



*Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc.*

*Where Curious Minds Discover & Grow!*

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*Parent Handbook*

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**PLEASE READ THIS HANBOOK ENTIRELY BEFORE YOU ENROLL YOUR CHILD INTO OUR PROGRAM.**

Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. reserves the right to modify center policies and tuition rates when necessary.

Copies are available at the office, upon request.

## MISSION STATEMENT

Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. is a full day learning center that is committed towards providing top rated child care services coupled with a high quality activity based learning curriculum. Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. is dedicated to providing a safe and nurturing environment for all children. Parents will feel comforted knowing that their child is spending his/her day in a place where he/she is encouraged to grow and learn at his/her own pace.

Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. is dedicated to providing an exemplary early childhood program and committed to fostering the continued growth and development of each child on a cognitive, physical, emotional, and social level. Since children learn best through active involvement, Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. provides an enriched, stimulating, and safe environment that encourages exploration and experimentation. Children are guided to question, hypothesize, solve problems, and express themselves creatively. The teachers at Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. both respect and understand the uniqueness of each and every child and differentiate instruction to meet those individual needs. Children are continuously growing and developing in many ways every day.

The programs at Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. are designed to meet the needs of all children by providing many experiences for them to practice and build upon the skills they already have while incorporating new knowledge. Our primary goal is to provide access to the opportunities that promote school success at the same time as recognizing and supporting each child's individual differences.

We believe that all children can learn; it is our job to create a setting where children's natural *Approaches to Learning* (Curiosity, Initiative, Engagement, and Creativity) are encouraged and built upon. We believe that children learn best by doing. A facilitated, activity based setting provides children with opportunities to learn about their world through hands on experiences. Activities at Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. encourage exploration and development of children's innate curiosity.

We consider Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. a small community; a safe place where children, staff, and families work together as partners; a place where everyone feels a sense of belonging; a place where everyone is respected and celebrated for their diversity as well as their common bonds.

## OWNER BACKGROUND

Erin Medlar holds a Dual Master's Degree of Science in Literacy/ Special Education from the University at Albany. She is certified in New York State to teach in the following areas: Elementary Education (1-6), Early Elementary Education (B-2), Special Education (1-6) and Literacy (B-6). She has over ten years of public and private school teaching experience, working with children from diverse backgrounds with a variety of needs.

Married and a mother of two boys, ages five and thirteen, Erin understands the unique challenges that families face in today's society. She is continuously building relationships with children and their families, as she believes that it is those partnerships that empower children to reach their fullest potential.

Erin uses a hands-on multi-sensory approach to learning, understanding that the more senses children use when they learn, the more likely they will remember those skills and concepts. She understands that every child is unique with a variety of strengths that can be built upon, and she modifies the classroom environment to meet these individual needs. She uses continual assessment as a way to guide her instructional decisions, rather than relying on any one set curriculum.

For Erin, being a teacher is not just a career; it defines who she is. Every day, she is amazed by the children she works with; she is inspired by their innate curiosity.

Ultimately, Erin is grateful to have the opportunity to work with young children and for the chance to be a positive role model in their lives.

### **HISTORY OF IMAGINATION CHILDCARE ACADEMY, INC.**

Prior to relocating to the Rochester area, we lived in Scotia, NY. When my son, Nicholas, was four months old, he was placed into the Schenectady County Early Intervention Program, because he was not tracking objects and had difficulty learning new concepts.

At first, a special education teacher came to the house and worked with Nicholas on a weekly basis. After a few months, his teacher suggested that he should work with a physical therapist, as he was having sensory issues and had difficulty learning to crawl. Then, a few months passed and his teachers recommended that he have a speech pathologist work with him, as he was delayed with his speech patterns. A few more months passed by and the teachers and I decided that Nicholas needed more exposure to all of these skills on a daily basis in order for him to progress.

The teachers recommended a preschool that was fully integrated with all children. The program consisted of a two hour daily preschool program, which included a special education teacher, a speech therapist, and an occupational therapist. After the pre-school program, parents could opt to have wrap-around daycare included.

This school was incredible. Every day Nicholas and I walked into those doors, he was greeted by name, with love and excitement by every staff member he encountered, including the secretaries and the custodian. He was excited to go to school, making mornings a breeze. Every moment of the day was purposely planned for developmentally appropriate learning. Every time I walked in, regardless of the time of day, the children were learning. Even in the morning, with us being the first people to walk in the door, there were planned fine motor activities on the table (ex. different color bears, with tweezers and color coded bowls for them to sort the bears) waiting for the children to explore. Nicholas attended this program for about six months, and then he tested out of the Early Intervention Program, though he continued to attend the school until we relocated to Rochester.

Shortly after moving to Rochester, my husband and I began looking for a daycare that was close to home that would provide Nicholas with the same experiences as his old school. I was saddened to learn that these schools are few and far to come by on the West Side of Rochester.

We visited several daycares. We found most to more focused on play, rather than facilitated learning. Many times, we observed the staff sitting next to each other talking, rather than interacting with the children and promoting language building opportunities. Inside the facilities, there were few spaces where children could go to move around, in cases of inclement weather. Some facilities prided themselves in the fact that they offered a writing curriculum for three year olds, including oodles of worksheets.

A few months later, I had the amazing opportunity to visit the Strong Museum of Play. I was amazed. This place provided natural learning experiences for all age groups to discover and explore. Literacy opportunities were in every direction: books, paper, writing utensils, words all over the walls to explain what's happening in the environment (up, down, in, out, loud, quiet). There were multiple opportunities for children to use imaginative play: The Wegmans, the restaurant in the Bernstein Bears section, the helicopter, Sesame Street, and Giant's land, the assembly line, etc. There were multiple exhibits that encouraged children to explore with science, math, music and art. I left the museum that day thinking...wow...what an amazing place for kids to go and learn.

I began to think...what if I created my own learning center, which incorporated all the things I loved about Nicholas' old school, some of the concepts from Strong Museum, and some of my own ideas:

- A warm, nurturing environment where all children would feel respected and loved
- A full day of purposefully planned hands on experiences that promote literacy, science, math, social studies and technology
- A large indoor arena where children could move around safely and use imaginative play (bakery, restaurant, grocery store auto mechanic)
- A curriculum that incorporates technology, where children would be encouraged to interact with web based learning materials.
- A place where parents are considered to be experts on their own children and encouraged to work as partners with the teachers and staff
- A facility that is designed to nurture children's imaginations, helping them discover and grow
- A place where literacy is integrated throughout all parts of the daily routine

This is how Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. was born! The name encompasses all we stand for. We want children to use their imaginations to learn about the world around them. We create an environment that facilitates this learning by modeling and by providing the children with the tools they need to be successful.

## ***POLICIES & PROCEDURES (Listed Alphabetically)***

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### **ABSENCES**

- Each child will be allowed one week's normal attendance per enrollment year, which runs from Labor day through the last week in June, for non-payment of tuition when the child is not in attendance at the center (please see Vacation Allowance section for further information).
- We do not provide tuition refunds for absences due to illness or any other reason, given that the centers' operating expenses remain constant.
- Please call to notify us if your child will be absent for the day.

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### **ALLERGENS**

- Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. cannot guarantee an environment free of any allergens, including peanuts, peanut oil and peanut dust. It is impossible to control the peanut residue that can linger on children's hands, on classroom furniture, or on items that children bring from home. However, we do attempt to minimize the risk of allergen exposure by:
  - Prohibiting the sharing of food or utensils
  - Requiring store bought treats/food items with ingredients listed
  - Washing and sanitizing tables where meals are served
  - Encouraging frequent hand washing by all staff and students, including washing hands before and after meals are served.
- Parents of children with allergies should consult with their physician and with the Center Director to properly assess the child's needs, and his/her ability to participate in the Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. program. Students with allergies must have an 'Allergy Action Plan' on file.

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### **ANNUAL ENROLLMENT**

- Annual Enrollment is required for our programs. Enrollment contracts must be returned by March 31<sup>st</sup> in order to secure enrollment for the upcoming academic year.
- After submitting the Enrollment Contract, if you decide not to begin fall enrollment, your registration fee, first week's tuition and security deposit will not be refunded.

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### **ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE; PICK-UP AUTHORIZATIONS**

- Parents must personally sign their child in and out of the center each day.
- Your child must be escorted into the classroom every morning and signed in. Parents are responsible for settling the child in (removing jackets, putting on sneakers, and washing your child's hands).
- Your child will be released only to the persons specified on the signed parental agreement form. No person under the age of eighteen, including family members, may pick up your child from the center.
- We require that in addition to signing your child out, you personally let a staff member know that you have arrived to pick up your child before removing the child from the classroom.
- At pick up time, once a child is greeted by a parent, that parent is responsible for his/her child and preparing that child to leave the center.
- In shared custody or divorce situations, parents should provide a mutually agreeable list of persons authorized to pick-up the child. If a mutually agreeable list is not provided, Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. will allow parents, step-parents and grandparents to pick-up, unless otherwise noted by the court of jurisdiction.

- Parents are responsible for keeping the pick-up authorization cards up-to-date. The center must also be notified in writing if someone other than those authorized will be picking up your child from the center.
- When leaving, please sign out your child and take his/her belongings home (art projects, notes and toys from home).
- Arrival and pick-up times often become very busy. Please make an appointment with the Director for lengthy conversations concerning your child.
- Our parking lot can be a busy place. Please hold your child's hand at all times and be sure to drive slowly in our parking lot.
- **NO CHILD WILL BE RELEASED TO ANYONE NOT LISTED ON THE PICK-UP LIST UNLESS PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE BY THE PARENTS WITH THE DIRECTOR. IN ADDITION, INDIVIDUALS ON THE PICK-UP LIST OTHER THAN THE CHILD'S PARENT, MUST HAVE WRITTEN APPROVAL FROM THE PARENT FOR EACH PICKUP, OR WE MUST BE ABLE TO OBTAIN A CONFIRMATION OVER THE TELEPHONE FROM THE PARENT/ PICTURE IDENTIFICATION WILL BE REQUIRED WHEN SUCH ARRANGEMENTS ARE MADE. THIS RULE IS STRICTLY ENFORCED!**

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#### ASSESSMENT

- Daily observation of your child's participation in classroom activities provides our faculty with insight about your child's developmental growth, and guides the teacher's future instructional decisions. Specifically, our faculty documents your child's demonstration of age-appropriate behaviors and characteristics as a means of assessing his/her progress.
- Observations are recorded and kept in your child's individual assessment portfolio. This file is available for your review at any time.
- Progress reports & parent teacher conferences are conducted at least bi-annually (October, and May) for all students enrolled in our preschool program. Please make sure to set up a day and time to meet with your child's teacher to review your child's progress.

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#### BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

- Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. is committed to the well being of each and every child. In order to provide a safe, loving, and stimulating environment for all enrolled children, we expect a reasonable degree of cooperation from each child and parent.
- We seek to build children's self-esteem by helping them develop self control and responsibility for their own actions. Since our goal is to help each child achieve self regulation skills, we set a few simple, understandable guidelines that set the limits of behavior for the safety and protection of all children. Our center rules, that all staff and students are expected to follow are: Be Safe, Be Kind, and Be Responsible.
- The staff will be supportive, firm and consistent in their approach to maintain a positive learning environment. Some techniques the staff will use to encourage the children to solve their own problems are; providing choices, redirecting a child to an alternate activity, encouraging children to talk about their feelings by using active listening, and by modeling appropriate behavior when speaking and interacting with children and adults.
- Our goal is to create an environment that minimizes the need for disciplinary action. We facilitate this goal in two ways: Using a pro-active approach to behavior management (foreseeing and redirecting potential problems before they arise) and providing engaging developmentally appropriate instruction.
- If efforts to re-direct inappropriate behavior are unsuccessful, our teachers will have children take time in the thinking spot (a place away from group activities) where children are encouraged to take as long as they need to think about their behavior and to regain composure. When children feel they are calm and ready to return to the group, the teacher briefly discusses the inappropriate behavior and brainstorms with the child some suggestions

for a replacement behavior. Then, when the child feels he/she is ready to return to the group, he/she may.

- If this method seems to be ineffective for a child, a parent/teacher conference will be held to discuss the situation and to brainstorm potential solutions. If after that there is little or no improvement and the child's behavior becomes a detriment to him/herself or the rest of the group, termination of enrollment may become necessary.
- In all situations, our faculty will partner with you to provide your child with consistent positive support.

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## BIRTHDAYS

- Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. does celebrate children's birthdays. However, our company policy prohibits homemade treats. As we are a peanut free-nut free facility, all contents must be properly labeled and checked with director prior to entry into the facility. If you intend to supply a treat, please let us know ahead of time so that we can plan accordingly.

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## BITING POLICY

- Our faculty strives to minimize biting incidents by providing a safe, supervised environment and by empowering children to use more acceptable means of communication. However, despite our best efforts, it is possible that your child may be bitten at some time.
- When a biting incident occurs, our faculty's first priority is tending to the needs of the child who has been bitten. To help the child who bit better understand his/her actions, the teachers often include him/her in their efforts to comfort the child who was bitten (i.e. giving a hug, apologizing, and/or offering an ice pack or cold compress). We will also document the incident on our center's Biting Report, which is shared with both sets of parents.
- We do maintain confidentiality in all biting incidents, so the report will not include the name of the other child that was involved.
- If your child bites, our faculty will work with you to try to correct the problem. However, if the behavior does not improve in a reasonable amount of time, termination of enrollment may be necessary.

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## CELEBRATIONS & HOLIDAYS

- Our students are a diverse community of learners. We embrace opportunities to introduce the children to customs, traditions, holidays and other celebrations that are important to their peers.
- You are encouraged to share your family's experiences with your child's class, and are always invited to participate in our celebrations and events.

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## CENTER DAYS & HOURS OF OPERATION

- Our center is open Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm
- Children must be picked up by 6:00 pm. A late fee of \$10.00 is assessed for every 10 minutes, beginning promptly at 6:00 pm.
- The center is closed on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, as well as Veteran's Day and Martin Luther King Jr. Day, which will be used for in-service training days.

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## CLOTHING & ITEMS FROM HOME

- Please keep a complete set of labeled clothing at the center. If you bring home a soiled set of clothing, please replace the extra set the following day.
- Please provide a sheet and blanket for rest time, making sure to launder the blanket and sheet on a weekly basis. Make sure that these items are able to fit inside a 15 quart bin.
- During rest time, a favorite stuffed animal is allowed; it should be small enough to fit in your child's cubby space.
- Please provide outdoor clothing that is appropriate for each season.
- We use messy art supplies everyday to produce our masterpieces. Smocks are provided, but please dress your child appropriately for craft activities. Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. is not responsible for damaged clothing.
- Your child may bring one small toy from home, as long as the item is small enough to fit in your child's cubby.
- Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. is not responsible for lost items.

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## CONFERENCE OPPORTUNITES

- Individual parent-teacher conferences are held bi-annually (October and May).
- Additional individual conferences with your child's teacher and/or the Director are always available upon request

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## CONFIDENTIALITY

- Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. respects the right of each family to privacy and confidentiality. Information relating to your child and family will not be released unless written authorization is provided by a parent or legal guardian or as directed by a court order or other law.
- If your child is involved in an altercation with another child, Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. will not reveal the identity of the other child.
- In the event of suspected child abuse, Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. will share information regarding the child and family with the appropriate agencies, as required by various federal and state statutes and regulatory rules. All faculty members participate in 'Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse and Maltreatment' training and are therefore identified as Mandated Reporters.

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## ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

- **NO CHILD MAY BE ACCEPTED AT THE CENTER UNLESS THE CENTER HAS BEEN FURNISHED WITH THE FOLLOWING:**
  - The non-refundable registration fee (\$50), a security deposit (equal to one week's tuition cost), and first week's tuition.
  - A completed registration application and signed contract
  - A signed affidavit stating that the parent has read and understands the procedures and policies of Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc.
  - Evidence that the child has received a health examination, conducted by a physician, physician's assistant or nurse Physical exams must be within one year of enrollment.
  - A written statement signed by a physician, physician's assistant or nurse practitioner stating that the child is free from contagious or communicable disease and is able to participate in child day care.
  - A certificate of immunization prepared by a physician or other authorized person who administered the immunization which specifies the products

- administered, the date of administration and the physician-verified history of measles, mumps, and other diseases, or
- The official State immunization record card completed by the administering physician or health care facility, or
  - A certificate from a physician, physician's assistant or nurse practitioner stating that one or more of the required immunizations may be detrimental to the child's health, and specifying which immunization may be detrimental or
  - Religious exemption letter - a signed note from the child's parents verifying that immunizations are being denied due to religious beliefs.

\*All medical forms (documenting the physical examination and immunizations) must be on the OCFS Written Medical form OR an equivalent from the pediatrician's office as long as the non OCFS form has all the required information. Many pediatricians have invested in software that produces a form very similar to OCFS which they expect parents to use.

\*The immunization certificate or record card shows that the child has received age-appropriate prophylaxis. This must include immunization against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, poliomyelitis, measles, mumps, rubella, Hepatitis B, Pneumococcal disease, (if born on or after 1/1/2008) and Varicella (chickenpox).and Haemophilus Influenza Type B (HIB) except where there is a medical contraindication and a physician, physician's assistant or nurse practitioner has completed and signed the medical exemption section of the Department of Social Services physical examination of day care child form.

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#### FIELD TRIPS

- On-site field trips complement our educational program for all ages, and include visits from local cultural organizations as well as magicians, puppeteers and other entertainers.
- Transportation for optional off-site field trips is provided by private busing companies and additional fees may be charged in order to cover the cost of the bus.
- In advance of each trip, you will be informed of the details, including applicable fees. You will also be required to provide written permission for your child to participate.

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## HEALTH POLICIES: ILLNESS

- Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. is committed to providing quality childcare to the children who attend our programs and to provide such care on a consistent basis that parents can rely on. We believe that in order to provide such consistency, it is essential to adhere to a health policy which provides specific health criteria which must be met for a child to be cared for at Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc.. Finally, we believe that only a team effort between staff and parents can maximize a healthy environment for all children to the fullest extent possible.
- In the event that your child becomes ill while at the center, you will be notified immediately, and expected to pick up your child and bring him/her home as quickly as possible.
- We are a center for mildly ill children. A child who meets any of the following criteria is defined as “mildly ill” and can attend our program:
  - The child has symptoms of a minor childhood illness which does not represent a significant risk of serious infection to other children.
  - The child does not feel well enough to participate comfortably in the usual activities of the program but is able to participate with minor modifications, such as more rest time.
  - The care of the mildly ill child does not interfere with the care or supervision of the other children.
- A child who is not well does not benefit from our program and can adversely affect the health of the other children.
- In the event that any of the following occur, we ask that you keep your child at home:
  - Temperature of 101° or above
  - Any fever accompanied by:
    - A deep cough,
    - An earache or draining ear,
    - Spasms of cough, or
    - Sore throat
  - Diarrhea or vomiting (your child must be free from these symptoms for 24 hours before returning to the center)
  - A rash of any kind until diagnosed, treated or declared harmless by a physician.
  - Red, runny or matted eyes—which may be Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis)
  - Severe Colds with excessive discharge from either the nose or the eyes
- Re-admittance is always based on the child’s ability to participate in regular Center activities and do not require more care & supervision than can be given based on teacher-student ratios.
- A copy of our Health Plan is available in the office upon request.

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## HEALTH POLICIES: MEDICAL STATEMENT

- Your child must have an up-to-date medical form, which requires a yearly physical and updated current immunization records. Your pediatrician must use New York State OCFS approved ‘Daycare’ forms (available at our center)
- Children with asthma and/or allergies are required to have the appropriate ‘Action Plan’ on file (available at our center).
- It is the parent’s responsibility to notify the center in writing immediately of any changes concerning allergy and health issues.

### Childhood Illness Chart

Illness	Your Child May Return When Approved by a Physician or:
Chicken Pox.....	24 Hours after lesions have crusted
Conjunctivitis.....	24 hours after start of treatment
Croup.....	After illness subsides
Diarrhea-Gastro Enteritis.....	24 hours after last loose stool
Impetigo.....	24 hours after start of treatment
Fever.....	24 hours after temperature returns to normal
Influenza.....	24 hours after symptoms subside
Measles.....	At least 4 days after onset of rash
Lice.....	24 hours after start of treatment
Whooping Cough.....	At least 5 days after therapy is begun
Pinworm.....	After treatment is completed
Roseola.....	After illness has subsided
Strep Throat.....	24 hours after start of antibiotic treatment
Poison Ivy.....	After lesions have dried up
Pinworm or Ringworm.....	24 hours after start of treatment
Pneumonia or Epiglottis.....	Written note from physician
Mumps.....	5 days after swelling begins

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## HEALTH POLICIES: MEDICATION & TOPICAL OINTMENTS

- All medications must be checked in with the Director, who will ensure their immediate and proper storage in a designated lock box or refrigerator.
- Over the counter topical ointments such as first aid creams, sunscreen or insect repellent may be applied to your child with written parent permission.
- Benadryl Policy from children 18 months and older: In an emergency situation, Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. must first receive verbal consent from the child's parent before we administer Benadryl. Please keep your telephone numbers and physicians information up-to-date.
- All other medication, both prescribed and over-the-counter, will only be administered according to the following policies, with no exceptions.
  - The child's parent and physician must both complete and sign the State-Issued Consent Form or equivalent prior to administering medication. Attached notes or scripts cannot be substituted for information which is required to be written on the form. We will not accept verbal consent.
  - Separate State-Issued Medication Consent Form must be completed for each type of medication administered.
  - All State-Issued Medication Forms must be updated at least every six months (including "as needed" medications such as EpiPen, Tylenol, Motrin, cough syrup, and inhalers).
  - All medication, both prescribed and over-the-counter, must be supplied in the original packaging and must be accompanied by the original packaging insert or printed pharmacy instructions. These instructions must indicate the correct method for administering the medication, dosage, restrictions, potential side effects, and any other pertinent information.
  - Prescription medication must indicate your child's name on the pharmacy label. Over-the-counter medication must be labeled with your child's name on the original packaging.
- We cannot exceed the dosage indicated on the prescription label and/or State-Issued Medication Consent Form.
- The exact name on the medication must be written on the consent form, i.e. if the consent form specifies Tylenol, you must provide Tylenol, not the generic equivalent.
- Parents, grandparents, and relatives of a child of the parents or step-parents of a child may administer medication at the center without the need for the State-Issued Medication Consent Form. However, a note from the parent authorizing the relative to administer the medication is required.
- Our medication policy is consistent with the regulations provided by the Office of Children and Family Services. There are absolutely no exceptions to this policy.

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## HYGIENE

- Children need to develop good health habits. We encourage hand washing upon arriving at the center, before and after meals, after toileting, after coming into the classroom from the playground, and other times during the day as necessary. This hand washing policy helps prevent the spread of germs and reduces the possibility of triggering allergy reactions.
- After lunch we encourage children to brush their teeth, as a way to promote dental hygiene.

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## INITIAL REGISTRATION

- Upon registration, your account will be billed a non-refundable, registration fee (\$50), your child's first week's tuition, and a security deposit (Equal to one week's tuition). Payment of the total amount due is required to secure your child's enrollment in our program.
- The security deposit is equal to one week of tuition and will be credited towards your last week of attendance.
- If you decide not to begin enrollment, your registration fee, first week's tuition and security deposit will not be refunded.
- Our program follows a typical academic calendar, from Labor Day through the last week in June. Specific dates are published on the school calendar. Summer Camp is available for the months of July & August. See the Summer Camp Enrollment section for more information.
- Upon registration and throughout enrollment, parents must notify the center, in writing, of any special needs, including but not limited to allergies, medical conditions, dietary restrictions, and disabilities; such knowledge is necessary to provide proper care for your child.

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## INTERNET USE

- We have implemented the use of the Internet at Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. to take advantage of the vast amount of educational resources available to children. With the Internet comes a need for appropriate content monitoring and filtering through the use of hardware and software.
- Software blocks access to thousands of websites, web pages, email addresses and chat rooms which may display or contain offensive language, sexual explicitness, hate themes or physical violence.
- Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. has also taken additional safety precautions by blocking children's access to all chat rooms, newsgroups and email servers.
- Even with all the security measures that we have implemented, we cannot guarantee 100% safe access to the Internet. We believe that the chance of exposure to inappropriate material is minute; however, we must inform you of the possibility.
- You may request in writing that your child be excluded from Internet use at Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc.. If you do not express your desire to exclude your child from such use, you agree to discharge Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc., its employees and its affiliates, from any responsibility or claim resulting from the use of the Internet.

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## LICENSING

- Our center is licensed by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), and operated with OCFS regulations.
- Our license, the current OFCS regulations, and our approved health care plan are displayed on our parent information board, located in the preschool classroom.

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## MEALS & SNACKS

- Our company policy prohibits homemade treats. If you opt to bring in a store-bought treat, please let us know.
- We provide a nutritious breakfast and afternoon snack. All breakfast and snacks are prepared in our kitchen, which has been approved by the Health Department.
- All parents are responsible for providing a nutritious lunch for their child. We do have a microwave that can be used to heat food. We also have a refrigerator where all lunches will be stored.
- Our breakfast and snack menu has been approved by a licensed nutritionist and is posted on the parent's board in your child's classroom for your review.

- Our faculty will happily prepare a healthy alternative if health, cultural or religious considerations preclude your child from eating a particular menu item. Please contact the Director to arrange for these pre-planned menu substitutions.

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#### OUTDOOR PLAY

- Outdoor play is an integral part of our educational program, contributing to your child's health and development. Children remain inside when the weather is inclement (including extreme hot- above 90° or extreme cold- below 20°), but otherwise participate in daily outdoor activities.
- Please dress your child appropriately for daily outdoor play, including sneakers or other sturdy, rubber soled shoes.

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#### PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

- It is important to the staff of Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. that you feel connected to us and understand that we would like you to be a part of our decision making process. We consider parents to be the experts on their own children. We work as partners with parents to provide developmentally appropriate educational experiences. Please, feel free to make suggestions that you feel would benefit the Center as a whole. We pledge to you that all suggestions will be given careful consideration.
- Our teachers and director are always available to answer your questions, to review your child's progress or to discuss any concerns that you may have. We encourage you to speak with your child's primary teacher regularly, and to work together to identify the best possible time and method for daily communication.
- We encourage participation in your child's daily experiences here at Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc.. Parents have free access to their child at all times and are encouraged to visit the center at any time. You may participate in our classroom activities, play with your child on the playground, or have lunch together. Unannounced visitations are always welcome.

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#### PAYMENTS

- ***Tuition is due in advance:*** Tuition may be paid weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly as long as it is in advance. Payment is due by the Friday for the up-and-coming week. If your payment is late, a late fee of \$10.00/ day will be automatically charged to your account.
- ***Checks:*** Please indicate your child's first and last name on your check. Checks returned unpaid from your bank will result in a \$45 Returned Item Fee billed directly to your account. Appropriate late payment charges will also apply.
- ***Account Receipts and Statements:***  
*Please notify the director if you need printed invoices*

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#### PROGRAMS

- Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. is committed towards providing high quality child care and education for young children. The daily program at Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. is structured so that your child will experience the security of routines he/she can easily master and that will contribute to a peaceful, yet active learning environment.
- Our center follows the guidelines of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). We fully support NAEYC's position that a major determinant of a quality early childhood program is the degree to which a program is developmentally appropriate. For a program to be developmentally appropriate, content and teaching strategies must be age and individually appropriate.
- Leading research in the field today suggests that play is the primary means by which children grow in the preschool years and even beyond into the primary years. In addition to

its value in developing children mentally, play also serves important functions in children's physical, emotional, and social development. Therefore, a structured play environment is an essential ingredient in our educational curriculum.

- Children need years of play with real objects and events before they are able to understand the meanings of symbols such as letters and numbers. Learning initially takes place as young children touch, manipulate, and experiment with things, and interact with people. Cause and effect is a large part of children's early learning experiences. Therefore, learning materials at Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. are real, concrete and relevant to the lives of children.
- Children at Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. will have access to a variety of learning materials that support our view towards providing facilitated hands-on learning experiences. Such materials include: sand and water tables equipped with accessories, blocks, puzzles, manipulatives, dramatic play props, a variety of science investigation equipment and items to explore. Fiction and non-fiction texts are integrated throughout the day to promote literacy into children's real experiences. To build on children's creative expression, they will have continual access to popular children's books, recordings, paper, crayons, water based paints, markers and the world of nature.
- Interaction with adults and peers is another essential ingredient to the development of children. They learn not only from direct experience, but also from validating their experiences with others. Teachers provide a variety of activities for the children, increasing difficulty, complexity and challenges as the children become more involved with the activity and develop understanding and skills. Our staff is trained to facilitate the children's learning process as they explore and inquire.

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#### REST TIME

- Children enrolled at Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. need time during the day to rest and relax. Rest time for our classrooms is from 1:00 pm -3:00 pm.
- Teachers provide individual cots for the children and encourage them to lay down with a blanket and comfort item from home. Stories, soft music, and dim lights help the children with the transition to this rest period. Children who do not fall asleep are provided with quiet opportunities to learn and play. Including but not limited to books, puzzles, and art activities.

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#### SAFETY

- The staff's first area of concern is for the health, safety and well being of the children.
- All staff members receive CPR/AED training bi-annually.
- Toys, play areas, eating areas, and restrooms are disinfected on a regular basis. We are dedicated to providing your child with the same clean environment that we would want for our own children.
- Indoor and outdoor safety is continually stressed with the children. Instruction is set up to integrate safety across the curriculum and throughout the year. In addition, we practice monthly fire drills that involve all the children and staff. Each classroom has immediate exits available to the outside of the building, in the event that it becomes necessary to evacuate. In the event that we need to evacuate for an extended amount of time, we either relocate to the basement of Holy Ghost church or across the street to Walt Disney Elementary school.

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## SCHEDULE CHANGES

- You may add additional days to your child's current schedule, provided that space is available and your account is paid up-to-date. Please call the Director as soon as you know that you will need child care for an additional day. If you add a day, your account will be charged the appropriate tuition fee. Once your account has been changed, refunds will not be issued for any reasons.
- You may make permanent schedule changes with at least two weeks written notification and upon Director approval. The schedule changes may not be granted in instances when the new schedule conflicts with enrollment, waiting lists and typical enrollment patterns.

If your child misses his/her scheduled day, switching days cannot be permitted, as it is difficult to schedule teachers, plan menus, and run an efficient center.

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## SCHOOL-AGE ENROLLMENT

- ***Tuition & Vacation Policy***
  - If your child is enrolled in our Before & After School Program, tuition is only billed for the days that your child's school is open. If you need care on school holidays and recess, please see your Director to check on availability and to add these days.
  - School Age students do not receive vacation day credits, since we do not bill tuition on school holidays or recess if your child does not attend.
- ***Elementary School Holidays, Recess and Early School Dismissal***
  - Your child must be registered in our program prior to attendance, with up-to-date enrollment and medical forms.
  - Please call if you need child care when your child's elementary school is closed for a holiday or recess.
  - After such arrangements are made, we will bill your account the appropriate tuition amount. Refunds will not be issued if your child does not attend.
- ***Weather-Related and Emergency Elementary School Closings***
  - Your child must be registered in our program prior to attendance, with up-to-date enrollment and medical forms.
  - If your child's school closes, please call the center ahead of time to make sure that the center is open and that space is available for your child. Once we reach our licensed capacity, we can no longer accept additional children.
- If your child is enrolled in our Before & After School Program and does not attend due to a school closing, your account will be credited the daily after school rate.

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## SECURITY

- Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. is equipped with a security entry system that prevents unauthorized or undetected entry.
- Each parent will use a four-digit code to gain access to the building.
- When entering the building we ask that you do not hold the door open for anyone that you do not recognize. This will help us to ensure a safe environment for all of the children.

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## SPECIAL NEEDS, CHILDREN WITH

- All children are considered for enrollment at Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc.. We believe in a least restrictive environmental setting and take pride in our staff's ability to

ensure a positive and educational experience for the majority of children. We realize that in some situations, children are simply not ready for the structured environment of a childcare center. Should the Director determine that a child is not able to adjust to the Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. setting, Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. reserves the right to give parents two weeks' notice to make alternate arrangements for the care of their child.

- Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. will provide reasonable accommodations for children with special needs, given that such care does not require specialized equipment or caregiver training.
- Should a child require additional equipment or one-to-one caregiver assistance, as deemed necessary by the Center Director, such additional costs shall be paid for by the parent or guardian.
- If you suspect your child may have an unidentified special need, please ask the Director for more information about the county's Early Intervention program. This program is free of charge, paid by the local school district, and is designed to help parents or young children identify needs and secure appropriate treatment.

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#### STAFF REQUIREMENTS & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- The center is staffed during operational hours with a director/lead teacher and a teacher assistant.
- The director, teachers and teacher assistants are selected based on experience, educational qualifications, their ability to nurture all types of children, and a demonstration of intuitiveness to the physical, emotional and mental needs of children.
- All lead teachers are required to have NYS Certification in Early Childhood Education
- All teacher assistants are required to have either an associate's degree in Early Childhood Education or to have earned a minimum of 12 credit hours towards Early Childhood Education.
- All prospective employees and volunteers are required to undergo a thorough interview process with the Director as well as a fingerprint clearance and a background investigation.
- The background investigation includes: a check from the State Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment, Criminal Background Check, Educational Background Check, Three References, and an approved physical conducted by a physician.
- All staff is required to be certified in CPR/AED bi-annually
- All staff is required to attain 30 professional development hours every two years in order to be in compliance with the Office of Children and Family Services. This includes training in the following areas.
  - Appropriate supervision of children
  - Differentiating instruction to meet the individual needs of all children
  - Age appropriate child development learning activities
  - Positive approaches to behavior management
  - Health, safety, nutrition and first aid
  - Collaborating with others effectively
  - Child abuse and maltreatment prevention

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#### SUMMER CAMP REGISTRATION

- Our summer program runs for ten weeks, from the last week in June through the Friday before Labor Day.
- You will receive a Summer Camp Enrollment Contract which allows you to circle the days or weeks for which you would like your child to participate. Summer Camp Enrollment Contracts must be submitted by June 1<sup>st</sup> in order to guarantee enrollment at our center.

- Once you submit the Summer Camp Enrollment Contract, you are responsible for payment of the total contract, regardless of absence, withdrawal, or other decisions not to attend as the center’s ongoing operating costs remain constant.
- Your security deposit is an amount equal to the weekly tuition rate for your last week of attendance (i.e. if your child is enrolled for 3 days a week, then you would pay a security deposit that is equal to three days).
- Summer Camp tuition may be paid weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly as long as it is in advance. Payment is due by the Friday for the up-and-coming week.
- If you choose not to enroll in the summer program, please indicate this decision on the Summer Camp Enrollment Contract and return it to the director prior to June 1<sup>st</sup>. You may secure your fall enrollment by completing the proper form and providing the security deposit and first week’s tuition, both of which are non-refundable.

#### TERMINATION

- Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. reserves the right to give parents two weeks’ notice to make alternate arrangements for the care of a child enrolled in the center. Notification may be immediate if it is determined by the Director that a child’s or parent’s presence in the center poses a threat to others.

#### TUITION RATES (2014-2015)

	5 days	4 days	3 days	2 days	1 day
Toddler (Ages 2 ½-3)	226	195	150	105	60
Toddler Half Day Rate	150	120	90	60	30
Preschool (Ages 3-5)	221	190	145	100	55
Preschool Half Day Rate	125	100	75	50	25
School Age (Am 7-9)	40	32	24	16	8
School-Age (Pm 4-6)	40	32	24	16	8
School-Age (Am & Pm)	80	64	48	32	16
School Age (Full-Day)	175	140	105	70	35

#### VACATION ALLOWANCE

- Each child will be allowed one week’s normal attendance per enrollment year, which runs from Labor day through the last week in June, for non-payment of tuition when the child is not in attendance at the center
- A “week” is considered the number of days that your child is contracted to attend in a typical week (i.e. children normally attending the center 2 days a week receive 2 days allowance, children normally attending 5 days per week, receive 5 days allowance).
- This allowance cannot be applied to an account balance.
- If you withdraw from our program, your available vacation day credits will expire on your child’s last day of enrollment.
- After your vacation allowance has been used, your account will not be credited for any additional absences until the following enrollment period.
- Unused balances may not be rolled over to the next enrollment year.
- ***If you are planning a vacation, and would like to take advantage of the Vacation Allowance, please notify the director in writing at least two weeks in advance, in order to receive your tuition credit, which will be credited to your account the week after your confirmed absence.***

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## WEATHER AND EMERGENCY CLOSINGS PROCEDURES

- In the event of inclement weather or other emergency situation, every effort will be made to keep the center open. If the center must close, we will contact the following news agencies:  
**WHAM 1180AM and NEWS10 NBC**
- We are not responsible for mistakes in the school closing announcements
- While it is impossible to anticipate every circumstance of a potential emergency, we do have the following general guidelines in place:
  - ***At all times:***
    - In the event of a utility outage (power, gas, and/or water) prior to 7:00 am, the opening of the center will be delayed.
    - If still without utility service at 11:30 am, the center will remain closed for the day.
  - ***During the winter months:***
    - In the event of a utility outage during normal business hours, the center will announce its' decision to close after 30 minutes.
    - Parents will be notified by phone and required to pick up their children.
  - ***During the summer months:***
    - In the event of a power outage during normal business hours, the center will remain open. Parents will be notified after 60 minutes.
    - In the event of a water outage during normal business hours, the center will announce its' decision to close after 60 minutes. Parents will be notified by phone and required to pick up their children.
- **If our center closes due to the weather, utility outage, or emergency situation, regular tuition charges will apply.**

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## WITHDRAWING FROM IMAGINATION CHILDCARE ACADEMY, INC.

- In the event that you do decide to dis-enroll your child, you must complete and submit an 'Enrollment Drop Out' form at least two weeks before withdrawing your child from the center. This form is available from the Director. Families who do not provide such notice forfeit the full deposit.
- If you withdraw your child from Imagination Childcare Academy, Inc. and decide to return at a later time, you will be placed on our waiting list. You will also be required to provide new enrollment information, along with a new registration fee and deposits.