



# **TREE HOUSE ACADEMY**

**Children's Learning Center**

## **Parent Handbook**

2334 Pecan Park Dr. | Richmond, TX 77406

Phone: 832-595-8500

Fax: 832-595-8510

[richmond@treehouseacademy.org](mailto:richmond@treehouseacademy.org)

## **Tree House Academy of Richmond**

### **Operating Services & Hours:**

Tree House Academy operates year round  
Monday-Friday 6:00am-6:30pm  
We serve children ages 6 weeks-12 years

### **Philosophy and Goals:**

Every child is uniquely blessed with the ability to learn and should be provided with developmentally appropriate opportunities conducive to learning guided by knowledgeable and loving hands. Children need to experience childhood. The individuality of each child should not be lost in an effort to teach. Learning should be a natural, rewarding and fun experience for children based upon their interests and developmental patterns. At Tree House Academy, we strive to provide the best in educational opportunities for the children in our care, while maintaining that delicate balance between learning and individuality. We also seek to instill in children basic core values such as respect for one another and pride in our country. Our goal is to prepare children for today and for the rest of their lives in a loving and educationally-sound environment.

### **ADA Statement:**

- Tree House Academy is in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This federal law, passed in 1990, requires that every business offering services to the public not discriminate against a person based on a disability.
- Acceptance of enrollment is not based on a child's or parent's disability unless needs cannot be met on "reasonable accommodations." The company makes every attempt to reasonably accommodate children and parents in a typical childcare setting.

**Enrollment Paperwork:** Due to being licensed by the State and our participation in several State and Federal Programs that help many of our families, we appreciate your help in keeping all of your child's paperwork up-to-date. Parents can update contact information at any time by simply filing out the

update form located in the Tree House Academy lobby or by emailing any updated information to [richmond@treehouseacademy.org](mailto:richmond@treehouseacademy.org). You may also print out and update any paperwork by visiting our page on our company website at [www.treehouseacademy.org](http://www.treehouseacademy.org) and clicking on Documents.

### **Equal Opportunity Provider:**

Tree House Academy is an equal opportunity provider. We accept applicants for admission and enrollment without regard to race, religion, national origin, color, creed, physical or mental disabilities or any other protected status.

### **Curriculum:**

Tree House Academy uses the Frog Street Press curriculum. The Pre-K curriculum is a comprehensive, research-based program that integrates instruction across developmental domains and early learning disciplines. The Preschool curriculum meets the specific needs of three-year-olds in key areas of development by providing a social bridge between children and their peers, opportunities for early literacy development, and building strong math foundations. The Toddler program is designed around the latest scientific brain research and is comprised of 52 weeks of easy-to-use activities specifically created for children ages 18-36 months. The Infant curriculum equips caregivers to optimize growth and development using 264 domain-based activity cards that build strong foundations for little ones 0-18 months. These activities are used to create individualized learning plans that support all stages of infant growth and development. Each of the weekly activity choices are organized around five developmental domains and include adaptations to meet the needs of children.

The cornerstones of Frog Street Press' entire program are:

- An extensive integration of theme, disciplines, and domains
- Social and Emotional development includes Dr. Becky Bailey's Conscious Discipline ®
- Differentiated instruction
- Equity of English and Spanish materials and instruction
- Joyful approach to learning

## Miscellaneous Fees:

1. A registration fee of \$75 per child or \$100 per family is due at the time of enrollment. Then the annual charge (same price) for enrollment will be applied every February 1st.
2. Curriculum fees are assessed August 1<sup>st</sup> of each year to cover cost of supplies, cooking materials, projects, etc. Curriculum fees are \$55 for Infants-2-year old's & \$75 for 3-5-year old's. If your child starts after February 1<sup>st</sup> your Curriculum fee will be prorated.
3. There will be a late pick up fee of \$1.00 a minute starting at our center closing time. After 15 minutes if you are still not here to pick up your children there will be \$2.00 fee per minute, per child. The fee is due at the time of pick up in cash. For families enrolled in our half-day program, the late pick up fee of \$1.50 a minute will be charged beginning at 2:40pm. We do understand that emergencies happen however; our late pick up policy will be upheld no matter the situation.
4. School Age children additional days will be \$15.00/day.
5. Fees are subject to change, but parents will be notified of any change immediately.

**Tuition Payments:** Tuition payments must be made by one of the following options:

1. Credit/Debit Card payments (Visa, MasterCard only). A \$35 NSF fee will be added to declined payments processed through our automatic withdraw system.
2. Checks MUST include a valid driver's license and phone number (There is a \$35 NSF fee on all returned checks. Money order or Cashier's check will be accepted as a replacement form of payment. One returned check will result in your account being placed on a money order, cashier's check or credit card payment only basis.)
3. Cashier's Check
4. Money Order
5. **We DO NOT accept cash for a tuition payment.**

## General Payment Policies & Tuition Schedule:

1. Tuition rates are established on a yearly basis and based on a child's age. Rate increases will apply with a minimum written two week notice to parents.
2. All tuition is due on Tuesday by the end of business day for the current week and is considered late Wednesday. A \$35 late payment fee will be added automatically to all past due accounts. Any unpaid balance will result in a late payment fee.
3. For insufficient or neglected payments, student participation may be suspended starting Wednesdays until the account is settled.
4. In any situation when a parent suspends tuition payments for one week or more, enrollment may be terminated. Re-enrollment will be based on availability of space; a new registration fee must be paid as well as any outstanding balance.
5. Accounts will be charged their weekly rate regardless of attendance.
6. Once your child has been enrolled at Tree House Academy for twelve (12) consecutive months, you will be entitled to one week vacation annually at no charge. Vacation must be taken in full week increments. No partial week credits will be given. After your child has been enrolled at Tree House Academy for six (6) consecutive months, you will be entitled to a one week Absent Credit that is charged at a reduced rate of 50% off your regular weekly tuition rate. You can utilize the Absent Credit (50% discount) when your child(ren) have been in attendance two days or less during that applicable week. Additional Absent Credits will be given twelve (12) months after the date of use. This vacation benefit applies to full-time children only. In order to receive Vacation credit a Vacation Request Form must be filled out and turned in before the vacation is taken. No Vacation credit will be given after the fact.
7. Vacation Credit will not be given to families with third party payers as the state mandates how much tuition we must collect monthly.
8. Parents can save 5% off their tuition by paying their child's tuition on a monthly basis and using the ACH (automatic bank account

withdrawal) method of payment. Monthly payments are due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month and will be considered late on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the month. If the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month falls on a weekend or holiday, tuition will be billed on the last business day of the week. In order to receive your 5% discount, you must pay on or before the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month and use the ACH withdrawal system. If tuition is not paid by the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month or is returned for any reason your discount will be forfeited. The monthly discount cannot be combined with any other discount.

9. No discount or pro-rated options will be given for holidays, illnesses, bad weather days, absences, etc. for part time or full time students; In the event of hazardous weather conditions or water/power outages beyond our control, we reserve the right to close the center for the safety of the children and staff. Full tuition is due unless the center is closed the entire week.
10. Part time students may add additional days based on availability. Please refer to the Weekly Tuition chart for the "Drop In" rate.
11. No weekly or monthly statements will be sent out; only statements for late or delinquent accounts.
12. For school age children an additional fee of \$15 per day will be charged for each day children are at the center for more than their schedule hours (i.e. snow days, school holidays, teacher in service days, etc.) However, this amount will never exceed the "summer" weekly rate.
13. We do offer a 10% sibling discount for the second and any additional child when all children are enrolled full-time in the center. The discount will apply to the lowest tuition rate.
14. The Highest single discount available to you will apply to your account and discounts cannot be combined.
15. The registration fee and one week's tuition will be required to hold any spots for new enrollment or an extended leave of absence that vacation credit will not cover. Upon your start date the paid tuition will go towards your first week of tuition. If you choose not to enroll or re-enroll your child on the agreed upon enrollment date your registration fee and tuition will not be refunded.

**Refunds:** Tuition Refunds will be given only if:

1. Proper withdrawal procedures have been followed and the family still has a credit. This procedure includes giving a two – week notice of ending enrollment.
2. The family has been asked to withdraw from the center and still has a credit.
3. A processing error on behalf of the center.
4. Under no circumstances are registration or supply fees refundable.

**Withdrawals:**

1. A two week written notice is required from all families wishing to discontinue care or go from a full-time to a part-time status. Once a notice is given, payment is due at that time.
2. Withdrawals are not accepted over the phone and re-enrollment will be based on availability. A new registration fee will be required for re-enrollment.
3. Please understand that once a notice is given, the center fills your child's spot with a child from the waiting list- it may not be possible to "take back" a withdrawal notice.
4. We regret that due to the high demand for quality pre-school services in the community, we are unable to "hold" spots. If your child has to leave the program for a significant length of time, you may choose to change your child's status from a full time to a part time status in order to ensure their spot in the class.
5. Once a written withdrawal notice is given all vacation credit is forfeited.
6. Items left at the center after termination will be kept for one week and after that will be donated to Good Will.

**\*Holidays:** Tree House Academy honors the following holidays:

- a. New Year's Day
- b. Good Friday
- c. Memorial Day
- d. Independence Day

- e. Labor Day
- f. Thanksgiving Day
- g. Day after Thanksgiving
- h. Christmas Eve
- i. Christmas Day

If the holiday falls on the weekend the center will be closed the next week day closest to the holiday (i.e. if the holiday is on a Saturday the center will be closed on a Friday, if the holiday is on a Sunday the center will be closed on a Monday). This excludes Christmas Eve.

### **Ultimate Financial Responsibility:**

1. Parents/Guardians are responsible for all tuition payments in advance of service.
2. Parent/Guardians Credit Card information will be kept on file only to be utilized if final payment of tuition and fees are not collected upon your withdrawal date.
3. Should a family leave the center with a balance, we are required to report the default. We will use every legal means possible to collect any unpaid balances.
4. Tree House Academy also reserves the right to charge the parent of any child who destroys property on our facility grounds and in or on our company vehicles.

### **Admission Procedure and Waiting List:**

1. Parents wishing to enroll should first tour the center with their child and place their name on the waiting list.
2. The registration fee will be required in order to place your child's name on the waiting list. In addition, their completed paperwork (including state forms, immunizations and the special accommodations checklist) is required before the child can attend.
3. Once you are on the waiting list you can make use of our free Fun Day program. During the Fun Day, parents are encouraged to stay with the child until comfortable and then leave the child to explore the classroom.



## Safety:

1. We are proud to be a smoke-free facility. There is no smoking allowed in our center or on our property including Electronic and Vapor cigarettes.
2. No weapons are allowed in our center or on our property.
3. Tree House Academy agrees to keep parents informed of any incidents, accidents, injuries or adverse reactions to medications that involve your child.
4. Tree House Academy agrees to obtain written authorization from parents before allowing your child to participate in routine transportation, field trips, special activities away from the facility and water related activities.
5. Tree House Academy reserves the right to transport a child or allow them to ride an emergency vehicle without a parent's written authorization if the parent does not answer a call from the center on the first try, in a life or death situation. The child will be taken to the nearest hospital. By signing this parent agreement, you agree that Tree House Academy will not be liable for injury or death caused in direct correlation to the transportation of a child in pursuit of emergency attention. Also, that Tree House Academy will assume no responsibility for any cost associated with the emergency 911 call.
6. A gang-free zone is a designed area around a specific location where prohibited gang related activity is subject to increased penalty under Texas law. The specific locations include day care centers and are within 1000 feet of Tree House Academy. Gang related criminal activity within 1000 feet of Tree House Academy is a violation of this law and is therefore subject to increased penalty under state law. For more information about what constitutes a gang-free zone, please consult sections 71.028 and 71.029 of the Texas Penal code.
7. Due to the new "Safe Sleep" policy recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics and governed by the Texas DFPS, infants younger than 12 months of age will be placed on their backs to sleep and nothing will be allowed to be in the crib with them. We

are unable to swaddle babies, use positional devices or blankets. If you wish, you may provide your child with a sleep sack or footed pajamas for them to use during nap time.

### **Child Abuse and Neglect:**

The State of Texas defines abuse as the mental, emotional, physical or sexual injury to a child, or the failure to prevent such injury to a child. Texas defines neglect as failure to provide a child with food, clothing, shelter and/or medical care; and/or leaving a child in a situation where the child is at risk of harm. The Abuse/Neglect hotline number is 1-800-252-5400. It is not only Tree House policy, but the law, to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect.

Our staff receives at least 1 training hour annually in recognizing and preventing child abuse and neglect. The center offers literature and books on signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect as well as prevention techniques that are available to both parents and staff. The center also has developed partnerships with local community organizations that can provide additional resources and referrals to parents and staff. All referrals and brochures are located in the front office in the Parent Resource area.

### **Childcare Licensing Reports:**

A copy of the Texas DFPS Minimum Standards is available at the school, along with the latest inspection report. Your center director will be happy to share a copy of the standards with you if you wish to review the rules. The standards are also available for review at [www.hhs.texas.gov](http://www.hhs.texas.gov), or you may contact your local licensing office in the telephone book under the State listing for the Health & Human Services Child Care Licensing Department. The State requires us to post (in a prominent place) the letter/form from the most recent inspection or investigation. If you have additional questions, please contact the Center Director.

### **Emergency Preparedness:**

1. Emergency preparedness information may be picked up in the Center Director's office.

2. In case of inclement weather or in an emergency, we will match the nearest Independent School Districts' opening and closing information. Upon multiple closing days it is up to the Center Directors discretion, based on safety for the staff, families and children, to re-open the school and/or delay the opening of the school. Please see the centers Facebook page for up-to-date information regarding the center's closings.
3. In case of an emergency that requires re-location, children will be moved to: Stephen F. Austin Elementary, 1630 Pitts Rd., Richmond, TX 77406, Phone: 832-223-1000.
4. A fire drill will be performed at least once a month and severe weather and lock down drills will be performed at least once every three months.

### **Arrival & Departure Procedures:**

1. All persons authorized and who regularly pick up a child or children will be given their own personal KES (keyless entry system) code to access the front door.
2. We require you to accompany your child in and out of their classroom.
3. Children must arrive and depart from the center in an approved child safety restraint in accordance with state law. If you fail to do so we are required by the state to report you to CPS and the local authorities.
4. Any adult dropping off an infant must remove the child from the infant carrier upon arrival.
5. Any adult picking up a child who we feel may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be asked to stay in our building with their child until an alternate adult can pick them up. If you refuse to stay the proper authorities will be contacted including but not limited to, local law enforcement and Child Protective Services.
6. An authorized person must sign the child in upon arrival and out upon departure in the front office.
7. As you arrive, you may relay any messages to a staff member present and receive any messages the center staff has for you.

We feel it is especially important for children to know that the people in the center and at home are working together to ensure that all of their needs are met.

8. In case of an emergency, if you need someone other than an authorized person to pick up your child, the center requires to be notified in advance. We will not release a child without the adult showing a current Government issued photo ID. A copy of the ID and the verbal pick-up authorization documentation will then be filed in the child's folder.
9. The center MUST be notified of absences of any school age children. If your child will be absent and not require transportation to or from school, please notify the center by 2:00pm or two hours prior to normal pick up time (in the case of half days, etc.). Also, there will be a \$15 charge for people who do not call.
10. Each child needs to be in attendance by 10AM. If your child will be in attendance past 10am due to a doctor's appointment or other appointments, you must call and notify your center by 9AM. If your child will not be in attendance for the day you must notify the office no later than 10AM that day.
11. Children cannot be dropped off at naptime. Double check with your child's classroom teacher or your Center Director to verify the specific times to avoid.

### **Transportation:**

1. We provide transportation to and from local elementary schools in the surrounding school districts. Please see Tree House Academy front office for a list of schools we currently pick up from. Schools are subject to change based on enrollment.
2. We do not provide transportation to or from home.
3. Transportation will only be provided for children ages 4 and older, unless there is an emergency situation.
4. Children measuring below 4'9" or younger than the age of 8 will be required to ride in a booster seat at all times. Parents may be required to provide booster seats.

5. To transport your child, we must have a current Authorization for Transportation on file and on all Tree House vans.
6. Any child exhibiting dangerous or disruptive behavior while being transported in a Tree House Academy vehicle will be suspended from being transported for one week and it is up to the Directors discretion whether re-enrollment is possible.

### **School Age Drop off & Pick up Procedures:**

1. If there is no one to receive a child upon deliverance at the destination, the bus driver will walk the child into the school. If there is still no one to receive the child, the child will be transported back to Tree House Academy and parents will be contacted.
2. Tree House Academy bus driver will take attendance before departing from elementary schools and not depart until all children are accounted for. Upon return to the center, parents will be contacted to confirm any information relayed to us by the elementary school staff.
3. Parents must call before 2PM for no pick up or a fee of \$15.00 will be assessed.

### **School Age Summer Camp:**

Tree House Academy offers an all-day school-age summer camp for children who are at least 5 years of age and have completed public school Kindergarten. School-age children must sign up and register for the summer camp. Children already enrolled in Tree House Academy will be offered an early open enrollment time to register but once that time has passed it will be on a first come first serve basis.

1. The Summer Camp will go on two field trips a week. All field trip fees must be paid before the field trip is taken or your child will not be permitted to go on the field trip.
2. Notification of the field trip location and time will be posted at least one business day before the field trip.
3. On field trips, parents may not drop off or pick up their child from the field trip. Tree House Academy must have signed permission for your child to attend all field trips. All Tree House Academy staff

that attends and monitors field trips is given Transportation and Field Trip training annually and adheres to field trip ratios determined by the Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers. Field Trip location, departure and arrival times will be posted on the front door the day before and of the field trip.

4. School age children attending field trips must wear the summer field trip shirt for the current year or purchase another in order to attend any field trip.
5. Parents cannot request a child be held back at the school during a field trip due to disciplinary reasons from home.
6. All school age children must sign the code of conduct for the field trips. Tree House Academy has zero tolerance for disruptive behavior on field trips and the Director may deny attendance on certain field trips for any child(ren) who is disruptive on a field trip.

### **Naptime:**

Tree House Academy offers a nap/rest time period each day. Please provide a blanket and small comfort item (i.e. small enough to fit in backpack and personal storage space at school) for children over 12 months up to school agers. These items will need to be taken home each week to be washed.

### **Screen Time:**

Children over the age of two are limited to two hours per day on "Screen Time" which includes television, tablet, computer and Wii activities. Any child under the age of two years is restricted from any screen time.

### **Animals:**

Tree House Academy does not allow animals of any kind on premises during and after operating hours. Consequently, no animals are to be brought through the center doors.

### **Outdoor Play & Physical Activity:**

Tree House Academy offers physical activity through indoor and outdoor play each day. We do not permit the children to play outside on bad weather days, red ozone days or after 12PM on orange ozone days. It is required by our

regulatory agency that the children participate in outdoor activities each day, so please ensure that they are dressed appropriately for this each season.

### **Sunscreen & Insect Repellant:**

Topical sunscreen and/or bug repellent will be applied to children only when the appropriate product has been supplied by the child's parent in a named, unopened container and is accompanied by the appropriate center release form.

### **Water Play Policies:**

Tree House Academy offers water play activities for children ages 18 months and up. This includes sprinkler play, splash pads and water parks. To ensure the safety of children involved in water activities we adhere to the ratios given in Minimum Standards.

- A lifeguard will be present at all times and is NOT counted in ratio at water parks.
- The use of diving boards is prohibited at water parks.
- All persons included in the ratios for water activities must be able to swim and must be prepared to do so in an emergency

### **Health & Illness Policy:**

1. Immunizations must be kept on file and up-to-date at the center for each child excluding school-age children.
2. Parents will be contacted to pick up their child if the child has:
  - a. An under arm or oral temperature of 100°F or higher, or an ear temperature of 101°F or higher.
  - b. 3 or more loose BMs, vomit, a rash or if we suspect a case of conjunctivitis (pink eye)
  - c. Symptoms or signs of possible severe illness (Such as: lethargy, uncontrolled breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, vomiting, rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, wheezing, behavior change, or other unusual signs)
3. We require that children be picked up within ninety (90) minutes after we first contact you. After ninety (90) minutes pass, late pick

up fees may be charged. Parents will be contacted by their preferred means of communication, as specified on enrollment paperwork, as soon as contact is deemed necessary. Children will be kept comfortable in the office and apart from other children until parents arrive.

4. Children with contagious illnesses are not allowed to attend the center. Should your child have a contagious illness please do not bring them to the center. We also request that if your child has a confirmed contagious illness that you inform Tree House Academy management so that we may take necessary precautions regarding the illness.
5. Any child either removed from the center or kept at home due to illness must remain away from the center and be symptom free and non-antibiotic medication free for twenty-four (24) hours before returning. Any child beginning an antibiotic regime must not attend the center for the first twenty-four (24) hours of the regime.
6. Each staff member at our center is required to be certified in First Aid and CPR. In case of an emergency, a qualified staff member may administer first aid or CPR to your child.
7. If a severe emergency does occur, we will contact 911 and the parents to discuss the extent of any injuries or illnesses.
8. If a child is exposed to poison either on site or off, we will contact Poison Control and the parents to discuss the extent of the poison exposure.
9. Any time that a child is sent home with an illness or injury, an Incident/Illness Report or Illness Report will be filled out by the witnessing staff member. We require that parents sign the form and a copy will be kept for our records. A copy will be provided to parents upon request.
10. Please make sure your child has up-to-date Emergency Medical Information on file.
11. Any child with a diagnosed allergy must have an "Allergy Action Plan" provided by the doctor on file at the center.
12. Parents will be notified immediately in the event children are exposed to a communicable disease while in our care. We ask that you as parents notify us immediately as well if your children are



exposed or diagnosed with a communicable disease outside of our care, so that we may make others aware.

13. If your child is sent home with lice or you have notified us that your child has lice, you must set up a time upon their return for a head check. Your child must be brought directly to the office, without stopping in any classrooms or facilities along the way. Your child's head must be lice and nit (eggs) free. If your child has any live lice or nits, they will not be permitted to return to Tree House.
14. Tree House Academy does not require our Staff to be immunized or bring any documentation of it.

### **Health Checks:**

Parents are required to notify the child's teacher or School Director of any special instructions or needs for the child's day. The parent must present the special instructions in the form of a letter and verbally discuss them with either the classroom teacher or School Director. These special instructions can include but are not limited to: early pick up, alternative pick up person, health issues over the previous night which need to be observed and/or any general issues of concern which the child care providers should be aware of to best meet the needs of your child throughout the day.

### **Medication:**

1. We distribute prescription medicine only at 10AM and 3PM. The only exception to this is breathing treatments or inhalers used "as needed." Since we are not a medical facility, we prefer to seriously limit the amount of medication we dispense, therefore we will only administer medications that are required to be given three or more times a day per the prescription label.
2. Medication will only be dispensed with written parental permission. Medicine must be signed in daily with the front desk and all paperwork must be filled out properly including the medication name, the dosage, time and date the medicine is to be given. This information must be consistent with the labeling on the medication; this includes breathing treatments and inhalers.

3. Medication will be administered orally, with the only exceptions being eye drops, ear drops or Diaper Cream to children 2 yrs. and younger
4. Medication will be kept in the front office in a locked drawer and out of the reach of children.
5. Prescription medications must have the original label attached; we will only administer medication to the child whose name is printed on the label. No child will be allowed to administer their own medication
6. Expired medication will not be administered under any circumstances.
7. The center will document distribution of the medicine, including the name of the medication, the amount given, the time given, and the name of the person administering it.
8. Designated employees will give out medicine.
9. The center will notify you in case of any adverse reaction to any medication.

### **Hearing & Vision Screening:**

Chapter 36 of the Health and Safety code requires that all children enrolled for the first time in any public, private, parochial or denominational school or in a Department of Family and Protective Services licensed child care center and child care home in Texas, or who meet certain grade criteria must be screened or have a professional examination for possible hearing and vision problems. The requirements for Vision and Hearing Screening apply each year for children enrolled in any licensed child care center, child care home or school program at the ages.

Children who are four years old by September 1<sup>st</sup> of the current year must be screened within 120 days of admission. Tree House Academy offers in-house screening each year or parents may choose to have their child screened by a physician provided that Tree House Academy receives a record.

### **Nutrition:**

1. Children are served nutritious meals throughout the day in accordance with state mandated guidelines.

2. In case of any special dietary needs, please check the posted weekly lunch menu.
3. We are proud to be a nut free facility. In case of any other allergies or preferences, please provide the center with a doctor's note or notarized note from a religious leader stating so.
4. Employees are educated on food allergies and take precautions to ensure children are protected.
5. On your child's birthday or holidays, you may bring sealed pre-packaged, store bought, and nut free treats for your child's class for afternoon snack, as long as the ingredients label is still attached. We ask that you let your child's teacher or the administrative team at your center know in advance.
6. Chewing gum is not allowed in our center.
7. FOR PARENTS OF INFANTS AND TODDLERS;
  - a. Parents are responsible for completing a current up-to-date feeding schedule for their child that is left in the class.
  - b. Parents are responsible for supplying enough pre-made formula or breastmilk bottles and commercial baby food per the child's feeding schedule, plus two (2) additional pre-made bottles, for emergency situations, daily.
  - c. If parents/children are eligible and choose to participate in CACFP utilizing the formula provided, you must provide bottles with pre-filled water in them that match the amount on the child feeding schedule.
  - d. All baby bottles must be plastic with a lid and be labeled with the child's first name and last name.
  - e. All bottles and opened jar food must be taken home daily.
  - f. All breast milk and formula bottles must be pre-made; bottles will be stored in the classroom's refrigerator.
  - g. Bottles will only be allowed to have formula or breast milk in them. We do not allow any medication, cereal or baby food to be added to an infant's bottle.
  - h. Mothers wishing to breastfeed their children on-site are welcome to do so. A rocking chair located in the Infant Room is available.

8. We provide parents and children with information and education outlining strategies on nutrition.
9. We provide parents with information about foods that may cause allergic reactions.
10. Sample menu and healthful lunches are provided for parents whose children bring food from home. Parents are encouraged to provide meals with adequate nutritional value.

### **Student Meals:**

1. Tree House Academy adheres to a strict “no outside foods” policy. The center does it’s best to reasonably accommodate all allergies. If for any reason the center is unable to do so, the family may provide a physician’s statement stating the child’s allergies and will therefore be allowed to provide the child’s meals from home. There is no tuition discount for children who bring their own lunch.
2. On days that we serve meals, milk, fresh fruit and vegetables are available for children who bring lunches from home.
3. On the days that meals are served, any prepared food that is brought into the program that is shared among children must be commercially prepared or prepared in a kitchen that is inspected by local health officials.
4. We ensure the safety of food brought from home, including refrigeration or other means to maintain appropriate temperatures.
5. Liquid and foods hotter than 110 degrees Fahrenheit are kept out of reach.
6. Tuition includes breakfast, lunch and snacks. Formula and baby food for infants and toddlers not yet eating table food is not included in the tuition and must be provided by the parents. (Unless you are participating in the CACFP.)
7. The meal schedule is as follows;
  - a. Breakfast is served daily from 8:00am-8:30am
  - b. Lunch is served daily between 11:00am-12:00pm
  - c. Healthy snacks are served daily between 2:30pm-3:30pm (and are available for school-age children as they arrive).

8. More snacks may be provided to children at alternate times if necessary.
9. Water will be served with every snack and meal. Milk will also be provided at breakfast and lunch. No sweetened beverages, including chocolate milk, will be served unless it is a class party or special occasion.

### **Guidance & Discipline:**

1. We focus our attention on teaching children what behaviors are acceptable and present positive options to unacceptable behaviors. Redirection is always attempted to correct negative behavior.
2. We encourage positive behavior by structuring the child's day to give ample opportunity for quiet and stimulating activities.
3. Tree House Academy does not allow corporal punishment of any form under any circumstances. This includes, but is not limited to: spanking, pinching, flicking, popping, squeezing, slapping and biting.
4. The denial of food will never be used as a form of discipline.
5. Director, Parent, and Caregiver will work together when addressing challenging behaviors. The Caregiver/Director will have ongoing conversations and/or meetings with Parents to address any concerns. The Caregiver/ Director will also discuss strategies in addressing challenging behaviors. The Caregiver/ Director and Parents will collaborate on a plan of action with outlined goals based on the individual needs of the child and the nature of the challenging behaviors. Parents will be kept informed daily via conversations and or written documentation of the progress of the plan and goals met.
6. Parents will be contacted to assist in resolving consistent disruptive behaviors. We reserve the right to discontinue child care services without notice when we feel that a child's behavior is detrimental to a class as a whole.
7. Biting is a common issue in early child development. The best way to deal with biting is consistency between providers and parents. Biting could occur for multiple reasons. Proper communication will

help determine why a child is biting. Tree House Academy will work with parents when biting becomes a problem. We will make every effort to solve the issue as soon as possible. If a child bites more than 3 times in one day he/she will need to be picked up and an action plan will be put in place to correct the behavior. We will follow the illness pick up procedures giving you ninety (90) minutes to pick up. If a child bites more than 9 times in a thirty (30) day period the action plan will then be forfeited and the child will need to be dis-enrolled. After a two week dismissal the child may be re-enrolled to retry if space is still available.

8. Tree House Academy employs the practice of “time out” and will redirect and teach each child the best way to solve the problem or relieve the stressful situation. We will work closely with the parent/guardian to lend assistance and support in any persistent behavioral circumstances. No children under 2 years of age will be subject to this practice. Also, our policy limits the time to 1 minute per each year of the child’s age: i.e. 3 min/3 years old.
9. Any child(ren) conducting verbal or physical abuse against staff will have enrollment terminated.

### **Confidentiality Policy:**

Tree House Academy believes that each child entrusted to its care has a right to have their individual personal information kept confidential and private. The following procedure will be followed to ensure children’s confidentiality:

1. Original records made by the center will be kept on file in the Director’s or Assistant Director’s office.
2. No records shall be released to any party without a court order authorizing the release of records.
3. Being a paying member does not authorize the release of records.
4. Private information will be shared only with necessary parties on a necessary basis.

## **Classroom Placement & Promotions**

1. Children are in their own classrooms with children their own age for the majority of the day. Only early in the morning, naptime or late in the afternoon may children of different ages be mixed.
2. Whenever possible, we try to place children in a classroom that, as it promotes, will evolve into the same class that the child will be in when qualifying for Pre-K or Kindergarten. Some exceptions may be made due to a child's developmental status. For this reason, your child may turn three but remain with the younger age group until the next center-wide re-grouping.
3. The center keeps appropriate staff/child ratios at all times.

## **Clothing & Belongings:**

1. Each child must have a bag with a change of weather appropriate clothing (including socks), clearly labeled with their name, in their cubby. Please check the bag regularly and replenish items as needed. If your child does not have these items, we may need to call you to bring them. This bag must be able to hang and accommodate all of their belongings.
2. FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN WHO ARE POTTY TRAINING: We require at least 3 full sets of clothing including socks and underwear (and shoes if possible). Potty chairs are not permitted.
3. FOR PARENTS OF INFANTS AND TODDLERS WHO ARE NOT POTTY TRAINED OR TRAINING: We require at least two extra sets of clothing and at least 6 diapers per full day of attendance along with an ample amount of wipes to get through the day. Also, no cloth diapers are allowed –only disposable diapers. Measures will be taken to communicate with you when you are low or out of diapers or extra clothes. If Tree House Academy must provide diapers for you until you are able to provide replenishments, a service fee of \$10 and a \$1 a diaper used will be applied to your account.
4. We request you send children dressed in clothes that are easily manageable.

5. For safety's sake we require that all children wear tennis shoes. No flip-flops, heels, mules or shoes with wheels are allowed.
6. Parents of Preschool aged children and up are required to supply a water bottle for their child.
7. Children who no longer sleep in a crib or pack-n-play must provide a sheet/blanket for naptime. All naptime items must be able to fit in the child's bag or cubby.
8. All clothing, bags and naptime items must be taken home on Friday's (or the child's last day of attendance) to be washed and returned on the next day of attendance.
9. In order not to confuse school toys with a child's personal property, we ask that children not bring toys or electronic devices from home. Tree House Academy staff cannot be responsible for lost or broken personal toys. Two exceptions to this are a stuffed animal for use during naptime by full-day preschool children and for Show & Tell purposes. You will be notified by your child's teacher if and when the class will have Show & Tell.
10. Please make sure EVERYTHING your child brings from home is clearly labeled with your child's name. This includes, but is not limited to: clothing, blankets, cups, backpacks, etc.
11. No cell phones are permitted for school age children. If your child has a phone, it will need to be kept in their bag the entire time they are in the care of Tree House Academy.

### **Role of the Parent in our Center:**

1. Our programs are developed with parents and guardians as an integral component involving you in many aspects of our program. You are invited to participate in our parent teacher conferences designed to present you with our observations of your child's progress.
2. Parents are encouraged to discuss their child's activities with their teachers. Open communication between parents and teachers makes for easier transitions between home and center.
3. You are invited to participate in our parent teacher conferences held twice annually. Parent conferences and/or meetings may be



face to face or by phone. You may also simply request or pick up a copy of your child's assessment.

4. Feel free to contact your center director or assistant director at any time, in person, by phone or email, to resolve any issues. This may help eliminate confusion and misunderstandings.
5. Tree House Academy has an "open-door policy." This means parents are invited to visit the center at any time throughout the day, without making reservations or giving an advanced notice. This of course is as long as the parent interaction does not disrupt the stability of the classroom or the child's behavior.
6. It is the responsibility of the parent to make sure their child's file and contact information is up-to-date.
7. Please understand that it is against Tree House Academy policy for our staff to have any outside employment. This includes, but is not limited to: babysitting, house sitting, nanny services, mother's helper, or carpooling. If you should offer a position to a member of our staff and they resign to take your offer, you are required to pay Tree House Academy a Finder's Fee of \$1,500.00.
8. Parent participation is a vital part of the success of our programming. We have several opportunities per year for the parents to become involved. Please contact the Center Director for any interest that you have in regards to parent participation.
9. Parent Code of Conduct-- Please understand young children are present in our building. Some adult language is not appropriate for young children. Tree House Academy prohibits swearing or cursing on our property. Threatening staff, children, or other parents will not be tolerated per Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Tree House Academy has the right to terminate care in the event of disruptive behavior from a parent or guardian. Tree House Academy must follow particular rules on discipline and guidance as outlined in the Texas Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers. All adults, including parents, must follow these rules while on our property. We will also not tolerate verbal or physical abuse from any parent towards a child, especially if the child does not belong to you. This includes verbally reprimanding, humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting or yelling at a child as stated in our Discipline

Policy in the enrollment packet. Talking down to a child about themselves or their family will not be tolerated as well. Failure to follow these policies will result in your care being terminated from Tree House Academy.

10. Parent Dress Code – We ask that no vulgar or offensive tattoos be visible while in our building. We also ask that parents refrain from wearing inappropriate clothing. Examples of this include but are not limited to revealing clothing and any visibly inappropriate wording or lewd content.
11. Proper parent communication is imperative when working with young children. It is difficult to communicate when cell phones are in use. *Effective January 1, 2013 we will be prohibiting the personal use of cell phones in our building.* We, at Tree House Academy, know that you trust us with your most valuable treasure, your child, and we strive to serve our families the absolute best in preschool education and childcare. We believe that excellent early childhood development is the foundation for a bright future for our children at Tree House Academy.
12. Cyber identity and social networking is very exciting these days. However, please understand that employees of Tree House Academy are prohibited from participating in social networking with parents and children. This includes, but is not limited to Facebook and Twitter. Please do not put the employee's job at risk by interacting with them via any of these social media venues. To stay up to date on Tree House Academy news, please refer to our school sponsored Facebook and Twitter accounts or website.
13. Tree House Academy will NOT get involved with custody disputes. Tree House Academy will follow a court order exactly as written. If your family has a court order on file, including restraining orders, please provide us with the most recent certified copy. *PLEASE NOTE: PER STATE LAW, IN THE ABSENCE OF A COURT ORDER, BOTH PARENTS HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS. When applicable, State Law will supersede Tree House Academy Policy.* With this being said, it is imperative that all enrollment forms are completed with both parents information. A copy of a child's birth certificate may be requested at the director's discretion. In the

event that a custody dispute takes place on our property, the police will be called and asked to handle the dispute. Our staff will not be placed in the middle of such disputes. If a custody issue creates a risk for our facility or staff, Tree House Academy has the right to terminate care. Also, we will not be able to provide any statements and/or documentation for either party unless ordered by the court. If you continue to involve the staff or management in a custody battle on or off Tree House Academy property, we have the right to terminate care immediately.

14. If an “authorized pick up” is asked to be removed from the account (other than mom or dad) that person will not be allowed to be resubmitted to the account and will be denied authority to pick up at any time.

To help us provide the best classroom environment:

1. Communicate any concerns regarding our program or your child immediately to staff.
2. Pick up and read the notices and information left for you in your child’s folder and/or posted outside your child’s classroom, at the reception desk, or on e-mail.
3. Pick up your child’s papers/projects daily. Their work is very important to them and provides another means of communication between parent and child and helps the parent share in the child’s day.
4. Please be aware of the scheduled meal times of breakfast and lunch, 8:00am and 11:00am, and make sure your child arrives in time to be included in those meals, if necessary. It is very difficult to try and feed a child later than the scheduled meal time, and causes a disruption in the classroom schedule, which affects all of the children in the classroom.
5. Periodically check on your child’s supply of extra clothing. Please take home soiled clothing promptly.
6. Please remember not to drop off your child during naptime. This disrupts the other children resting and makes it very challenging for the staff.

7. Again, we do not allow smoking on the premises, either indoors or outdoors including Electronica and Vapor cigarettes.

### **Parent Notifications:**

All parent information will be posted on the boards in our reception area. Any changes in the center, field trips, and/or other events will be posted. You may also access recent reports and a copy of Minimum Standards by making a request in the front office. Tree House Academy policies are reviewed annually and updated as necessary. If there are any changes to enrollment procedures, tuition policies, etc. parents will be notified through a letter sent home and a posting in the reception area. Also, our current tuition rates and monthly calendar and newsletter are available via our website.

### **Webcasting:**

Tree House Academy has a program whereby web cam's are in use and your child(ren) are under constant streaming video surveillance that is accessible from the web in accordance with the terms and conditions associated with the Peanut Butter & Jelly, LLC website. All photographs and/or recordings singularly or in conjunction with other photographs and/or recordings may be used for advertising, publicity, commercial or other business purposes. The video footage is the sole property of Tree House Academy by which you have no rights to any of the video footage or photographs for any reason at any time. Any unauthorized recording, duplication, screen shots or distribution of this copyrighted work, including login information, is illegal. Any mis-use of our webcasting policies will result in immediate termination of the PB&J services, and can be done without notification. The video footage will be used for internal training and management within the facility.

### **Termination and Suspension of Enrollment by Tree House Academy:**

Tree House Academy reserves the right to terminate or suspend enrollment as a result of, but not limited to, the following circumstances:

- Non-payment of tuition
- Abuse of children, staff or property
- Continued violations of Tree House Academy policies.
- Disruptive or dangerous behavior by child or parent

- Continued involvement in a custody battle
- Continued false accusations against an employee that are found to be malicious in intent.
- Our inability to meet your child's needs.

A decision to suspend or terminate enrollment will be based on whether it is in the best interest of the child, the other children in the program, and/or the overall operation of the center. Every effort will be made to correct the problematic situation before a final decision is made.

### **Referral Program:**

The Referral Program allows parents to spread the good news about our program and enjoy free quality educational services at the same time! When a newly referred child remains in the program for four weeks, you receive one child's free week of tuition. We want you to be rewarded and want other children to benefit from the same quality educational programs that your children enjoy. The referral program credit will not be given to families with third party payers as the state mandates how much tuition we must collect and the tuition is already at a discounted rate.

### **Volunteers:**

Volunteers are welcome in our center. All individuals including any parent wishing to help chaperone an event must go through our screening process. Anyone visiting or volunteering for more than one day per semester must go through a screening process. Tree House Academy's screening process includes, but is not limited to, 1) a signed statement indicating whether or not they have had a conviction of any law in any state, or any record of founded child or dependent abuse in any state; 2) a signed statement indicating whether or not they have a communicable disease or other health concern that could pose a threat to the health, safety or well-being of the children; 3) undergoing fingerprinting and background check 4) a signed statement regarding child abuse. Any "visitor" who spends extended periods of time in the center will be considered a volunteer and be required to go through the screening listed above. This policy excludes any state funded Pre-K programs and/or other state funded programs. These programs have specific guidelines to abide by concerning volunteers.

**Questions or Complaints:**

Parents should feel comfortable discussing any issues with their child's teacher. If there is anything you feel needs the administrative team's attention, please feel free to stop by the front office at any time; there is usually no need to make an appointment. However, during high traffic times, especially normal drop off and pick up times, you will need to make arrangements due to the staff's primary responsibilities.

You may also call the center at 832-595-8500 or email the center at [richmond@treehouseacademy.org](mailto:richmond@treehouseacademy.org)