum standards of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Any concerns should be directed to the principal.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event of inclement weather, Young Scholars Academy Child Development Center and Elementary School follow the same schedule as the Houston Independent School District.

When school is canceled because of inclement weather prior to the start of the school day, students and parents should tune in to their local radio and television stations. The missed day will have to be made up at a later date.

If school is dismissed because of inclement weather after the school day has begun, parents are notified by phone or over local radio and television stations. Parents should arrange to pick-up their child as soon as possible.

Parent questions are always important to us. You may call and leave a message if the staff member you need to speak to is unavailable. At the school age site, the voice mail will take a message, and your call will be returned as soon as possible.

EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

ATTENDANCE

In order for us to provide optimal learning opportunities for all children in care and school, parents must ensure that their child's arrival complies with Young Scholars Attendance Policy.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Young Scholars Academy and our PTO sponsors family-centered events throughout the year. Please secure a calendar of events in order to plan accordingly.

ACTIVITIES/CURRICULUM

Young children at the Young Scholars are exposed to a variety of guided and self-directed activities. A developmentally appropriate curriculum approach is used and children are given individual attention and opportunity to play and explore at their own pace. The following activities are offered throughout the day: story time, music, gross and fine motor development, outdoor play, dramatic play, free play, easel painting, science, creative art, construction, social development and quiet activities. A daily routine and a lesson plan of the day's happenings are posted in each classroom.

Curriculum for elementary school includes a variety of activities. Our innovative instructional design utilizes certified, professional staff to implement learner-centered instruction, in a safe, nurturing environment. Our design promotes higher order thinking skills (HOTS). Integrated curriculum, including CLEAR, is utilized to develop skills in reading, language arts, math, science, technology, social studies, foreign language, personal health and safety, and physical education.

Our after-school program encompasses activities that meet the interest of the school-agers. The activities include: access to outdoor play, dramatic play, music, board games, art projects, study time/tutorials, science projects, cooking, computers, books, manipulative toys (legos), and storytelling, and other physical development activities.

ASSESSMENTS/PORFOLIOS

Infants – Toddlers

The Creative Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers Online Assessment Tool

Elementary School

NNAT- Naglieri - used to identify gifted and talented students.

TPRI – Texas Primary Reading Inventory – used to determine language ability

Y-SAT- Young Scholars Achievement Test

TAKS – Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills

HFW – High Frequency Word Assessment

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

Each staff person and child at Young Scholars Academy is special and will be treated with respect at all times. Any type of behavior intended to physically or emotionally hurt someone will not be tolerated.

Young Scholars Academy uses positive guidance as a learning tool to provide children with the guidance and security necessary for emotional and social growth.

Positive guidance methods used in this learning process include: redirection, ignoring the behavior, positive reinforcement, alternatives and choices, problem solving techniques, modeling, limit setting, and as a last resort, time out away from the situation and group to calm down for a period of time geared to the age of the child.

Parents will be notified if frequent "time out" is needed. (Individual behavior plans will be developed for children who have persistent behavior problems.) Each of the teachers at Young Scholars Academy is trained to implement each of these procedures.

When all positive methods and resources have been exhausted, Young Scholars Academy reserves the right to require the parent/guardian to seek medical attention for a child who subjects self, other children and staff to dangerous, physical acts. Child shall be excluded from the center/school until medical attention has been sought and doctor's recommendation is available. This notice can come without warning if the situation warrants. Please note, exclusion from center/school does not apply to the normal acts of development during the ages of 0-3 years.

OUTDOOR PLAY

Outdoor play is an important part of your child's day and total health. Weather permitting, the children will play outdoors each day. All children who are well enough to be at center/school will be expected to participate in this activity. You can help your child to enjoy this time outdoors by being sure that she or he is dressed for the existing weather conditions. In winter this includes, coats, sweaters, mittens, and hats.

Restrictions for outdoor play must be provided in written form the child's physician.

FINANCIAL COMMITMENT

TUITION INFORMATION

Tuition is due before services are render. For tuition rates and information please secure a copy of our current Financial Policy, Activity Fee Contract, and Financial Membership Contract.

WITHDRAWAL

Families which pay weekly are required to provide a two-week written notice before your child's last day at Young Scholars Academy.

Families which pay monthly are required to provide one month's notice before your child's last day at Young Scholars Academy.

A withdrawal form and exit interview form may be picked up from the school registrar. Withdrawals without required notice will require re-enrollment fee.

ACTIVITY FEE

An annual activity fee is required per child. Refer to the financial policy for details.

REGISTRATION FEE

A registration fee is required per family. Refer to the financial policy for details.

WAITING LIST APPLICATION FEE

Young Scholars Academy operates from a waiting list in each classroom. Each classroom is allotted a limited number of monthly slots. Our 44 full day public school pre-k slots are coveted slots in that many public school programs offer only half-day pre-kindergarten. Availability of all slots is given on a first-come, first-serve basis. In addition to submitting waiting list application, a non-refundable processing fee is required to place child's name on waiting list.

TUITION CONTRACT CHANGES

When any change needs to be made to the tuition contract, the old contract will be voided and a new contract will need to be entered into. A two-week written notice and principal authorization is required for these changes.

SUSPENSION/TERMINATION OF SERVICES

We know that from time to time, extenuating circumstances will disrupt ones cash-flow. Unfortunately, the staff of Young Scholars, costs in running the school require that payment be received according to policy.

Suspension of services shall occur as follows:

Weekly Tuition Due on Friday for the Following Week

Suspension of Services shall occur on Monday, a.m. for families which fail to render tuition on Fridays for the following week. A late fee of \$25 per day shall be applied each day that account is delinquent.

Monthly Tuition Due on the First Working Day of the Month

Suspension of Services on second working day (a.m.) for families which fail to render tuition on the first working day of the month. A late fee of \$25 per day shall be applied each day that account is delinquent.

Termination of services shall occur on the third day tuition has not been rendered

Payment plans are available for families which have completed one year membership and who have established a track record of timely, reliable, payments.

LATE PICK UP AND EARLY DROP OFF FEES

In order to keep cost to a minimum, we staff our program based on parent contracts. Staff have a multiplicity of duties to complete before departing for home. Parents must share in the cost when a child is left in our supervision past the contracted time. This is also true with early drop off.

Our early drop off and late up fees will be strictly enforced. Please refer to your financial policy for specific breakdown.

DONATIONS/CONTRIBUTIONS

Young Scholars Academy for Excellence is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. All donations are appreciated. Cash donations are tax deductible. Other donations suggestions include: uniforms, plastic containers, plastic grocery bags, sewing materials, toys, books, and children's magazines. Talk to our PTO president for particular school/classroom needs.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

PARENT INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Parent Involvement is an intricate part of our program. Here at Young Scholars, we recognized that the parent is the child's first teacher. Thus, the most important involvement for any parent/guardian in a child's life is to ensure that your child has a supportive home environment for healthy development; an environment which includes limits/boundaries for child's development; an environment which encourages good eating habits, appropriate manners, good sportsmanship, good personal hygiene, self respect, respect for others, their property, and the world around them; an environment which protects the child from hostile, unhealthy acts that involve profanity, fighting, sexually explicit language/scenes.

- Other opportunities for involvement include:
- Ensuring that your child arrives to school on time.
- Supporting school rules; encouraging your child to —follow directions the first time especially, at home
- Reading to your child daily.
- Staying abreast of school events, classroom projects.
- Participating in the PTO.
- Showing interest in your child's activities and carrying on related activities/conversation at home.
- Attending special family-centered events (parties, field lessons, programs, etc)
- Helping with fundraisers
- Sharing customs, hobbies, and careers with the children at the center/school.
- Helping your child bring with homework.
- Ensuring that your child helps with responsibilities at home.
- VIPS (Volunteers In Public School)

If you are interested in sharing your talents, let the staff know.

RESOLVING PARENT CONCERNS

We hope that your child will enjoy attending Young Scholars Academy. If you should have a grievance the following procedure has been set up so your concern can be properly addressed. A grievance is defined as a statement alleging a violation of the policies or principles of the Young Scholars Academy. A grieved person will first attempt to resolve the grievance in an informal manner. For example, discussing the situation with the principal-director or her appointee. If the informal process does not resolve the situation to the satisfaction of the complainant, the

grievance must then be put into written form, using a **Parent Communication Form** then and submitted to the director of Young Scholars Academy within 24 hours action. No adverse action will come to the grieved party as a result of his/her filing the grievance and using these procedures.

PARENT CONFERENCES

Young Scholars staff works to ensure that communication of a child's social-emotional/academic progress is communicated to the parent in a professional and productive manner.

Designated school personnel (parent-child mentors) are the only personnel given authority to provide parent(s) with information on child's behavior/performance. Parent-Child mentors are professional staff which have completed one year employment with Young Scholars and/or 16 hours of in-house training on Parent-Child Conferencing.

Parent conferences are mandatory. Parents are required to conference twice per school year with child's teaching staff (teacher and parent-child mentor) to support child's development/progress.

Parent conferences must be scheduled. Staff are prohibited from conferencing with parent when counted in ratio, as this creates a unsafe environment for children in care/school.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

To ensure your child's safety, upon arriving, be sure to clock your child in and accompany your child to child's classroom. Please help them put their things away.

If you should arrive during rest time, please enter quietly. Parents must proceed to gallery area and must provide supervision, as children are required to rest during this time. Please remember to all areas during rest time quietly. Parents may drop off child with child's teacher once rest time is over. Each rest time period varies depending on child's classroom schedule.

When picking up your child at the end of their day, please clock your child out. If children are out on the playground, parents are expected to go out on the playground to pick up their child.

PARKING GUIDELINES

In order to reduce congestion in the St. Joseph/Louisiana Parking Lot during the hours of 7:15 – 8:00 a.m., we offer DRIVE THRU DROP OFF FOR school-age families-- preschool through 8th grades. WOW!

The following guidelines should be followed when dropping off and picking up your children.

Infant through Transition-To-Preschool Families (6 WEEKS TO 2 YEARS)

1. Drop off and pick up in St. Joseph/Louisiana Parking Lot from 6:30 am to 6:00 p.m.
Parking for drop off and pick up is limited to 15 minutes, as parking is limited.
2. All parking slots are for drop off/pick up only.
3. All vehicles which do not display a Young Scholars Parent Parking Decal will be towed at owner's expense. No exceptions.

Elementary/Middle School Families (Preschool 3 years to eighth grades)

1. Drive through drop off is available from 7:30 a.m. to 7:50 a.m. and (Families that are not enrolled in the wrap-around program can not drop off prior to 7:30 a.m.. An early drop

- off Fee will be assessed to parent's account. No exceptions.)
2. Families that elect to park in the Milam St. Parking Lot must pay for parking, as Young Scholars will not responsible for tickets or towed vehicles. No double parking allowed.
 3. Families may utilize the St. Joseph St. Parking Lot for parking when dropping off during the hours of 8:15 a.m.- 2:30 p.m.
 4. Families picking up from 3:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. may use drive through pick-up in the St. Joseph St. Parking Lot from 3:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. (A late fee will be charged from late pick-up.)
 5. All vehicles that do not display a Young Scholars Parent Parking Decal will be towed at owner's expense. No exceptions.

DOUBLE PARKING IS PROHIBITED! TOWING WILL OCCUR AT THE OWNER'S EXPENSE.

REMEMBER, OUR CLIENTS ARE YOUNG CHILDREN. THUS, WHEN ENTERING AND EXITING PARKING LOTS, PEASE REDUCE YOUR SPEED TO NO MORE THAN 5 MILES PER HOUR. THANKS.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER POLICIES

Infants through Transition-To-Preschool (Ages 6 Weeks – 2 ½+ Years)

Research on brain development suggests that every one who cares for and assist in the development of young children—parents, family, friends, early childhood educators shape their way for learning, thinking, and behaving for the rest of their lives. Young Scholars Academy (YSA) utilizes experienced, degreed staff strive to provide a safe and nurturing environment that promotes the physical, social, emotional and cognitive development of young children while responding to the needs of families. *Creative Curriculum* is used to promote:

- Problem-Solving Skills
- Large and Small Motor Development
- Visual Stimulation
- Auditory Stimulation
- Sensory Stimulation

CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER PROGRAM HOURS

For a minimal fee we offer wrap-around child care hours 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. or 7:15 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. Monday through Friday for families which require drop-off/pick-up outside of 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. See secretary for more information.

ADMISSIONS

A pre-admission/tour interview is required between the principal or her appointee and parent(s) or guardian(s) before admission into the program. This interview will include:

- completion of enrollment forms
- introduction to your child's teacher
- tour of the center
- explanation of financial and center/school procedures

Families for child care will receive a registration packet that includes:

- enrollment application
- emergency information form
- authorization to administer medicine form (when needed)
- financial contract
- activity contract
- physical examination summary
- developmental profile form
- rate schedule and payment plan
- immunization form

INFANT PROGRAM- 6 WEEKS – 11 MONTHS

Our Infant Program serves children ages 6 weeks to about 11 months.

The infant room is designed for different developmental stages with equipment and materials for your baby at each stage. Your baby will stay with the same two teachers until he or she is ready

to move up to a toddler room at about 18 months of age.

The goals of the infant program are to meet your baby's individual needs while providing a developmentally appropriate and stimulating environment. A personal, trusting relationship develops between each infant and teacher that is enhanced by good parent/teacher communication and cooperation.

Your young infant is on a "demand schedule" of eating and sleeping. As your baby gets older, he/she begins to move toward a more group-oriented schedule (such as eating and sleeping together) as they prepare for the transition to the Toddler Program. This schedule still remains flexible to account for the needs of your individual child.

Emotional: Development of trust is a primary goal of this age group. The teachers develop personal relationships with the children in their care. They strive to provide an environment where babies can bond with their teachers and form trusting relationships. Each child has his/her own comfort level and style of attachment, and the teachers provide an emotional support for each child on their own terms.

Social: Your child's needs are met on an individual basis. Opportunities are provided for social interactions with other infants, toddlers, siblings, and adults throughout the day.

Cognitive: Cognitive development is encouraged through a stimulating environment including many different experiences that encompass the senses. Appropriate activities, materials, and equipment are made available, as your baby appears developmentally ready.

Physical: Your infant is given the opportunity to explore the environment within safe limits. As your child develops physically, new equipment, including climbers, pull and push toys, large foam blocks, and riding toys are introduced for large motor skills.

Lesson plans are posted on the parent board. Plans are used to plan activities for the week. In addition, a brief summary of your child's day will be available for you to read on a daily basis and will be available for you to take home. In addition to daily forms of communication, we also offer parent/teacher conferences. Finally, we encourage you to take part in our parental involvement opportunities to assist with special projects. Our partnership with you is paramount to creating a positive toddler experience for your child.

The partnership between parents and staff is an important one in working together to ensure a healthy and safe environment. Our health policies are essential to ensure the health and safety of all of the infants. The policies are designed to consider the safety of both the group and the individual. Your child will be supervised at all times and equipment is clean and kept in good repair. Please let us know if you have any questions about our health policy.

Communication between parents and teachers is the key to our partnership with you to provide your infant a warm, safe, and nurturing experience in our Infant Program.

INFANT ROOM COMMUNICATION BOARD

The infant room has a communication board to assist with planning the child's daily needs. In order to plan to meet your child's individual needs, upon arrival, parents are required to record

child's last feeding and other pertinent information and special instructions on communication board and/or designed planning form.

SCHOLARTALES

Individual records of each baby's daily eating, sleeping, and changing routines will be kept on file. Scholartales are used to capture and report a child's daily activities.

INFANT FEEDING PLAN

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services require that we maintain an updated feeding schedule on each infant in care. Parents will be required to complete a plan based on child's individual developmental need.

BREAST-FEEDING

Breast-feeding in our infant room is welcomed.

BOTTLES-FORMULA/MILK

In order to meet the individual needs of all infants in care, families are required to provide staff with prepared bottles. To reduce the chance of mistake in feeding, parents are responsible for ensuring that bottles, caps, utensils, and food are labeled at all times. Items that are not clearly labeled will be discarded. No exceptions.

BABY BED BUMPER PADS

For your child's safety, baby bed bumper pads are prohibited.

SUPPLIES FOR INFANTS (6 WEEKS – 11 MONTHS)

We ask that you bring ensure the following items are on hand at all times:

- Formula or other liquids placed in **pre-assembled** bottles that were prepared at home.
- Sufficient lunch and snack foods (jar baby food, baby cereal, finger foods) must be provided to meet the minimum dietary needs of each infant
- Pacifiers, with snap to attach to clothing (if needed)
- Adequate supply of disposable diapers and wipes
- Any creams, wipes, etc. used for diapering
- Plastic grocery bags (for soiled clothing)
- 2-3 feeding dishes and spoons that are microwave safe
- Socks
- Extra clothing and bibs
- Shoes are a must when child begins pulling up
- Two sets of sheets and cover blanket

All items must be labeled.

TRANSITION-TO-PRESCHOOL PROGRAM (TTP1&2) – 12 M TO 35 M

When your child enters our Toddler Program at around 12 months, he or she will be in a classroom with children ranging in age from 12 months to 3 years. As a younger toddler, your child will benefit from being in a classroom with a range of ages. Increased social interaction in a mixed age setting allows toddlers to work on skills such as learning to take turns and sharing. Your child will also have the opportunity to further develop his/her emerging language skills through interactions with the teachers and with children slightly older than themselves. As your

child grows into an older toddler, they will have the opportunity to grow into a leadership role in the class by role modeling the classroom routines.

Our program is based on full day attendance with an approximate daily schedule as follows:

- Free choice of play including art activities
- Clean-up and morning snack
- Group activity (music, discussion, movement, games)
- Free choice of play
- Outdoor play
- Lunch
- Reading and stories
- Rest time
- Afternoon snack
- Outdoor or gym play
- Free choice of indoor activity

Our child-centered active learning philosophy means that toddlers learn by doing. Our planned activities are child-oriented and are based on the children's interests. The toddler environment is created to facilitate your child's growth and learning while taking into account their areas of interest. Each area in the room is arranged so your child can make independent choices of materials to use. When planning daily activities, the teachers consider all areas of development.

Emotional: The teachers provide a loving and nurturing environment where your child can gain a sense of self. The teachers help children label their emotions in order to help them gain a better

understanding of what they are feeling as well as provide a way for them to express their emotions in order to be better understood.

Social: The teachers will help your child become a socially responsible person by encouraging him or her to communicate with and listen to others. In doing this, they are learning to trust, make friends, and feel that they are part of the group.

Cognitive: The teachers will encourage your child to grow intellectually by helping them acquire learning skills such as the ability to solve problems, ask questions, and use words to describe his or her ideas, observations and feelings.

Physical: The teachers encourage fine and gross motor development through a variety of daily experiences. The environment within each classroom grows and changes to meet the group's abilities and needs. Opportunities are provided for children to explore his/her physical space and discover ways to move in it as they gain control of their own bodies and actions. Classroom projects such as drawing, building and eating help your child develop fine motor skills. Toilet training is encouraged according to your child's readiness and done at your child's own pace. Communication is a key piece in the relationship between teachers and families.

Lesson plans of activities planned for the week are posted. In addition, a brief summary of your child's day will be available for you to read on a daily basis and will be available for you to take home. In addition to daily forms of communication, we also offer parent/teacher conferences.

Finally, we encourage you to take part in our parental involvement opportunities to assist with special projects. Our partnership with you is paramount to creating a positive toddler experience

for your child.

TTP SUPPLY LIST

- Adequate supply of disposable diapers and/or training pants
- Appropriate outdoor apparel (e.g., hats, mittens, warm jackets, shoes, etc.)
- One or more complete changes of clothing (appropriate for season/time of year)
- Ointments, creams, etc. for diapering
- Pacifiers, with snap to attach to clothing (if needed)
- Plastic grocery bags (for soiled clothing)
- Any necessary food substitutions

All items must be labeled.

CLOTHES

Each child must have a change of clothes in their cubby. You need to check for soiled clothes and make sure that they have fresh clothes in their cubby each day. Weather appropriate clothing is necessary. They need to wear durable, washable clothing that can withstand play and art projects. Some activities can be messy.

Shoes are a must! Strapless shoes or thongs are not acceptable and create a safety hazard for the children. Children need to wear shoes they can successfully remove and put back on with little or no assistance, especially with the older children.

REMEMBER: All items MUST BE LABELED.

LUNCH/SNACK TIME

Young Scholars will supply lunch, morning and afternoon snacks. Milk and/or juice are provided for snack time as well as lunch. It is always available for Toddlers throughout the day.

Menus are prepared meeting all of the four major food groups, which are dairy, fruits & vegetables, grain, and protein.

Please keep this in mind when preparing their lunches.

When your child comes to school, there is a small refrigerator in the Toddler room for your child's sipper cup.

BOTTLES/SIPPER CUPS

Bottles in the Toddler Room are discouraged.

Sipper cups are required and must be labeled. They should be taken home each day for sanitizing.

Please apply sunscreen to your child before they come.

Please bring in one box of baby wipes a month to contribute to classroom use. We use these throughout the day. Also, remember that it is necessary for families to provide diapers for their child.

Always make sure you have enough on hand here at the school.

NAP/QUIET TIME

Each child will be provided a mat, labeled with his/her name. Parents need to bring a small blanket. This item should be taken home each Friday, laundered, and returned Monday morning. Again, please to remember to label all items.

PHOTOS

Young Scholars feels it is important to the children to feel a connection between family and school. To support this, we encourage families to bring no more than six photos from your family. These may include parents, grandparents, other special people, and pets; whomever you consider part of your family. These photos will not be returned but will become a permanent addition to each classroom, providing a lasting chain of memories through the years. Thank you for your support. Remember, LABEL EVERYTHING!

ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SCHOOL POLICIES

Preschool through Eighth Grades (Ages 3 years+)

Our innovative approach in bridging gaps in funding streams, education, and staff development has afforded families of Young Scholars to receive public school services in a private school setting. Our model is used throughout the state as a way to provide affordable, high quality early care and education.

Young Scholars Academy for Excellence (YSAFE) instructional design utilizes certified, professional staff to implement learner-centered instruction. The design promotes higher order thinking skills (HOTS). Integrated curriculum is utilized to develop skills in:

- Language Arts
- Math
- Science
- Technology
- Social studies
- Foreign Language
- Personal Healthy and Safety
- Physical Education
- Fine Arts

ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM HOURS

School hours are 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Parents must clock children in according to contract on file. Early drop-off fees will automatically be assessed to family's account.

ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SCHOOL OUTREACH PROGRAM

Through our outreach program public school families may elect to drop-off from 7:30 a.m. to 7:50 a.m. for breakfast.

ADMISSIONS

A pre-admission/tour interview is required between the principal or her appointee and parent(s) or guardian(s) before admission into the program. This interview will include:

- completion of enrollment forms
- introduction to your child's teacher
- tour of the center
- explanation of financial and center/school procedures

Families for child care will receive a registration packet that includes:

- enrollment application
- emergency information form
- authorization to administer medicine form (when needed)
- financial contract
- activity contract
- physical examination summary
- developmental profile form
- rate schedule and payment plan

- immunization form

Families for elementary school will receive a registration packet which includes forms listed above and:

- HISD enrollment forms, including pre-k application when applicable
- home language survey
- free/reduced lunch application

Additionally, all elementary school students are required to complete an academic screening and social-emotional observation upon enrollment.

TARDIES

A child is considered tardy at 8:05 a.m. Children will not be accepted for school or care after 10:00 a.m. without a doctor's statement or prior principal approval. Arrivals after 10:00 a.m. create a hardship for your child, their classmates, and the school staff.

UNIFORMS

Khaki Bottoms and White or Black Polo Style Tops
Workout Wednesday : Navy Shorts and White T-Shirts

Uniforms must be worn each day.

All Students

Shoes- Closed-toe at all times, **no sandals!**

Back-Packs - Must be able to fit inside of student cubby (**clear or mesh back-packs only; no other backpacks will not be allowed in class.**)

1. No head cover head coverings are permitted. Hats, caps, scarves, bandanas, or dark glasses may not be worn in the school.
2. Shorts, skorts, skirts and dress worn above the knee must pass the fingertip test.
3. All clothing and accessories must be free of profane, suggestive, or provocative language and/or symbols, advertisement or promotion of alcohol, tobacco, or drug use, and/or reference to or association with gang activity. All clothing must cover the entire mid-riff area, chest, back and top of shoulder area. Pants must be worn at the waist and held by a belt at all times. Students may not wear pants that by design or by the way they are worn create a safety hazard. Suspenders or overall tops must be worn on the shoulders.
4. Accessories/clothing which constitutes a safety hazard to self and/or others are unacceptable. Failure to comply with dress code will result in discipline action.
5. No flip-flops. Appropriate footwear for running.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES(Preschool—8th Grade)

In order to provide each student with real-life, hands-on experiences in the classroom, the traditional supply list of paper, pen, and pencil is a thing of the past! This year, in addition to the traditional paper, pen and pencil tools used to develop skills, students will be provided opportunities to develop comprehension, math, science, and social studies skills through cooking experiences and project-based learning experiences. Young Scholars Student Supplies will be purchased weekly/monthly by Young Scholars PTO. The Student Supply Fee is

\$20 Per Semester for Preschool—2nd Grade

\$25 Per Semester for 3rd Grade-8th Grade

Please make check or money order payable to YSAFE-PTO.

School supply lists are provided for each grade.

COMMUNICATION FOLDERS

The school will send home a communication folder daily. The folder may contain information items, as well as homework assignments, and request for information items. Please check your child's folder and ensure its return.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Young Scholars Academy is committed to maintaining a safe, nurturing, and academic environment in which all students treat each other with dignity and respect. Young Scholars will work hard to prevent and correct any violation of this policy.

We provide sexual harassment training for students to assist them with

- defining sexual harassment
- understanding what sexual harassment is and how it operates in the school
- understanding how and when to report sexual harassment
- understanding the consequences of sexual harassment

Anyone who violates this policy will be subject to discipline up to and including termination or expulsion. Sexual harassment includes: unwanted sexual advances; inappropriate visual conduct, sexual gestures, display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; verbal sexual advances or propositions; verbal abuse of a sexual nature, graphic verbal commentaries about an individual's body, sexually degrading words used to describe an individual; and/or verbal conduct, making or using derogatory comments, epithets, slurs and jokes. Students who feel that they have been subjected to conduct of a harassing nature are encouraged to report the matter to a school principal within 24 hours. Information must be first hand. Students who observe conduct of a sexually harassing nature are also encouraged to report the matter to a school principal. All complaints will be promptly and thoroughly investigated. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken on the basis of investigation.

ABSENTEEISM - *Young Scholars Charter School is a school of choice.* Children enrolled in our private school or public school programs are expected to attend school according our school calendar. Excessive absences and tardies impact a child's progress, also, may impact child's advancement to the next grade. HISD school families that exceed eight unscheduled absences within a school year violate school truancy laws and will be subject to such penalties. Preschool and Pre-kindergarten families which have been awarded HISD Full Day slots by Young Scholars must not exceed five (5) excused absences per year. Excessive absences will result in transfer to half-day slot. **Excessive absenteeism will result in exclusion from our school program for the next school year.**

CHARTER SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: To increase student achievement

Goal 2: To increase management efficiency

- Goal 3: To improve public support and confidence in schools
- Goal 4: To create a positive district culture
- Goal 5: To increase violence prevention and intervention

PROFANITY/SEXUALLY EXPLICIT LANGUAGE AND OR ACTS

While we know that a child's natural curiosity and development involves exploration, profanity and/or acts of sexually explicit behavior are strictly prohibited.

Young Scholars is family-centered, thus, such behavior will not be tolerated. This includes, accessing internet pornographic web sites, as well.

Adults are responsible for exercising self-control and ensuring a healthy environment wherever children are present. Parents must work with Young Scholars staff to discourage speaking, repeating, or exhibiting inappropriate behavior. We are committed to working with families as they work to ensure a healthy developmental environment at home. Parent resource materials are available and shall be provided to assist families with redirecting such behavior.

A child (age 4 years and above) which violates this policy while on school premises, whether the child brings the language from home to school or repeats the language of another classmate shall be fined \$1 per violation. Children must know that repeating inappropriate language/behavior is just as distasteful as the person who first committed the act. Additionally, parents/guardians which violate this policy shall be fined \$1 and asked to leave school premises, including our parking lots. Fines shall be billed to parent's account. Violations shall be reflected in child's developmental progress report.

FIELD LESSONS

Field Lessons (Trips) at Young Scholars, are an important part of the learning environment. Our field lessons are designed to be an extension of the classroom. Your child's participation in these lessons has immeasurable benefits to their social and intellectual development.

As guardians of your child's safety during field lessons, we bear the ultimate responsibility for their safety. For this reason, children must consistently demonstrate safe and orderly behavior during field lessons.

Here, at Young Scholars, our discipline approach encourages children to follow directions the FIRST TIME. While we recognize families use a variety of different discipline practices at home to encourage appropriate behavior, here at Young Scholars, we must use developmentally appropriate practices to encourage appropriate behavior.

Our universal practice at Young Scholars is, —Follow directions the first time.

Any child whose behavior at Young Scholars, gives us cause to believe that the child would be an endangerment to themselves or others will not be permitted to attend field lessons unless accompanied by the child's parent/guardian. **Please note, field lesson fees are non-refundable due to absences of any kind, child's behaviors, etc.**

PRESCHOOL, PRE-K FIELD LESSON NOTATION

Field lesson ratios for preschoolers require lower student-to-teacher ratios than that of our

students which are in grades Kindergarten and above. Activities planned for preschool children age-appropriate for their developmental needs. If parent/guardian is able to participate as a chaperone, parent/guardian must agree to follow the instructions of the field lesson coordinator and to help ensure that the preschoolers experience nothing but EXCITEMENT while on trip. Should parent/guardian encounter concerns regarding any aspect of any field lesson, I agree to inform the principal or field lesson coordinator. All field lessons are optional. Cost of the field breakdown is available. Again, field lessons fees are non-refundable for any reason.

Written parental permission is required for all field lessons. Parents will be notified in advance to sign the permission slip given by the school. Adequate supervision will be provided during the entire trip..

TECHNOLOGY

Students have will be provided access to on-line internet services upon parent's written authorization. Parents and students are required to complete an internet user contract. Contract may be picked up from one of the secretaries. Parents are reminded to provide appropriate supervision of child's internet usage when at home, ensuring that children are not surfing the web, accessing inappropriate sites.

ASSESSMENT

Accelerated Reader – Supports Grades Pre-K – 12

This technology-based curriculum works to accelerate reading growth for all students, from emergent readers to college prep. Students gate excited about books. Accelerated Reader helps teachers focus attention on careful reading of books, which improves students' critical-thinking skills and builds the intrinsic love of reading. Accelerated Reader Provides you with reliable, objective information. Three different types of assessment give staff valuable data on students' reading practice, literacy skills development, and performance on classroom assignments. The programs helps you keep each student challenged

Using AR, you can continually match kids to appropriate books within their zone of proximal development (ZPD). That means you can ensure every student is challenged without being frustrated.

STAR Reading – Supports Grades 1-12

This technology-based assessment tool helps students achieve state standards! Standards Master is the new instant assessment and web-based reporting software that helps teachers:

- Measure student progress on your state standards throughout the year.
- Assess with test items that match your state standards down to the specific item level.
- Store student assessment data in one centralized, secure location.
- Generate detailed, customizable reports for all levels—district, school, class, and student.
- Disaggregate assessment data easily by any student characteristic.

Accelerated Math – Supports Grades 1-12th

This technology-based program generates unlimited practice assignments—tailored to each student. Gives immediate, individualized feedback—shows what mistakes each student makes and so to let teacher help student correct them. Lets the teacher know that all objectives are being mastered—covering each student's needs, abilities, and learning style.

Helps each student practice the precise skills necessary to move ahead at their own pace.

STAR Math – Supports Grades 1 – 12th

This technology-based assessment tool is the assessment tool which helps students achieve state standards! Standards Master is the new instant assessment and web-based reporting software that helps teachers:

- Measure student progress on your state standards throughout the year.
- Assess with test items that match your state standards down to the specific item level.
- Store student assessment data in one centralized, secure location.
- Generate detailed, customizable reports for all levels—district, school, class, and student.

Disaggregate assessment data easily by any student characteristic.

STAR Early Literacy – Grades Pre-K to Independent Reader

STAR Early Literacy is the breakthrough, computer-adaptive diagnostic assessment and database that provides teachers with fast, accurate, and reliable feedback on pre-K through third-grade students. This program allows us to intervene faster and provide students with effective instruction during the most critical years of their literacy development!

STAR Early Literacy helps:

- **Measure literacy skills accurately and reliably**—Helps diagnose each student's command of phonemic awareness, phonics, and other readiness and literacy skills.
- **Target instruction**—Diagnostic, Growth, and other information-packed reports help intervene faster and provide targeted instruction within existing curriculum.
- **Eliminate student frustration**—Adaptive Branching technology adjusts the difficulty level of each question based on a student's previous response.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS POLICIES

YSAFE GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM

YSAFE's Gifted and Talented program serves students who have been identified as potentially gifted or talented in intellectual ability, creativity, or leadership. Curriculum is specifically designed to develop the student's special talents while enhancing their learning capabilities.

Information about this program and application forms can be obtained from this Dean of Instruction.

YSAFE AFTER-SCHOOL TUTORIAL AND ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

As needed, our After-School Tutorial/Enrichment program is coordinated by our elementary school teachers. Homework workshops are offered to students enrolled. We also offer a wide variety of enrichment classes. Fees vary, depending on the type of class.

YSAFE SUMMER CAMP PROGRAMS

Camps are specifically designed to provide enrichment over the summer. Camps work to help students retain information gained during the school year.

YSAFE SUMMER INTERN PROGRAM

This program is designed to develop good work ethics and develop entrepreneurs skill in pre-teens, teens, very young adults. While learning about the various aspects of running an early care and education program, participants will have hands-on opportunities to learn about the

responsibilities in running a business, what it takes to develop and deliver a good product (high quality early care and education program), and the economic impact a poor product has on the business vs. the impact a high quality product has on the business. Participants must complete an application and go through an interview process. Participants must complete 8 hours of Pre-Service training offered by YSAFE. Participants who are 13, 14, and 15 years of age are classified a Jr. Interns. High school seniors are classified as Sr. Interns and or thus, eligible for summer employment with Young Scholars. In order to qualify for employment, participants, must have successfully completed at least 200 volunteer hours with Young Scholars. Background checks are conducted on all participants. High School juniors and seniors are required to successfully complete first aid and cpr. Students receive Certificate of Completion at the conclusion of program.

YOUNG SCHOLARS ACADEMY TRAINING PROJECT

This program gives undergraduate and graduate students currently enrolled in a university or community college the opportunity to explore and recognize the importance of high quality early care and education, and the social and economic implication on a community/region. Participants develop an awareness of, and an appreciation for, the contemporary issues in early care and education of typical and atypical young children. Past participants have come from Rice, Texas Southern, St. Thomas, UH Universities and Houston Community College.

APPENDIX

SEPARATION

Separation can be stressful for parents as well as children. We are here to help in this sometimes difficult, but very common, developmental process.

When you leave your child, please don't "sneak out". Make the "good-bye" and hug something he/she can count on, even if it brings some tears at first. Sometimes children don't express anxiety until a few weeks later, when they feel comfortable enough here to do so. In either case, please be assured, we will comfort and reassure your child; we'll talk about his/her feelings. We will need you to do the same. And when it's time for you to leave the classroom, after you say your good-byes, make the departure definite. Lingering can make a child unsure of what is expected of him/her. Together, we will work through this most important developmental process. Although parents are welcome to visit the center at ANY time, keep in mind that it may be difficult for a very young child to cope with separating from a parent for a second time during the day.

Feel free to make use of our observation windows if your child is having a difficult time at drop off (or if you decide to check on him/her anytime during the day). This is a nice way to see how your child is doing without having them see you

POSITIVE PRESCHOOL EXPERIENCE

- Your attitude is contagious! Be positive and confident about your decision to enroll your child in preschool. You have made a wise decision! Your little one will reflect your confidence and positive attitude.
- When dropping off your child in the morning, don't linger but be sure to tell your child good-bye and remind them that you will be there to pick them up in a little while. A quick, clean, confident break will be best for both you and your child. As soon as you are gone, your child will quickly become absorbed in the activities of the day.
- Be sure your child gets plenty of sleep and a good breakfast before coming to school.
- Encourage your child to tell you about his or her day at school. Look for the positives and ***don't dwell on any negative experience***. However, don't press the issue if your child doesn't seem to have much to say - some kids just don't keep their parents informed as well as others!
- Check with the teacher for activities you can do at home to carry through on the things done in school. Let your child teach you finger plays and songs. If special recipes are used in school, try making them at home. Your interest and involvement will give your child a great sense of achievement and importance.
- Please read all papers and newsletters which are sent home with your child. Watch for notes and announcements posted outside your child's class. Stay informed so your child won't miss out on any of the fun!

GOLDEN RULE OF TODDLER DISCIPLINE

What you do now will have a profound influence on whether your child turns out to be a delight or a terror. *By Paula Spencer*

The way you respond to your toddler's behavior shapes her future actions. Now the rub: How do you teach good behavior to a not-yet-rational, nonverbal child, whose understanding of the finer concepts — such as manners, sharing, and empathy, not to mention personal safety — is primitive to nonexistent?

Start with a lot of patience and practice, and follow some simple rules of discipline, and before you know it, your tyrannical toddler will be a pleasant preschooler.

RULE 1: ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE

It's easy to fall into the habit of simply reacting to your child's misbehavior, forever intervening and correcting when something goes amiss. But you'll have better success if you actively reinforce good behavior — since your child prizes your approval above all else. Give him hugs when he's behaving.

Praise him by saying things like, "I appreciate how you put your puzzle back on the shelf when you were done."

RULE 2: PREVENT PROBLEMS

Removing sharp objects, breakables, and enticing plants from your child's environment wards off potential mishaps. Also avoid situations that will cause trouble: trying to run one more errand when it's already past naptime, wheeling a hungry tyke past the candy-filled checkout counter.

Another way to minimize the odds of a tussle: Offer helpful reminders before things go awry. Before every bath, for example, you might gently remind her, "The rule is, if you splash water outside of the tub, you have to come out."

RULE 3: SET LIMITS

All kids need clear, consistent limits to define the boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable behavior. In fact, they crave them to feel secure in their world. At first, defining and enforcing limits may not seem necessary. What harm is it, you might ask yourself, if your 12-month-old pulls your books off the shelf or your 18-month-old neglects to say "please"? The answer: If you don't approve of a behavior now — even if your child looks comically cute as he's defying you — you won't like it after a few dozen times, either. He's trying to figure out what's okay and what's not. It's your job to tell him. It's easy to excuse toddler transgressions by saying, "Oh, he's just a little guy" or "She won't understand if I say no." But toddlers are smarter than you may think they are. With your help and patience, they're capable of learning the difference between right and wrong.

RULE 4: BE FIRM

Doug Dunn, a father in Valley Forge, PA, says, "I'm good at saying no, but with my daughter, Taylor, who's 2, I always want to say yes. I'm tempted to spoil her, but I've learned that when you give in once, on, say, buying a balloon at the store, she'll want one every time." Certainly, indulgence has its place in parenthood. But over time, a lack of firmness tends to backfire. If you

GOLDEN RULE OF TODDLER DISCIPLINE CONTINUED.....

don't enforce limits, you deprive your child of understanding how you expect her to behave. Rather than making her feel liberated, the opposite occurs. She feels frightened and confused. If you're too lenient, your child is also apt to take advantage of you. She'll soon discover which buttons to push to get the response that she desires. And you can be sure she'll push them again and again. Better to make it clear that you're in charge — not your child.

RULE 5: KEEP YOUR EXPECTATIONS ABOUT HER BEHAVIOR REALISTIC

Otherwise, you set yourself up for failure. One-year-olds can barely sit still for 15 minutes, let alone for an hour at the table while the family eats. "We let Tiffany, who's 16 months old, wander around before a meal at a restaurant," says Ziette Hayes, of Spring Valley, NY. Do increase your expectations as your child grows. For example, while a 12-month-old shouldn't be required to use "please" and "thank you," an 18-month-old with a 50-word vocabulary is capable of learning to say them.

RULE 6: AIM FOR CONSISTENCY

Once you make a rule, enforce it. Inconsistencies confuse a learning child. If it was all right to dump sand out of the sandbox last week, why are you so mad about it now

Try to follow through on your rules in a predictable fashion. If you say that it will be time to leave the playground after your child goes down the slide two more times, then do so. Don't wait for him to make three more trips, or ten; the next time you're ready to leave after "two more times," you probably won't be taken seriously.

Of course, it's impossible to be 100 percent consistent in all things, all the time. There's room for exceptions. You might let your child bounce on the sofa — something ordinarily verboten — when he's trapped inside on a rainy day, or allow her to eat her snack in the living room instead of the kitchen during a play date with her pals. Explain why a deviation from the norm is special and just for that day.

RULE 7: STAY COOL

Your disciplinary message will have a much greater impact if you deliver it in a calm, rational manner. Yes, this is easier said than done. It can be a challenge to curb your temper when your 1-year-old has just written with permanent marker on the kitchen wall, or your 2-year-old has unspooled an entire roll of toilet paper. Raising one's voice is a natural reaction, but yelling both degrades a child and makes you a poor role model. Plus, if you shout a lot, a toddler may tune you out or think it's funny and do mischievous things just to get a rise out of you. On the other hand, a too-timid response can be as ineffective as shouting. Sounding too mild or uncertain may dilute your message. Avoid couching commands as questions: "Stop jumping on the bed, okay, honey?" or "Do you want to go to sleep now?"

RULE 8: BE BRIEF

The best way to get your message across to a toddler is to use as few words as possible. There's no need, for instance, to stray into a medical explanation of why sticking dried beans up one's nose is a bad idea. A young child benefits most from short, to-the-point messages: "Hot." "Walk, don't run." "We don't do that." "Biting hurts."

GOLDEN RULE OF TODDLER DISCIPLINE CONTINUED.....

RULE 9: SET A GOOD EXAMPLE

You've most likely heard about the mother who slaps her child's hand as she scolds, "No hitting!" And grabbing is another negative behavior parents unwittingly demonstrate to young kids. If your child is clutching something you don't want her to have, try not to just snatch it away from her. It's better to calmly ask her to give you the object in a no-nonsense tone while holding out your hand for it.

RULE 10: MONITOR MOODS

When it comes to discipline, "One size fits all" definitely doesn't apply to small children: Some easygoing toddlers respond well to low-key reminders and a warning. Other kids may need more stringent limits; if you give in once, they'll take advantage of it later. As you discipline your little one, remember that you're not just helping him learn how to behave: You're also teaching him what to expect from his world, and what it expects from him in return.

WHY TODDLERS MISBEHAVE?

Before you react when your child acts up, consider his point of view. Common causes of naughtiness at this stage include:

PHYSICAL DISCOMFORT Take a toddler on a long morning of errands past his naptime, and the tantrum in aisle 7 of Wal-Mart isn't about a toy he spotted; it's his way of saying, "Enough, Mom! I'm tired."

CURIOSITY Toddlers learn about the world through hands-on exploration. A child who pulls the cat's tail may simply be intent on finding out what will happen, not trying to be cruel. A toddler lacks the self-control to curb this kind of discovery-by-doing.

TESTING Even the best-behaved children go through a contrary phase starting at around 14 to 22 months, which can last for at least six months. This is when a child grows increasingly aware of his personal power. Intoxicated by this finding, he seems to be asking himself, "Just what am I capable of, and how much can I get away with?"

FRUSTRATION Toddlerhood is fraught with limitations, both physical (the inability to stack blocks perfectly) and imposed (having to hold your hand when crossing the street). What's more, a toddler lacks the verbal skills to make her wishes known or to orally let off steam. As a result, frustration mounts quickly; it's often vented as aggression, anger, and other forms of antisocial behavior.

IF YOUR DISCIPLINE METHOD FAILS.....try another. Here, 4 sure strategies:

1. **SELECTIVE IGNORING** Not all of a toddler's undesirable behaviors merit the same degree of response. Save your energy for the truly destructive actions, as well as those that can set dangerous precedents, such as hitting, biting, or standing up in a shopping cart. One rule of thumb: If you're in doubt about whether a behavior is safe, take action. Better to err on the side of caution than leniency.
2. **REDIRECTION** Distraction can work wonders with a toddler, preventing mishaps or pulling her back from the brink of trouble. Any fresh sight or sound helps a young child shift gears. Try an object she's never seen before, whether it's a new toy or a metal pie pan from the kitchen.
3. **VERBAL DISCIPLINE** A 1 or 2-year-old may not yet speak eloquently, but he can certainly understand most of what you say. Often, using the right words is sufficient to prevent a problem.
Offer positive reinforcement ("I like how you're sitting the right way in your

chair"), reminders

("Drink your juice at the table," as you hand him the cup), or reprimands ("Connor, stop shoving. Shoving hurts").

4. **TIME-OUT** Remove your child from the situation and place her in a brief period of forced boredom. Time-outs provide a break in the action, usually enough for her to understand why she ought to stop.

SCHOOLAGE DISCIPLINE TIP

There are many times when we need to reinforce a student's positive behavior. We can do so easily and effectively by taking three specific actions:

- First, ask the student what he or she liked about his or her behavior in the specific situation where you want to provide reinforcement. Then listen closely to the answers.
- Second, repeat or paraphrase the student's description back to the student to reinforce the description and show that you were listening intently.
- Third, make a specific and supportive statement about the behavior which also labels it. For example, "Tommy, you seem to be thinking carefully before you respond to John's teasing. You are showing strong self-control."

You can use this technique countless times and never wear it out.

TOILET TRAINING

STEP-BY-STEP

Toilet training is a fairly straightforward process with many steps that your child can master in a few days or a few months. If you wait until your child is ready to begin, it will most likely go fairly smoothly for both of you. It is your child's project, not yours.

From start to finish, toilet training includes: telling your child what you expect of him, your child telling you he has to go, undressing, going, wiping, dressing, flushing, and hand washing. Each step can and will take time, so remember to reinforce your child's success with praise at the completion of each step. Your child's timing and mastery of the previous step should determine when the next step should be introduced. The long-term goal is important, but the smaller accomplishments are special in their own right as well. Remember, initial success relies on your child understanding the use of the toilet, not on mastering the process. Show him what you expect with the following steps:

1. Get a potty chair. Many children feel more secure on a potty chair than on a toilet because when they sit, their feet are securely on the floor, and they aren't afraid of falling off or in. If your child is afraid of the potty chair, don't put pressure on him to use it. Put toilet training aside for a month or two and give your child time to get used to the idea of the potty and to be comfortable with it.

2. Allow your child to become familiar with the potty chair. Let your child observe, touch, and get comfortable with the potty chair before attempting to use it. Also, introduce the potty chair to your child as his or her own chair.

3. Place the potty chair in a convenient place for your child. The potty chair does not have to be limited to the bathroom. Keep it in the playroom, in the yard, or wherever your child is playing so your child can get to it when he wants to.

4. To start, let your child sit on the potty once a day, fully clothed, as a routine. Also, let your child leave the potty at any time, and never force your child to spend time sitting on it.

5. After your child is comfortable sitting on the potty with clothes on, let him sit there without clothes. This is the next logical step and will help your child get used to the idea of undressing before going to the bathroom.

6. When your child has a bowel movement in his diaper, have him watch you dump the stool into the potty so that he can see where it should go. Explain to your child that this is where urine and stool belong; he should understand the importance of putting things in their place.

7. Be patient and positive. As with all new skills, your child will master toilet training in time.

Other helpful tips for **TOILET TRAINING:**

- Keep your child in loose, easy-to-remove pants. Help your child master the dressing and undressing needed to sit on the potty. Once he's comfortable sitting on the potty with his clothes on, try it without them.
- Encourage imitation. With your child next to you, sit on your toilet, and allow him to sit on his potty as well.
- Have your child go to the bathroom sitting down. Both boys and girls will initially learn to use the potty this way. If boys start out standing up to urinate, they may not want to sit down again to have a bowel movement.
- Watch for your child's signals. Grimaces, grunts, poses, or other behavior may signal your child's need for a bowel movement. When you see him doing this, ask if he is ready to go.
- Offer to take his pants off so he can run around bare. Offer to remind him each hour that he may need to go. Don't remind him unless he wants you to.
- Praise your child. Be sure to praise your child when he tells you he needs to use the potty — with or without a reminder.
- Let your child flush, but only if he wants to. Some children don't like the sound of the toilet or are afraid of it, so be sure to watch for that fear. Also, try to reassure your child if he becomes upset about his stool disappearing down the toilet.
- Take care of your child's skin. Your child's skin is just as likely to get a rash due to wetness or exposure to stool now as it did when he was an infant. Keep him dry and clean by changing him regularly. Don't leave him in soiled clothing as a toilet training method.
- Think about underwear. When your child is successfully using the potty several times a day, he may be ready for underwear. Start by putting him in it for only part of the day. And because diapers can be very reassuring, don't rush him out of them. Disposable training pants can be used as part of the transition from diaper to underwear, and are especially helpful when your child demonstrates that he's ready to take over the process.
- Coordinate with your child's other care givers. Make sure to coordinate your toilet training plans with whoever is with your child during the day (care givers, grandparents, day care staff, etc.). It's important that they know how you want your child to be potty trained so that he receives the same message during the day, when you're not there, and at night and on weekends, when you are.

Expect accidents. Occasional accidents and withholding of both urine and bowel movements are natural and part of the learning process. If your child continuously withholds bowel movements, it may result in hard stools, which make going to the bathroom painful. To keep the movements soft, consult your pediatric professional for a stool softener. When the stool is softer, reassure your child that it won't hurt when he tries to have a bowel movement. It's also a good idea to feed your child high fiber foods (you should eat them, too — children will learn from their parents' example) and lots of water, which will contribute to keeping your child's stool soft in the long run.

YOUNG SCHOLARS ACADEMY UNIVERSAL GUIDANCE RULES FOR HOME AND SCHOOL

The home/childcare/school, like any other place where more than one person resides and interacts, needs rules. Rules are set up to provide children with guidelines of expected behavior. The rules that we have established are to not only teach children respect for themselves, but also for others.

As principal, it is my goal to teach children to develop their own set of internal controls, thus enabling them to control and guide their own behavior.

When a child's behavior is not acceptable, we must be willing to talk to the child about why their behavior is not acceptable.

Listed below are the universal rules for Young Scholars children, staff, and parents. The rules are fair and reasonable. Each employee, parent/guardian, and child should memorize each rule. Parents are asked to incorporate these in their rules at home.

10 Universal Rules for Children

1. Listen for directions and follow them the —first time.
2. Hitting, biting, teasing, horseplay (rough play), pushing, kicking, spitting, profanity, sexual gestures, weapons, drugs of any kind are not allowed..
3. Throwing anything indoors is not allowed.
4. Respect self, others, and their belongings.
5. Indoor voices when indoors.
6. Use good manners: —please, —thank you, —excuse me....
7. All toys/equipment at center/school are for sharing.
8. Raise your hand and wait to be called on (preschool and above).
9. Remain in your seat and wait to be called on (preschool and above).
10. Walking around while eating or drinking is unhealthy, thus, not allowed.

5 Universal Rules for Staff and Parents

1. Treat each child and adult with common decency and respect.
2. Know and be aware, at all times, each child's individual need.
3. Listen to all allegations, complaints, and concerns from children.
3. Investigate all allegations, complaints, and concerns, from —beginning to end, to determine appropriate praise/consequence.
4. Be fair, remembering to meet each child's individual needs.
5. Use appropriate child restraint, if necessary, to keep child from harming himself/herself and others.

The objective for child guidance is really quite simple. Children should be taught to abide by the same rules that society as a whole find in their lives. To accomplish this, we need only to determine the appropriateness of their day-to-day behaviors by following the three following guidelines:

1. Behavior must not infringe on the rights of others.
2. Behavior must not present a risk of harm to oneself or others.
3. Behavior must not unreasonably damage the environment or animals, objects, or materials within the environment.

By simply translating these rules to the comprehension level of the child (simplifying the language) we are preparing the children appropriately for the world's rules (laws) they will eventually need to live by.

PARENTS RESPONSIBILITY FOR SAFETY

- Keep current on children's immunizations and well baby/child check-ups.
- Keep sick children at home until 24 hours after the disappearance of all symptoms including the disappearance of fever, Tylenol-free.
- Tell your child's teacher if he or she has a communicable disease.
- Fill out the necessary forms to allow center/school to administer medications.
- Take home medications that we no longer administer.
- If your child will not be coming to the Young Scholars for sickness or other reasons, please call your child's teacher to let him or her know.
- Teach your children good health practices at home (wiping nose with tissues, brushing teeth after meals, flushing the toilet, washing hands before meals and after toileting, cleaning up after self, etc.). It helps if we are consistent with health practices at home and school.
- Keep your locating information current with the Young Scholars office. This includes phone numbers for home, work, and cell; home address; and e-mail address.
- Keep your authorized pick-up people current with the YOUNG SCHOLARS ACADEMY office. You may have up to three (3) different people who are authorized to pick up your child on the emergency directory. We encourage families to have at least two (2) authorized people listed in the database.
- Introduce the people authorized to pick up your child to the YOUNG SCHOLARS ACADEMY teachers and office personnel. If we do not know the people authorized to pick-up your child we will ask to see their identification.
- Always tell the teachers of office staff if someone other than the parent(s) will be picking up your child. This should be done in writing. Make sure that person is authorized to pick-up your child (by having the teacher check the emergency information).
- Bring your child to the YOUNG SCHOLARS ACADEMY in the appropriate car safety restraints. Keep children eleven years or younger in the back seat where it is safer. If we notice that your child is not properly restrained, don't be offended if we say something to you about it.
- Never leave a child in the car unattended.
- Do not let your child run ahead of you in the parking lot. Teach them to stay close for safety purposes.
- In the parking lot, walk in front of the cars. Do not walk in the street.
- Please do not "race" with your children in the building or parking lot. Do not let them run ahead of you in the hallways.
- Do not ask your child to meet you inside or allow the child to linger in his or her classroom while you go to pick up another child in a different room. When we see you arrive, we transfer responsibility for keeping your child supervised back to you.
- When you drop off or pick up your child, make time to make contact with the child's teachers so that they know you are dropping off/picking up. Never take your child without letting a teacher know.
- Keep teachers informed about your child's health, mood, eating habits, family situation or anything that might affect your child's behavior at school.
- Teach your child about safety practices (good strangers/bad strangers, practice fire and tornado drills at home, stop drop and roll, etc). It helps if we are consistent with safety practices at home and school.
- Have your infant-toddler start his or her day with a fresh diaper and a morning breakfast snack/bottle.
- If possible, volunteer on your child's field lessons so that we have a better ratio of children to adults.
- When possible, volunteer on special event days to help us keep the events as safe as possible.

BITING AND HITTING: 16 WAYS TO STOP IT

Growing teeth and hands often find their way into trouble. Toddlers often bite and hit with little regard for the consequences of their actions. Bites and hits hurt and should be corrected, before serious harm is done to bodies and to relationships.

1. Understand why babies bite and hit. Don't take it personally. Babies do bite the hands (and the nipples) that feed them. Everything babies do revolves around their hands and mouth. The hands and teeth are their first social tools, and they learn how to use them from the responses they get. As soon as teeth erupt and hands flap, babies experiment and use these instruments on different objects to see how it feels. What could be more familiar and available than parents' skin? Baby's job is to use these tools; your job is to teach him how. These early nips and slaps, as awful as they look and feel, are playful communications, not aggressive, disrespectful conduct.

Aggressive biting and hitting is most common between the ages of 18-months and 2½ years when the child doesn't have the verbal language to communicate his needs. Instead, he communicates through actions. Biting usually stops as the child's verbal skills grow but hitting doesn't.

2. Understand why toddlers bite and hit. What are simply socially- incorrect gestures in infants can, if unchecked, become aggressive behaviors in children. That's why you want to purge these from baby's repertoire before they become part of the growing child. Children become aggressive in order to release pent-up anger, to control a situation, to show power, or to protect their turf in a toy squabble. Some children even resort to obnoxious behavior in a desperate attempt to break through to distant parents. Most aggressive toddler behaviors will lessen once the child is old enough to communicate by words instead of actions.

3. Consider the source. What triggers aggressive behaviors? Keep a journal (at least mental notes) identifying the correlation between how a child acts and the circumstances prompting the action. For example: "Kate bit Suzie during play group. Suzie had Kate's favorite ball. It was almost nap time. Lots of kids in a small place. Suzie is very bossy."

4. Child hurts parent. Face-slapping is a socially-incorrect gesture babies experiment with. Redirect the slapper into a socially-acceptable alternative: "Give me five." Likewise, redirect nipping: "No biting, ouchie, hurts Mama! (put on your unhappy face); then redirect the behavior: "Hug mama. That's nice!" (smile and hug back). Once your child's face-slapping becomes an expression of frustration (for example, the toddler in your arms becomes angry and hits you because you won't let her have candy), you'll have to show her the natural consequence. Firmly but calmly announce "You may not hit" and put her down. She'll still be angry about the candy, so you can verbalize that for her. Do not allow your toddler to use you as a punching bag. Give her the message that you will not let her hurt you. If you don't allow your child to hurt you when he's very young, he will be less likely to let others hurt him when he's older. You will be modeling to him how to say "no" to being hit, for example, by holding up a hand to stop the blow but not hit back.

5. Toddler hits babies. If your one-and-a-half-year-old bangs his toy hammer on the heads of other babies in the group, remove all objects that he can hit with. Show and tell him not to hit and give him an alternative gesture: "Be nice, pat baby" as you gently guide his patting hand.

Don't bite back. "But the child needs to learn that biting hurts," you may reason. Yes, but there's no way your child will decide that she shouldn't bite if you bite. Try this alternative tooth-for-tooth method: Take your child aside and ask her to let you show her how teeth feel on skin.

BITING AND HITTING: 16 WAYS TO STOP IT CONTINUED.....

6. Press your child's forearm against her upper teeth as if she were biting herself, not in an angry revengeful way, but as a parent making a point, "See, biting hurts!" Give this lesson immediately after he bites you or someone else. You want your child to learn to be sensitive to how others feel – an early lesson in empathy.

7. Hitting models. Katie hits Tommy. Katie's mother (embarrassed and irritated) quickly goes over and smacks Katie on the arm saying "Mustn't hit." Are you as confused as Katie is right now? Have you ever been driven by embarrassment or anger to do something illogical? We all have. So plan in your mind ahead of time what you will do when your child hits someone.

8. Child hurts child. You notice one child hits (pushes or kicks) another to get a toy. Show and tell an alternative way to get the toy. "We don't hit other people. If you want the toy, wait until your friend is finished with it or ask Mommy and I'll set the share timer. When I want something from you I don't hit you, I ask you nicely." If the hitter doesn't cooperate, ask the victim to say, "I'm not playing with you anymore until you say you're sorry and stop hitting." Two-year-olds may not be able to say all these words, but they'll understand them; so you say the words for them and follow through with the consequence. Also, impress upon the biter: "How would you feel if Tommy bit you."

9. Timeout the aggressor. "Biting hurts, and it's wrong to hurt. You are going to sit by me." Usually by two years of age the child can make the connection between being aggressive and the consequences. Encourage your child to say "I'm sorry." If he's not angry anymore, he might want to give a kiss or hug. (See).

10. Model nonaggression. A child who lives with aggression becomes aggressive. How do you communicate disappointment, handle conflicts, and get your point across? Aggression is contagious. Toddlers and young children also pick up aggressive behavior from older siblings. If the younger children see the older ones hitting each other, they conclude that's the way you treat other people. Make this a teachable experience for the older children. Point out their modeling and tell them for their own benefit and the benefit of the little ones to clean up their act.

Grabbing is a common aggressive behavior in toddlers and young preschoolers. (Watch that you don't unintentionally model this by snatching things from little hands) Calmly explain why he can't have the item he grabbed and ask him to hand it back to the other child or give it to you. You may have to offer a replacement for what he has to give up. If your child is about to damage something valuable, or is likely to hurt himself with an object, use a no-nonsense voice and show by your body language you expect him to give it up immediately.

AVOID SETUPS

Avoid situations that bring out the worst in kids. At a birthday party a mother setup a scavenger hunt for a bunch of boys -- inside her house, of all places. To fuel the frenzy, she offered a prize for the winner. You can imagine what happened. Both the house and the children were a wreck. They hit and shoved each other and trashed the house in pursuit of the hidden treasures. Bruised skin and bruised feelings resulted.

12. Mellow a mean streak. Watch the toddler who habitually bangs toys, bashes dolls, kicks cats, and pounds on walls. While some of this acting out is normal, it can be a red flag for tension and anger. The child is at risk for treating humans this way. Besides delving into the roots of the problem, encourage more gentle play: "Hug the bear," "Pet the kitty," "Love the doll."

BITING AND HITTING: 16 WAYS TO STOP IT CONTINUED.....

13. Reward. Children over three respond well to rewards, such as a no-hitting chart: "Every day you are nice to your friends, put a happy face on the chart. When you have three happy faces we'll go out to lunch together."

14. Program self-control. Some impulsive children hit before they think. For children over three, help them control these impulses by suggesting substitute behaviors that the child clicks into at the first thought of hitting: "As soon as you feel like hitting, grab a pillow and pound on it or go run around the yard." You can model impulse control for your child. For example, next time you feel like hitting, let your child see you think your way out of it. Grab your hand and talk to it: "Now, hand, you should not hit people." He'll pay attention, especially if he's the one you felt like hitting.

15. Apply double discipline. When hitting becomes disrespectful and undermines your authority, it deserves a double-dose of correction from Mom and Dad. Four-year-old Timmy got angry and hit his mother. She immediately sat him down, looked him squarely in the eyes, and impressed on him that under no circumstances was he ever to hit his parents; that behavior was intolerable and would be firmly corrected. She sent him to his room. After this time-out they talked about his anger. Later that day she shared this incident with her husband who had a talk with Timmy. He reinforced the seriousness of this situation and told Timmy that it would not be tolerated: "I will not allow you to hit the woman I love." This wise father got some extra mileage out of his discipline by communicating his feelings for his wife.

16. Supervise. It's neither fair nor safe to allow aggressive toddlers to play with potential victims in close quarters without a parent on watch. If your child is aggressive, share your concern with the other parents or teachers in the playgroup, and seek their help in tempering your child's aggressive behavior. Don't hesitate to tell them about the problem. You can bet they have also struggled through an aggressive stage with their own children. Your candidness shows your concern for the other children. Otherwise, aggression, especially biting, may destroy friendships. The parents of a biter are embarrassed, while the parents of the bitee are angry that their child has been hurt. The biter's parents get blamed for the child's misbehavior ("bad parents of a bad kid"), and the adult friendship cools.

Teachers and day-care providers also need to be vigilant in supervising the aggressive child, lest this attitude infect the whole group. In a group setting children learn what is socially-acceptable behavior. If they see and feel that aggressive behavior is tolerated -- especially if the biter is in the spotlight ("Watch out, he's a biter") -- they pick up on this label and may try making it part of their repertoire. While the aggressor's behavior requires immediate attention, be careful not to give the other children the idea that this is the way to get attention. Be sure to find opportunities to praise the other children for their good behavior.

UNDERSTANDING WHY A CHILD BITES

As you think about the many possible reasons that would cause a child to bite, consider these suggestions and solutions.

1. Biting can be a need for control. Toddlers are in the process of developing a need for doing things themselves. They want to make their own choices, control their environments, and so, they make demands. As toddlers move out and away from adults and then close again for comforting, biting may be a way to feel powerful over others.

Solution: Help toddler achieve a balance between their need for control and their need for loving, firm limits. Set up your environment so infants and toddlers can have long stretches of time to explore and make choices. To help children feel powerful, allow and provide as many situations as possible when they can choose such as choosing the red marker or the blue marker or celery sticks or apple slices.

2. Biting is a part of sensory/motor exploration. Toys, food and people must be touched, smelled and of course, tasted, if the toddler is to learn.

Solution: Provide a variety of sensory/motor experiences. Provide infants and toddlers with closely supervised opportunities to play with water, paints, play clay, and sand, as well as time to crawl and tumble over a variety of hard, soft, and smooth surfaces. Make sure you have a colorful array of easy to clean toys that children can mouth.

3. Teething. Teething can cause infants' and toddlers' mouths to hurt. Babies often need something or someone to gnaw on to provide relief for them.

Solution: Provide young children with something to teeth on that is safe to bite. Try teething toys, frozen bagels and chewy foods (such as bananas) that can disintegrate in the mouth without causing choking. Keep clean frozen cloths on hand to provide cooling relief.

4. Peer interaction. Infants and toddlers are just learning how to approach and engage peers in positive ways. They often express their interest by biting, pulling hair, pushing, etc. (Infants usually don't understand that they are hurting others when they bite, however older toddlers may.)

Solution: Children need many social experiences to learn how to interact with others.

Acknowledge a child's interest in other children by saying, "You like Sarah, You can give her a toy." (Keep sentences short with toddlers.) If a child reaches out to others roughly, take his or her hand and say, "Touch gently, That makes her happy." Provide plenty of supervised interaction.

CHILDREN'S SEXUAL BEHAVIOR AND BODY SAFETY

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

This information has two purposes. First, to help parents become knowledgeable on child sexual development and to provide parents with a guide on what behaviors they can expect to see in their children as they develop sexually. Second, to help parents become more comfortable in talking with their children about sexuality and some suggestions for parents on how to talk with their children about body and personal safety.

Sexual Development in Young Children

As parents, it is important for us to communicate with our children and teach them as they grow. It is easy for parents to talk with their children about the differences between right and wrong, but it is difficult for parents to talk with their children about sexuality. It is estimated that 40-85% of children will engage in at least some sexual behaviors before turning thirteen years of age (Friedrich, et al, 1991). It is believed by experts that 80% of children have masturbated by the age of three (Parenting, 1997).

Children need to learn about sexuality. If children do not receive information about sexuality from their parents, they will receive it from their peers, TV, magazines, movies and other media, which may provide them with misinformation and cause confusion.

The more information that parents have about childhood sexuality the better they will be able to respond to their child's sexual development. Natural and healthy sexual exploration during childhood is an information gathering process. At a very young age, children begin to explore their bodies by touching, poking, pulling, and rubbing all their body parts, including their genitals.

What behaviors should I expect as my child develops sexually?

Many parents become embarrassed, upset, and even concerned when they see their children begin to explore their sexuality. This is very natural and normal for children and parents should not over-react to this behavior. When children are exploring their genitals, it should not be considered a sexual behavior. Children's understanding of genital exploration is that "it feels good", not that "I am doing something sexual".

When children begin to explore, ask questions and/or experiment with their own bodies or with others, this is a sign to parents that they are curious and have questions. Children will begin to explore their own bodies and will seek out opportunities with same-age peers to compare similarities and differences of body parts. This will happen with same sex peers and opposite sex peers. This curiosity about basic anatomy can also be satisfied by parents who read books about body parts with their children.

Children will touch their genitals to explore their anatomy and sensations. Such touching may lead to masturbation. Children often rub their genitals with their hand or against objects, such as furniture, toys, and pillows. This is normal childhood development. Masturbating for children can serve to relieve tension, to relax, and to comfort.

CHILDREN'S SEXUAL BEHAVIOR AND BODY SAFETY CONTINUED...

Children's behaviors and play are related to their experiences and exposures. Children will play house and act out sexual behaviors with dolls, pets, and stuffed animals. Children may use their toys to model kissing, holding hands, and sleeping together. When children are exposed to sexualized activity, such as seeing adults show affection, having intercourse, or observing sexual behaviors on TV, they become curious and may begin to experiment through their play and act out situations to which they've been exposed.

Children often tell sexual jokes and use sexual words with peers. Children will imitate what they have heard and observed but often do not understand the meaning behind their words.

How do I respond to sexualized behaviors?

As children begin to explore their bodies and experiment with their peers, parents should not shame, blame, or discipline a child. Parents who do not feel comfortable discussing sexuality or fail to recognize that exploratory behaviors are normal may respond to children's behaviors by over-reacting.

When responding to sexualized play between children:

Do not over-react:

By staying calm and handling the situation without over-reacting, children will develop a positive sense of self and sexuality

Stop the behavior:

If children are masturbating in public or in front of others, explain to them that it is not appropriate to touch their private parts in public and that if they feel they need to touch their private parts, they need to do it in private, hence "private parts".

Children should not be told that it is "bad", "dirty", or "nasty", when found masturbating and they should not be punished.

When children are exploring their sexuality with other children, parents should explain to them that when they are playing with their friends, they need to leave their clothes on and that it is not okay to touch or show private parts. Parents should also ask the children if they have any questions and be available to answer any that they ask

Don't punish:

Don't yell at or punish them. Punishing sexual behaviors can lead to sexual inhibitions later on and hinder a child's sexual development. Tell children that their behavior is not appropriate by being clear and direct without making them feel guilty.

Provide information:

Explain that touching their own private parts is private and should be done in private. Reinforce that children should respect each other and the touching of others' private parts is not acceptable.

Redirect the behavior:

Redirect the children's behavior into a more acceptable play activity. Introduce a new game or other activities to distract their behavior.

CHILDREN'S SEXUAL BEHAVIOR AND BODY SAFETY CONTINUED...

Body and Personal Safety

Talking to children about body safety can be difficult for parents. It seems that most parents think that if they talk to their children about body safety, they have to talk to them about "sex". This is not the case. Parents teach their children to look both ways when crossing the street, to wear their seat belt in a vehicle, and to not talk to strangers. At the same time, parents need to teach their children that they have private parts of their bodies and that it is not okay for others to touch these parts.

Parent should begin to teach their children about body safety between the ages of 3-5.

Teach children proper names for all body parts, including names such as genitals, penis, vagina, and private parts.

Teach children to bathe, toilet, and dress themselves starting at an early age **Teach** children that privacy, modesty, personal behaviors, and boundaries are important.

Teach children that it is not okay for anyone to invade their privacy or boundaries. Explain that it is not okay for others to look at or touch their private parts. Explain that these parts are private and need to be kept private.

Give your child permission to say "NO" to people who want to touch his or her private parts. Let your child know that saying "NO" is okay and the right thing to do.

Do not force your child to give hugs or kisses to people they do not want to. Respect their right to tell "grandma or grandpa" that they do not want to give them a kiss or a hug.

Let your child know that he or she should tell you right away if anyone attempts to look at or touch their private parts. Children need to know that it is their job to tell you if anyone invades their bodies. Reassure them that you will listen to them, believe them and keep them protected.

Reassure your child that most touch are okay touches, but that they can say "NO" and need to tell you about any touches that are confusing or that scare them.

Remember to review this information and to practice it on a regular basis. Parents should talk to their children about personal safety during:

bath time: as you are teaching your child to wash himself or herself
bed time: when they are focused on what you are saying

new situation: before going to camp, starting school, going to day care

Play "what if" games with your children and let them practice saying "NO". By role playing with your children, you help them develop the skills they need in certain situations.

Normal Stages of Sex Play

O-4 Years Old

Touches or rubs own genitals (random)

Shows genitals

Interested or asks about bathroom functions

Interested and explores the differences between genitals

Uses dirty language

Plays house and doctor (imitative, modeling)

May insert objects into genitals

CHILDREN'S SEXUAL BEHAVIOR AND BODY SAFETY CONTINUED...

5-8 Years Old

Touches self (specific)
Tells "dirty jokes"
Plays doctor while exploring other children
Kissing, holding hands
Mimic dating
Writing letters about "sex" terminology

9-12 Years Old

Touches self and others' genitals
Mooning
Exhibitionistic
Kissing or dating
Talks about sex with same-sex peer Interested in own organs and functions
Looks at pictures in books, writes letters and poems about sexual activity Dry humping

Additional Tips for Parents

It is important for parents to protect their children. The following are some things that parents can do:

- Listen to your child when they have something to tell you. Take seriously what children have to say about the way people treat them. When your child says that they do not like someone, take the time to figure out why they do not like that person.
- Notice when your child is being bullied, picked on, or treated differently. Help your child to solve problems and deal with situations appropriately.
- Monitor adult and older children around your children. Know the people and friends with whom your child is spending time. Do not leave your child with adults, relatives, or friends that you do not trust, do not know, or have abused children in the past.

Source: *Children's Assessment Center - Grand Rapids, Michigan*

RESPONDING TO SEXUAL PLAY

The children are too quiet. Something is up. When you go to investigate, you find two four-year-olds minus part of their clothing playing "doctor." Or, you might overhear the conversation of two six-year-olds repeating "bathroom" words as they giggle hysterically. Or you might notice that two-year-old Tim constantly walks around with his hands in his shorts. While each of these situations is different, they are similar in that the children are all involved in various forms of sexual play.

Observing elements of sexuality in children's play often causes parents and providers to feel uncomfortable. On the one hand, we are told that it is normal for children to act this way at certain ages. The sexual play of young children usually results from their need to explore everything! It is also a way to indicate to the adults around them that they would like more information on the topic.

On the other hand, we worry about whether the behavior of the children is, indeed, normal and how we should respond to it. Could the children's behavior be an indication of sexual abuse?

Masturbation is of special concern to parents and providers. Is it normal for children to masturbate? Should it be allowed? If not, how do you get them to stop?

The answer to the first question is "yes." In a study of over 1400 parents, mothers reported over half of boys and one-third of girls between the ages of three and eight had masturbated (Gagnon, 1985). However, even though masturbation is very common in young children, does that make it "right"? Determining whether a behavior is right or wrong requires an ethical decision - one based on the moral or religious values of the family. Thus, although parents should not be alarmed if their children occasionally masturbate, some parents will feel it is acceptable under some circumstances, while others will believe it is wrong, and should be strongly discouraged.

When asked how they would handle the situation if it occurred with their child, the 1400 parents in the above study had a variety of responses. Three percent said they would allow it. Approximately 28% indicated they would ignore the behavior. Another 15% said they would tell the child to do it in private, while another 13% suggested they would try to distract the child. About 15% said they would talk to the child. The remainder of parents indicated they would tell the child to stop, that it was harmful, or they would punish the child.

When you encounter children engaged in masturbation in the child care setting, it is important never to punish the child or make the child feel badly. However, if the masturbation continues beyond a day or two, or if it spreads to other children, it is important to try to encourage the children to move on to other things.

Sometimes masturbation is a sign of stress in the child's life. By providing interesting activities and extra attention, the masturbation is likely to disappear. Other times, it has simply become a habit. In such cases it can be helpful to substitute a more appropriate object. For example, giving a child a soft stuffed animal at naptime or hanging a lucky rabbit's foot from a loop on the child's belt may distract the child from self-stimulation. Older children may benefit from a brief discussion indicating that people don't touch their "private parts" when others are around.

It can also be helpful to mention the behavior to parents. Explain that this behavior is perfectly normal in young children. Also tell them what you are doing to change the situation. You might

RESPONDING TO SEXUAL PLAY CONTINUED

want to suggest that the parent explore whether the behavior might be the child's way of trying to get more information about their own emerging sexuality.

All of the above responses are appropriate if you believe that the behavior is within normal bounds. However, if you are concerned that a child's self-stimulation or sexual play goes beyond normal, you

should explore the situation further with parents and professionals. But what constitutes cause for alarm? In an insightful article on this topic, Dr. Maria Sauzier (1984) suggests providers ask themselves five questions about the behavior.

First, is it age-appropriate? It is very common for two-year-olds to walk around the house with their hands in their shorts. However, most five-year-olds should know better.

Second, how prolonged is the behavior? If a child constantly engages in sexual play and never moves on to other topics, there may be more cause for concern.

Third, can the child handle the feelings they are experiencing? Play is characterized by laughter and light-heartedness. Little girls often giggle as they raise their skirts over their heads. If children who engage in sexual play look anxious or guilty, or become extremely aroused, it is probably time to give the matter more attention.

Fourth, is there any sign of one child forcing another to engage in sexual play through bribes, name-calling, or physical force? If so, this requires immediate attention.

Finally, does the child know more than you feel is normal at this age? It is very unusual for a preschool child to imitate intercourse. This may indicate the child has witnessed or been exposed to adult sexuality.

Responding to the sexual play of children is not always easy. However, by approaching the situation in a calm way, by involving parents in the solution, and by using appropriate guidelines, children are likely to develop healthy attitudes about their bodies and their emerging sexuality.

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THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BRIGHT AND GIFTED

Janice Robbins, PhD

The Bright Child, Gifted Child Continuum

This worksheet will help you see where your child might fit on the scale between "bright" to truly "gifted." Try using this chart and plotting your child's talents along each row of dots. Whatever your child's place on this continuum, celebrate her enthusiasm, curiosity, and talents!

The Bright Child.....	The Gifted Child
Knows the answers.....	Asks the questions
Is interested.....	Is highly curious
Is attentive.....	Is mentally and physically involved
Works hard.....	Plays around, yet tests well
Answers the questions.....	Discusses in detail, elaborates
Is in the top group.....	Is beyond the group
Listens with interest.....	Shows strong feelings and opinions
Learns with ease.....	Already knows
Needs 6-8 repetitions for mastery.....	Needs 1-2 repetitions
Understands ideas.....	Constructs abstractions
Enjoys peers.....	Prefers adults
Grasps the meaning.....	Draws inferences
Completes assignments.....	Initiates projects
Is receptive.....	Is intense
Copies accurately.....	Creates a new design

HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT CHARTER SCHOOLS

Choice is a big issue in public education, and charter schools are one of the choices that have been getting a lot of attention. There is also a certain amount of confusion about just what charter schools are. This document will help you understand what they are and how HISD charter schools, which must meet higher standards, are better than the others.

Charter Schools—What They Are and How They Differ

The principle is simple. The term —charter school means that the state has granted a charter or contract to a group or an organization to run a school that uses state funding to offer innovative learning opportunities with greater flexibility than traditional public schools.

A charter school pledges to demonstrate satisfactory scholastic achievement in exchange for freedom from some of the regulations that apply to traditional public schools. A charter school's achievement standards are generally equal to or higher than state and local standards for public schools. A particular charter school may also set other goals, such as reducing the number of dropouts or increasing the number of students who go on to college.

There are two kinds of charter schools in Texas. The majority are autonomous, open-enrollment public schools operating under charters granted by the Texas Education Agency, outside the jurisdiction of local school districts. Such open-enrollment charter schools report directly to the TEA and are not subject to the same regulations as traditional public schools. Open-enrollment charter schools receive the same per-student state funding as local public schools but no money for facilities or start-up costs.

Then there are HISD charter schools, which we hold to higher standards. Our charter schools operate with the approval of the HISD Board of Education and within the jurisdiction of HISD. Although they are not regulated the same way as the other HISD schools, they are accountable for showing measurable results in return for exemption from many of the restrictions that apply to the traditional public schools. Accountability is the key factor behind the superiority of HISD charter schools to other charter schools.

HISD Charter Schools—A Higher Standard of Accountability

HISD operates four types of high-accountability charter schools.

- **A campus charter school** is one at which an entire existing campus submitted a petition, signed by the majority of parents and teachers, to the School Board to request charter status.
- **A program charter school**, by contrast, is only a portion of an existing traditional school—a sort of —school within a school.
- **A cooperative program charter school** operates the same program at multiple locations (at four campuses in the case of the single HISD cooperative charter school).
- **A contract charter school** is one at which HISD supplies instruction under a contract with an outside entity that holds the charter for the school. The terms of the contract delineate every aspect of school policy and are subject to annual review. (**Young**
- **Scholars Academy for Excellence is a contract charter school.**)

Every HISD charter school reports to one of HISD's administrative districts. Each one likewise has the advantage of all the resources that HISD makes available to its other schools, including training, stipends, the latest technology, facility maintenance, and a wealth of information.

Although HISD charter schools are subject to fewer restrictions than the other HISD schools, they must nevertheless comply with the same requirements for health and safety, the same guidelines for special programs (Special Education, Bilingual Education, —no pass, no play, etc.), the same requirements of the Public Education Information Management System for reporting student data, and the same high standards for Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills testing.

Enrolling in HISD Charter Schools

Parents interested in enrolling their child in an HISD charter school can obtain detailed information and an application for admission from the principal of the school or from the HISD administrative office that supervises that school. At some HISD charter schools, there is a limit on enrollment because of limitations on space. When there are more applicants for a school than there are available spaces, the school holds a lottery to determine acceptance.

Young Scholars Academy Curriculum

Unlike most child development centers and elementary school programs, Young Scholars Academy posts a copy of weekly lesson plans on each teacher's parent board. Additionally, our pre-k teachers post a copy of the weekly benchmarks being covered. Our curriculum is not a book on the shelf! Our curricula is integrated, utilizing developmentally appropriate practices. The frameworks for our curricula are listed below.

Infants – Transition-To-Preschool (6 weeks – 2 years)

Young Scholars Academy uses *The Creative Curriculum for Infants & Toddlers*, by Diane Trister Dodge, as its framework for planning and implementing a developmentally appropriate program. The curriculum is based on accepted theories of child development and the latest brain research. *Creative Curriculum* promotes healthy social, emotional cognitive, and physical development needed for school success.

Pre-Kindergarten – 8th Grade

Young Scholars Academy for Excellence (YSAFE), agrees that —using critical content as a tool to understanding key concepts and principles of a discipline, and applying understanding in the context of a complex performance, raises standards. (H. Lynn Erickson, 1998) Thus, our goal is to teach beyond the facts.

Our integrated curriculum is designed to establish a rich content foundation of knowledge, understanding, and skills most relevant to the four core content areas for in Pre-K-8th grade.

YSAFE has also adopted *HISD's Gifted and Talented (G/T) Curriculum Framework* to overlay the core curriculum. The G/T framework is implemented in pre-kindergarten thru fifth grade. The framework is concept-based and allows us to focus on deeper, conceptual ideas and use facts to support the understandings. Our conceptual ideas are developmentally appropriate for each age level.

Listed are some of the conceptual ideas by which we frame the thinking skills of our students:

Pre-kindergarten thru 1st Grade

- Relationships
- Change

2nd Grade thru 5th Grade

- Systems
- Change
- Relationships
- Exploration
- Conflict
- Patterns

YOUNG SCHOLARS ACADEMY SCHOOL RULES

TEN UNIVERSAL RULES FOR CHILDREN	Consequence 1	Consequence 2	Consequence 3	Consequence 4
1. Listen for directions and follow them the —first time.	Loss of Privilege -2	Report to Parents -3	Conduct Cut -6	Parent Conference -10
2. Hitting, biting, teasing, horseplay (rough play), pushing, kicking, spitting, profanity, sexual gestures, weapons, drugs of any kind are not allowed	Report to Parents -3-	Conduct Cut -6-	Parent Conference -10	Suspension -15
3. Throwing anything indoors is not allowed.	Report to Parents -3-	Conduct Cut -6-	Parent Conference -10	Suspension -15
4. Respect self, others, and their belongings, school property	Report to Parents -3	Conduct Cut -6	Parent Conference -10	Suspension -15
5. Indoor voices when indoors.	Loss of Privilege -2	Report to Parents -3	Conduct Cut -6	Parent Conference -10
6. Use good manners: —please, —thank you, —excuse me....	Reminder -1	Loss of Privilege -2	Report to Parents -3	Conduct Cut -6
7. All toys/equipment at center/school are for sharing.	Loss of Privilege -2	Report to Parents -3	Conduct Cut -6	Parent Conference -10
8. Raise your hand and wait to be called on..	Reminder -1	Loss of Privilege -2	Report to Parent -3	Parent Conference -10
9. Remain in your seat and wait to be called on.	Reminder -1	Loss of Privilege -2	Report to Parent -3	Parent Conference -10
10. Walking around while eating or drinking is unhealthy, thus, not allowed.	Loss of Privilege -2	Report to Parents -3	Conduct Cut -6	Parent Conference -10

NOTE: Students that receive conduct cut during the week are prohibited from visiting the snack bar during the week. Three conduct cuts in 9 weeks disqualifies student from Honor Roll for that period. Suspension of any kind prohibits student from participating in upcoming field lesson.

LEVELS OF INFRACTIONS	Points Remaining	Color Equivalent	Grade Equivalent
Reminder = Level One Infraction (-1 point)	5	Red	E
Loss of Privilege = Level Two Infraction (-2 points)	4	Yellow	S
Report to Parents = Level Three Infraction (-3 points)	3	Orange	N
Conduct Cut = Level Four Infraction (-6 points)	2	Blue	P
Parent Conference = Level Five Infraction (-10 points)	0	Green	U
Suspension = Level Six Infraction (-15 points)			

NOTE: Each child starts out with 5 pts per day. Child must earn a total of 20 points per week to participate Fun in Friday Events or Spirit Day activities.

NOTE: Child must earn 180 points, per 9 weeks to qualify for Honor Roll