

# Castle Academy Parent Handbook

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## Introduction to Castle Academy

### *Welcome*

Welcome to Castle Academy Preschool and Child Care Center. We are a *school with kindergarten and preschool classes*, that offers child care, for preschoolers/ kindergartners during the hours and days they are not in the classroom, before/after school care and off-track care for school aged children, as well as infant and toddler care. We hope that your whole family will enjoy the Academy and the friends you will make here. This handbook has been written to describe our programs, goals, policies and the myriad of practical details that go into making each school day as happy and successful as possible for you and your child/children. Please read it and keep it for reference, as it will answer many of your questions.

### *The Learning Philosophy of Castle Academy*

We believe in the value of early experiences for a child's development. We believe in providing the kind of environment and experiences that encourage children to become creative, independent, responsible, self-directed and that start them on the road to becoming fully functioning adults. We provide a safe, positive and accepting atmosphere where children can safely explore their environments and their individual abilities.

*We believe* that all children have the right to feel good about themselves and that it is the responsibility of the teachers to provide an orderly, inviting environment, which will nurture the child and promote learning.

*We believe* that all our educational and guidance decisions for children must be based on our knowledge of child development.

*We believe* that each person is a unique individual and has his/her own needs. Each person has a right to meet these needs in his/her own way and own timeline. However, one of the responsibilities of having rights is recognizing and respecting the rights of others.

*We believe* that everyone is entitled to feelings, "good and bad", as well as the trial-and-error process that goes with feelings. It is important for people to understand feelings rather than deny them.

*We believe* in appreciating and supporting the close ties between the child and family. A child is best understood in the context of his/her family, culture, community and society.

*We believe* that creativity, self-expression and curiosity are expressions of individuality and should be encouraged to develop in all people.

*We believe* in helping children and adults achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust, respect and positive regard.

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*We believe* that each child and family is due the respect for personal privacy demanded by professional ethics.

## ***Program***

The children are introduced to a balanced program of interaction with friends in both teacher-directed and child-directed experiences. The daily schedule includes free choice of time spent in the learning centers with language arts, math, science, computers, practical life, etc. and group times for creative movement, music, storytelling and dramatization.

Our professional staff encourages exploration and growth in a well-equipped environment that is stimulating, safe, consistent and nurturing. Castle Academy provides opportunities for each child to master tasks that are appropriate to his or her individual level of development.

Our program is based on what we believe are the best qualities of a number of different models of child care and education. From the Montessori model, we have taken the idea that children, during the first six years of life, possess a sensitive, absorbent mind that makes learning unconscious, natural and fun. A child's environment can promote and enhance this natural growth process, and therefore, needs to be stimulating and challenging. The Montessori model provides hands-on learning experiences through sensory exploration that require specific tasks and materials. We have chosen what we view as the best of these materials and have provided them for children to explore at their own pace, choosing what is fulfilling for them. Some of the materials that we have chosen fall under the Montessori subject of practical life activities, which develop basic personal and social skills used in daily living such as: dressing oneself, cleaning things, and being polite. Another subject area is represented by sensorial activities, which enhance the child's sense perceptions of the world. Two other subject areas are language activities, which start the child reading and writing, and mathematics activities, which introduce counting and arithmetic. Finally, culture activities expose the child to such fields as science, history, and geography. Another important concept that we have taken from the Montessori model is the idea of having children in mixed-age classrooms. This allows the younger children to have role models and allows the older children to assist others. It also facilitates cooperation and cross bonding.

From the German Kindergarten model, we have taken the ideas that learning by doing is fundamental to understanding, and we provide ample opportunities for children to explore their abilities at their own pace. An understanding and appreciation of the gifts of nature is also a key component to the German Kindergarten model. At Castle Academy, we slow the pace of everyday down and allow time for children to observe and investigate their natural surroundings. At the same time, children are forming habits when they learn to respect and care for the environment. The third, and perhaps most important idea that we have taken from this model is, that children's educational experiences should prepare them in developing the tools for a lifelong love of learning. In this age of information technologies, there is more information out there than anyone could ever learn. We view it as our job to teach children how to acquire that information, and to never stop wanting to know more.

Howard Gardner's Multiple-Intelligence Theory states that different individuals have their own learning style. He believes that there are multiple basic intelligences and that every person possesses all the different styles of learning to varying degrees but leans toward one particular "way of knowing." Some people are number smart (logical/mathematical); some are picture

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smart (visual/spatial); others are body smart (body/kinesthetic); many others are music smart (musical/rhythmic). While some people are word smart (verbal/linguistic); many are nature smart (naturalist); others are people smart (interpersonal); while still others are self smart (intrapersonal). The Academy provides a prepared environment, which promotes and encourages all learning styles, where children can take a multifaceted approach to thinking and learning. Teachers are the link between the child and the work he/she has chosen.

The English Infant/Primary School models focus on creative activities. At Castle Academy, these activities include art work, dramatic play, vocational and instrumental music, and original writing. From this model, we have also taken the idea of the absence of tracking and testing. "The arts are fundamental to education because they are fundamental to human knowledge and culture, expression, and communication."

-M. Goldberg

The last model that lends us ideas for our program is the Reggio Emilia model for Early Learning. From this model we have taken the idea that an educational system needs to instill in its young an abiding sense of their own potential. Art is a very important dimension to this model and children are allowed to create what they want at their own pace. The environment encourages children's explorations through actual experience, inquiry and dialogue. It is the teacher's responsibility to observe the children and facilitate an acquisition of knowledge about topics in which the children are interested.

We at Castle Academy believe that we have chosen the best ideas to facilitate learning in our classrooms. All decisions we make are based on the desire to do what we believe is best for children. It is our job to create a noncompetitive environment where children are never compared to others or criticized for their efforts. We believe that when children know what is expected of them, they are free to explore their environments and their abilities. We provide an organized environment that does not inhibit creativity but provides a sense of harmony. We believe that learning occurs experientially in early childhood and we provide abundant opportunities for children to try and try again. We believe that the fundamental areas of child development are play, learning, the arts, and nurturing. We, at Castle Academy, do our very best every day to facilitate this development. A child's day must be seen as too precious to waste or mishandle.

The seeds of educational success are sown early, in the prenatal period and the first months and years of life. During this time, children develop basic language and reasoning skills. They also acquire social skills, confidence, and a sense of self-worth, and they come to see themselves as important and competent members of their family and of other small communities in their lives. Children who arrive at school incapable of managing the kindergarten routine can quickly lose confidence in their ability to learn. Traditionally, society's responsibility for educating children began when they entered school. Growing knowledge of child development, however, compels us as individuals and as a society to place far greater emphasis on children's early development to ensure that every child is prepared for school.<sup>1</sup>

## ***Our Curriculum***

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<sup>1</sup> The National Commission on Children, May 1, 1991

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Since children learn through play, we plan our indoor and outdoor time to encourage this activity. Through play, children reenact experiences, try out different roles, express ideas, develop vocabulary, process information, widen their worldview and relate to others.

Children also learn by doing, so we provide first-hand experiences as a basis for expanding knowledge about our physical world. Children also understand things that are real or concrete rather than abstract. We emphasize the *process* of learning rather than the *products*.

We believe that adults need to facilitate learning by discussing with the children what they see, hear, smell, taste, touch and feel, helping them to increase understanding. To this end, there are times during each day when teachers direct group discussions and introduce concepts and learning experiences.

Knowing that children learn from what adults do, we model the behavior we want to encourage. We strive to show understanding and respect for each person and use words to express needs and feelings. We try to learn from mistakes instead of labeling them failures.

We believe that growth and development happen best in a supportive, safe, orderly environment where rules, limits, expectations and plans are known. We strive to be clear, consistent and firm in these areas.

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## **Policies and Procedures**

### ***Enrollment Policy***

Castle Academy accepts children ages 6 weeks to 13 years. A \$100.00 non-refundable registration fee for an individual child or a \$200.00 registration fee for families will hold your child's/children's place.

Prior to enrollment, we require all parents to meet with the director and walk through the Academy. At this time we go over our parent handbook and you receive an enrollment application.

At the time your child starts at the Academy we need to have the following filled out and on file:

- Enrollment application (including policies agreement, field trips or excursions authorization, video viewing at the school authorization and application and use of sunscreen authorization)
- Signed Tuition Payment Schedule
- Health Appraisal Form or Physical (within 30 days)
- Copy of your child's immunization history
- Written authorization for emergency medical care

### ***Children with Special Needs***

Castle Academy will not discriminate against any child with special needs (physical, behavioral, cognitive, etc.) and seeks to be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Close communication with the parents is essential to providing quality care. If the child has already been evaluated by his/her public school feeder system, we will work with them to implement the IEP that has been developed. Parents are required to submit to us their child's most recent IEP, and keep us updated on progress. If we feel a child should be evaluated so that he/she can get extra help early on, we will make recommendations to the parent.

If space is available, we will admit any special needs child on a trial basis for one month, after which we will require a conference with the parent(s). At this conference, we will assess whether we are able to adequately provide care for the child with our current staffing patterns. If we are not able to meet the child's needs within our current staffing patterns, we will give the parents the time and assistance to find more appropriate care.

### ***Hours of Operation***

We are open from 6:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. Monday through Friday.

Part day Preschool (PDO) is offered two, three four and five days per week. And runs from 9-3 Kindergarten is offered either four or five full days from 8:30 – 3:30. We also offer half-day kindergarten with transportation to and from the public schools.

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## ***Tuition Payment***

All tuition is due on the first of the month for that month. Accounts will be considered late on the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month and a 9% late fee will be added to the remaining balance on your account if unpaid by the 15<sup>th</sup>. Castle Academy reserves the right to dis-enroll any child if payment is not made by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month. If your child is dis-enrolled due to lack of payment, the account will be sent to our collection agency with up to 50% of the balance added to the past due balance.

Castle Academy accepts cash, checks and all major credit cards.

## ***Holidays***

Castle Academy's Infant, Toddler and Extended Care Rooms will be open 51 weeks of the year. The entire school is closed the week between Christmas and New Years. The following legal holidays will be observed and Castle Academy will be closed:

- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Thursday and Friday
- Christmas Day and the week between Christmas Day and New Year's Day
- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Presidents' Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day

The Kindergarten Program follows a similar schedule to the Douglas County Schools traditional calendar, with regards to its closure during the summer, fall, winter, and spring breaks

Castle Academy will give notification in advance of any other days the Academy will be closed.

## ***Delayed Start and Snow Days***

Any closures of the academy will be posted both on our website and on our phone message system before 5 am.

If there is a need to close early we will call parents. Parents are expected to pick up their children in a timely manner

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## ***Arrival***

Castle Academy opens each weekday at 6:00 A.M. All children must be signed in and escorted to their classroom by an adult. Parents need to allow enough time to assist their children in hanging up their coats and bags, bring them into the classroom, and say goodbye.

## ***Departure***

The Academy closes at 6:00 P.M. Children are to be picked up by that time. Children must be signed out at the time of pick-up by either parents or guardians or persons specified in the child's records. It is best to notify the Academy if the parent will be late so that the child does not feel abandoned. After 6:00 P.M. a late charge will be charged of \$1.00 per minute for the first five minutes you are late and \$25.00 for every 10 minute interval after that.

If a child is not picked up within 5 minutes of the closure of the Academy, staff members will begin to try and locate parents. If we are unable to locate you, we will try and reach your child's emergency contacts or authorized pick-ups. If the staff can not reach anyone, we will call the police department or the local division of human services.

If someone other than the persons on the "Authorized Pick-Up List" is to pick up your child, a written, signed and dated note should be given to the director at the child's arrival. We will also ask for at least one form of identification from individuals who are unknown to us.

The staff that closes the Academy at night is responsible for ensuring that all areas of the classrooms be checked for children. This includes bathrooms, cribs, loft areas, kitchen, and anywhere that a child can get in the school. They will also check the sign out computer system and verify that all children have been picked-up and signed out.

## ***Snacks***

We provide a mid-morning and an afternoon snack daily.

## ***Lunch***

We provide a hot lunch Monday through Thursday for the children who are here during lunch. This provides your child with a balanced meal, which includes a protein, grain, fruit and vegetable and milk.

### **FRIDAYS ARE SACK LUNCH DAYS**

On Fridays or any other day you pack your child's lunch, please be sure to pack a nutritious, well balanced meal with a cold pack in it. We have too many children to keep them all in the refrigerator. Also, remember to label your child's lunch box on the outside. This keeps us from having to open every lunch box to find the name.

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## ***Nap Time***

We require a quiet rest or nap time for all full-time children under the age of five. Some children may need sleep; others may only rest. We try to accommodate each child's sleep needs.

Children who cannot go to sleep but have shown us that they can rest quietly for twenty minutes are given some books to look at quietly while others are sleeping.

\*\*\*\*\*EACH CHILD NEEDS TO BRING A BLANKET FOR NAP TIME.\*\*\*\*\*

## ***Clothing***

Dress your child in washable, sturdy, play clothes for school. Messy, art and creative activities are planned every day and your child will want to participate. Unfortunately, an apron that covers every square inch of clothing has yet to be invented so be prepared for some extra washing! We try to mix detergent into all of our paints, and we hope this will help.

Tennis shoes are a good idea, because they can be easily cleaned and easily dried in case they get accidentally wet. Teachers agree that cowboy boots should not be worn to school, unless specified by the Academy. They are awkward for running and climbing and they can accidentally hurt another child during play. Sandals, clogs and flip-flops (any shoe that will slip off your child's foot) are also not safe footwear for the playground. If you send your child to school in this type of footwear, please send a pair of tennis for the playground. Also, please remember to bring proper clothing/footwear for the changes in seasons/weather.

All children need an extra set of marked clothing left at school. Please place this set of clothing in a plastic, zip-lock bag with the child's name on the outside for easy storage. We expect wet pants occasionally and will treat any "accidents" very matter-of-factly and help your child change into dry clothing.

Toddlers who are potty-training need several changes of clothing. Do not forget to pack extra socks as well as pants and underwear.

Lost clothing is a problem most of us cannot afford. Help yourself and us by clearly marking your child's name on jackets, sweaters and change of clothing and shoes.

## ***Health***

You are the best judge of your child's health and we trust you will not bring a sick child to the Academy. However, if in the opinion of the teaching staff your child is ill, we will call you to come and pick-up your child. The following criteria will be considered in determining if your child must go home.

- \*fever
- \*inflammation of the eyes
- \*vomiting
- \*diarrhea
- \*frequent coughing

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- \*excessive nasal discharge
- \*unknown rash
- \*communicable disease

If a child exhibits any of these symptoms at school, we will call you to pick-up the child. When called, you (or an alternate emergency person) are expected to pick your child up IMMEDIATELY. There are no exceptions to this rule. This is to protect the health of your child, his/her classmates, and the staff. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

Contagious diseases (measles, mumps, chicken pox, head lice, conjunctivitis, etc.) must be reported to the school by the parent as soon as the illness has been diagnosed, so that other parents may be notified of the exposure. When a potentially contagious illness occurs, notes will be sent home to parents of children who may have been exposed. We also need to be informed if your child is going to be absent for several days, for whatever reason.

After your child has been ill, it is important to adhere to the following guidelines when determining whether or not your child is ready to return to school.

- \*Mood, appetite, behavior and activity levels are again normal
- \*No fever for 24 hours or more
- \*Antibiotics (if prescribed) have been used for a full 24 hours (48 hours in the case of strep)
- \*Vomiting, diarrhea is cleared for 24 hours
- \*Frequent coughing, excessive nasal discharge has been resolved
- \*Pain (earache, cramps, headache, etc.) resolved

Minor injuries will be treated with soap, water, ice and Band-Aids. If your child sustains a minor injury while at Castle Academy, you will be given a report to sign that we retain in your child's file. This report will explain what happened and what action was taken. Should there be a serious accident, parents or other persons listed on emergency forms will be contacted. If no one can be reached, we will call the physician/hospital you have listed.

## **Medication**

In general, we feel that a child on medication needs to be at home. However, some medication must be given over a specific number of days, even though the child has improved. Parents may request under these circumstances that the child be given medication while at the Academy.

No medication, vitamins or special diets are administered unless instructions to administer such items are written, signed and dated by a licensed physician and are prescribed for that child. This applies to over-the-counter pain relievers as well as prescription medicines. All medication must be in its original container, with the child's name written on it. Prescription medication must also be in its original container, labeled with the child's name, name of drug, dosage, and directions for administration, date and physician's name.

All medication will be stored in a safe location away from children. Only persons who have been trained in the proper way to give medications will administer them to the children. Castle

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Academy administers medication in compliance with Section 12-38-132, C.R.S., of the “Nurse Practice Act”.

There are special forms that must be completed by the physician, parent and staff who administer the medication. No medicine, vitamins or special diet can be administered without this completed form. Medication authorizations forms can be downloaded from Castle Academy’s website [www.castleacademy.com](http://www.castleacademy.com) under the forms section

### ***Toilet Training***

If your child is in the Toddler room and is at the age where he/she is toilet training, we encourage you to share with teachers what you are doing at home to help the child. This communication will help teachers continue the methods at school that are being used at home. This consistency will also benefit your child.

If your child is in the ELC 2 class or Preschool, do not send him/her in diapers or pull-ups. If your child is still wearing diapers during daytimes, chances are he/she is not ready for a school experience yet. It will probably be just a matter of time before he/she will be ready for school, and it is best not to push. We will refund any unused portions of tuition in the event your child is not toilet-trained. If your child has a messy accident in his/her pants and does not want us to change them, we will call you to come to school.

If a child has an accident during school, or if your child is too old to be in the toddler room and is not yet toilet trained, he/she will be changed immediately. If your child is not toilet trained, he/she will be changed on a mat that is laid on the floor.

Castle Academy provides basic diapers and wipes for children in the infant and toddler rooms.

### ***Inclement/Excessively Hot Weather***

We try to take the children outside every day, regardless of weather. We believe that they need the opportunity to run around and get some fresh air if only for a few minutes. However, we will not go outside if the teachers believe it is too cold. If there is snow on the ground, and your child wants to play in it, they must have a coat, snow pants, snow boots, mittens and a hat. They must also bring 2 pairs of shoes to school on snowy and rainy days---one dry pair to put on when we come inside.

On the other end of the scale, we will not take the children outside if teachers believe it is too hot. There is always shade and water available on the playground, and the children will be encouraged to use them both. Castle Academy provides sunscreen for the children. If you wish for your child to wear a different brand of sunscreen, you must provide it. We encourage you to send a pair of child-sized sunglasses and a hat or ball cap, which fit your child for sunny days.

If the weather is too extreme for us to go outside, we will provide activities for large muscle exercise inside.

### ***Emergency Procedures***

We have regular fire and disaster drills at school. We urge each family to plan what you will do if disaster strikes during the day when you and your child are separated at work, school, etc. You will find helpful disaster planning information in your phone book.

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The children at the Academy are taught to listen to the teachers' directions. We will assemble and count everyone and give aid and comfort as needed. We will stay with your children until you or someone of your choice can get to the Academy.

We have stored flashlights, radios, first-aid-supplies, food and water. Teachers all have First Aid training, CPR training, and Universal Precautions training.

The Academy is equipped with a basement, which will be utilized in case of a tornado warning. We will conduct regular tornado and fire drills for the children's safety.

## ***Head Counts***

Teachers in each room will have a list of the children that are present that day in their classroom. During any transition (moving from classroom to playground, playground to classroom, from one room to another, etc.) they will check to see that the number of children in the room matches the number of children on the sign-in sheet. Should a child be missing, the Director or head teacher will be notified immediately so that the assigned staff can search the building and grounds. If the child is not found, the Director or head teacher will take the appropriate steps to notify the police/guardians and conduct a search of the surrounding areas. The Department of Human Services will also be notified.

## ***Field Trips/Outings***

Throughout the year, the Kindergarten children may go on field trips. If the occasion does arise where the teachers believe that a field trip would enhance the children's' learning, a notification will go home with each child and must be signed and returned before the trip.

When we leave for a field trip, we will post a sign saying where we are going and when we are due to return. Someone will always stay at the Academy in case a child arrives at the school late and the class has already left.

When school aged children are off-track or have an inservice day, we may take them on an outing away from the school. We will try and do activities outdoors when the weather is nice. Hikes, trips to a park, picnics or other outings that keep the children active. Any time your child leaves Castle Academy you will be informed in advance.

If for any reason you do not want your child to go on an outing from the school, or if they arrive after the group has left, there is always someone at the school who they can stay with.

## ***Transportation***

Any time teachers will be transporting the children staff-to-child ratios will be maintained. Children will not be allowed to stand or sit on the floor of a moving vehicle, and their arms, legs and heads must remain inside the vehicle at all times. The children will never be left unattended in the vehicle. All teachers will have a first aid kit and be current with the First Aid and CPR classes. If parents are driving children while on a field trip, they will be asked to show proof of insurance, a valid driver's license and will also carry a first aid kit in their vehicle.

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## ***Treasures and Possessions***

Children have a specially marked “cubby” for their jackets. Extra clothes will be kept in zip-lock bags in the closets in the rooms. Nap blankets will either be stored in your child’s cubby or in a basket in the room. Each child will have a file for paperwork done at school.

Sometimes, children need to bring special toys or newfound treasures to school to use as a “bridge” between home and school. On these occasions we will work with you and your child to make it a positive sharing experience. However, experience has taught us that toys from home create many problems at school. We have a wide variety of materials as well as many opportunities to work on sharing at school. We ask you to encourage your child to leave personal belongings at home. The exception to this rule is show and tell. The Preschool/Kindergarten classes will have “show and tell” once a week. At this time children may bring something from home that they would like to share with the class. We would encourage you to help your child find an item that would go along with our theme for that week or some work we are doing at school.

**IMPORTANT:** There are four things that **MUST** remain at home –  
weapons, gum, candy and money.

## ***Birthdays***

If a birthday is to be celebrated away from school and the entire class is not invited, please mail invitations. If the entire class is invited, feel free to bring the invitations to school to be passed out to each child. Please be considerate of our children’s feelings and comply with the above request.

Children are invited to celebrate their birthdays at school. If parents choose to bring a birthday treat, we prefer a treat that is nutritious and healthy. Some suggestions for nutritious snacks are: fruit salad, melon balls, fruit and cottage cheese, fruit juice bars, raw vegetables and dip, carrot, pear, apple cake or muffins, granola cookies, cornmeal muffins, banana or raisin bread, bagels and cream cheese, yogurt push ups, etc. The teachers can help you with other ideas. Parents often donate a book, puzzle or game to the Academy in the child’s name. The birthday child has the honor of giving, not just receiving, on his/her special day. If you wish to donate an item, the classroom teacher or Director can give you ideas of what the class would enjoy.

If you plan to bring a treat for your child’s birthday, please notify us ahead of time so that we can plan snack time around it. We will also inform you as to the number of children for which to plan. Parents are always welcome at their child’s birthday celebration.

## ***Discipline and Guidance***

At Castle Academy, the term guidance is used for several reasons. It is a positive term, and implies working WITH the child to develop internal control of her/his behavior. Our goal is to encourage the children to become creative, independent, responsible, and socially mature human beings. This involves learning to make responsible choices, and accepting the consequences of all choices.

Guidance takes several forms:

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Environment – A place designed for children. The furniture is child-sized, with lots of hands-on experiences.

Logical Rules – Such as keeping our hands to ourselves, and taking care of and learning about the environment. These are discussed with the children, as well as why such rules are needed.

Curriculum – Is developmentally appropriate, based on the children’s interests and level of readiness.

Positive Behavior – We reinforce the behaviors we encourage. Catch them being “good”!

Redirection – Often, attempting to interest a child in another activity can eliminate a potential difficulty. We might ask the child to help us or send them to a different play area.

Positive Reminder – Telling the child what we want them to do, rather than using “no” or “don’t”.

Renewal Time – Occasionally a child needs to be removed from the situation for a brief time allowing them to consider alternate, appropriate behavior. We provide an area in each of the rooms where children can be “alone” for a while.

Any on-going situations will be discussed with the parents to ensure a cooperative approach. Please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns.

Note: No corporal punishment will be allowed. This is defined as the use of negative physical touching (spanking, slapping, pinching, etc.). No unusual punishment will be allowed, such as humiliation, ridicule, threats or coercion.

## ***Chronic Disruptive Behavior***

We will make every effort to work with the parents of children having difficulties in child care. However, we are here to serve and protect all of our children. Children displaying chronic disruptive behavior, which has been determined to be upsetting to the physical or emotional well being of another child may require the following actions.

### **-Initial Consultation**

The Director may require the parent(s) of any child who attends Castle Academy to meet for a conference. The problem will be defined on paper. Goals will be established and the parents (and the child when capable) will be involved in creating approaches toward solving the problem.

### **-Second Consultation**

If the initial plan for helping the child does not work, the parent(s) will again be required to meet with the Director. Another attempt will be made to identify the problem, outline

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new approaches to the problem, and discuss the consequences if progress is not apparent.

### **-Suspension**

When the previous guidelines have been followed and no progress has been made towards resolving the problem, the child may be suspended from Castle Academy indefinitely. The Director may immediately suspend a child at anytime the child exhibits a behavior that is harmful to himself/herself or others. A parent may be called from work at anytime the child exhibits uncontrollable behavior that cannot be modified by the Academy's staff. The parent may be asked to take the child home immediately. Suspensions from the Academy may vary from a few hours to an indefinite period.

### ***Discharge Policy***

Castle Academy reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child for the following additional reasons (But not limited to):

-non-payment or excessive late payment of fees

-not observing the rules of the Academy as outlined in the parent agreement

-child has special needs which we cannot adequately meet with our current staffing patterns

-physical and/or verbal abuse of staff or other child/children by parent or child

-Castle Academy reserves the right to immediately cancel the enrollment of any child or family should enrollment affect the well-being of Castle Academy students, teachers or administration.

### ***Withdrawal***

Four weeks written notice of intent to remove child/children from the Academy is required. Four weeks of tuition will be charged for each registration not canceled in this manner.

### ***Videos at School***

Videos are not normally shown to infants through kindergarten aged children at the Academy. If there is a special instance when the teachers/Director feel that an educational video could enhance/extend the learning process, a sign will be posted and a note will go home in advance. If for any reason you do not want your child to view the video, he/she can go to another classroom while the video is being shown.

School aged children will have the opportunity to watch videos throughout the year that are more entertaining in nature. The title and rating of any video that will be shown will be posted in advance of the showing. If for any reason you do not want your child to view the video, he/she can go to another classroom while the video is being shown.

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## ***Parent/Teacher Communication***

Parents and teachers need to communicate! However, we encourage all our parents and staff to never talk about a child while that child, any other child, or any other parent is present. Since it is necessary for the teachers to devote their time during the school day to all the children, we ask that you write a note or have your child tell his/her news to the teacher if it can be related quickly during the greeting time. If there is something you need to discuss with your child's teacher or the Director, please make an appointment or request a call back. We appreciate your cooperation in this. We are the guardians of each child's sensitivity and innocence.

Newsletters along with any other written communication will be placed in your child's file. It is important to check this file daily.

## ***Bulletin Boards***

Please take the time to scan the Parent board regularly to keep informed of the Academy happenings and/or announcements. Weekly lesson plans and monthly menus will be found on the bulletin boards.

## ***Conferences***

Parent/Teacher conferences are held in the Fall and Spring and at other times as requested by parents or teachers or the Director for preschool and kindergarten aged children. Conferences are a time when information concerning a child's abilities, needs and progress can be exchanged.

## ***Visitors***

All visitors to the Academy must sign in, giving their name, address and reason for the visit. If the visitor is unknown to the Academy's staff, he/she will be asked to show at least one form of identification.

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

Staff members are required by law to report any cases of suspected child abuse or neglect. If you suspect the staff of Castle Academy as committing any child abuse or neglecting the children, you can report your suspicions to the local department of human services at (303) 688-4825 or the local police department.

## ***Complaint Procedure***

To file a complaint about Castle Academy Contact:  
The Colorado Department of Human Services  
Division of Child Care  
1575 Sherman Street  
Denver, CO 80203-1714  
Or Call  
(303) 866-5958

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1-800-799-5876

## **Infants (6 Weeks – 15 Months)**

### ***Introduction***

This stage is marked most radically by the infant's need to develop as a unique individual with behaviors and growth changes ever present. Each infant has different schedules reflective of his/her own personality. It is the adult's role to accept each infant's uniqueness and provide a safe and stimulating environment in which to grow.

The infant program provides for the following goals:

- ◆ To care for infants in a warm, affectionate way that lets each child know that he/she is a special person, including the physical affection and cuddling that is so important at this stage of development
- ◆ To meet each child's physical needs fully
- ◆ To implement strict sanitation procedures that are adhered to, faithfully
- ◆ To provide opportunities for exploring, learning and social interaction through a variety of daily activities
- ◆ To prepare activities to stimulate the senses, recognizing that infants learn through the use of their eyes, ears, fingers, sense of taste and smell
- ◆ To care for children in small groups; to prevent over-stimulation and disorder; and to provide opportunities for one-to-one interactions between children and staff
- ◆ To provide opportunities for the use of large and small motor skills with both indoor and outdoor activities
- ◆ To provide a safe environment for exploration
- ◆ To provide a consistency between Child Care and Home Care practices that will be most beneficial to the infant and will offer the parents an opportunity to influence the kind of care that their child receives
- ◆ To establish an observation system in which a daily outline/check list on each child is kept
- ◆ To be supportive of parents, encouraging involvement, education, and open, honest communication while using tact and discretion

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Infants learn by experiencing the environment through their senses (seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and feeling), by physically moving around and through social interactions. Non-mobile infants absorb and organize a great deal of information about the world around them, so adults need to talk and sing with them about what is happening and bring them objects to observe and manipulate. At times, adults carry non-mobile infants around the environment to show them interesting events and people. Mobile infants and toddlers increasingly use toys, language, and other learning materials in their play.

Adults play a vital socialization role with infants. Warm, positive relationships with adults help infants develop a sense of trust in the world and feelings of competence. These interactions are critical for the development of the children's healthy self-esteem. The trusted adult becomes the secure base from which the mobile infant explores the environment.

The most appropriate teaching technique for this age group is to give ample opportunities for the children to use repetition to practice newly acquired skills and to experience feelings of autonomy and success. Infants will bat at, grasp, bang, or drop their toys. Imitation, hiding, and naming games are also important for learning at this age.

Play opportunities are essential throughout early childhood. For infants this means sensory experiences and adults who cuddle and talk to them. It means careful selection of toys and materials that stimulate and challenge them, but are not over-stimulating. As the infants become more mobile, they should be able to count on a safe and interesting environment to explore. Some activities for this age group might include: scooting on the floor, looking in a reflective mirror, reaching for objects to grasp. Language activities that begin as "Ma Ma" or "Da Da" will soon become extended through repeating words of an adult's stories, songs and finger plays. Opportunities to develop large muscles can be found in walking, climbing up and down, pushing toys; and for small muscles, in sensory play with water, sand, etc.: feeling different textures, stacking blocks, nesting toys, etc. Art activities are provided to give infants an exposure to a variety of materials and enjoyment for the process of the project.

An infant can feel secure and develop a sense of trust as the adults in his/her world respond to individual needs of hunger, thirst, sleep, and security with a flexible and individualized daily routine.

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## ***What is done in this room?***

The Infant room daily schedule may look something like this:

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Open-7:00   | All ages meet in Toddler room & play                              |
| 7:00-8:30   | Move to Infant room & Play  |
| 8:30-9:30   | Breakfast   |
| 9:30-10:00  | change diapers & Morning nap                                      |
| 10:00-11:00 | Outside time/ story reading                                       |
| 11:00-11:30 | Lunch   |
| 11:30-12:00 | Change diapers  |
| 12:00-2:00  | Noon nap  |
| 2:00-3:00   | Change diapers & do floor time<br>(practice sitting up & walking) |
| 3:00-4:00   | Outside time/ music & singing                                     |
| 4:00-4:30   | Change diapers  |
| 4:30-6:00   | Clean up & get ready to go home                                   |

## ***Feeding***

Infants are fed on demand through out the day. We ask parents to keep us informed as to the changes in each child's diet so that we can maintain consistency for the child while at school.

## **Toddlers (16 months – 36 months)**

### ***Introduction***

The toddler stage can be seen as one of the most challenging (and rewarding) times. Toddlers are very mobile and active using all five senses to discover the world. Adults are challenged to provide a safe, but stimulating environment in which the child can grow. The toddler responds well to regular daily routine with set meal times, rest times and play times. Toilet training is best accomplished by taking the child to the toilet at the same times each day.

Important independence skills are being acquired during these years, including personal care such as toileting, feeding and dressing. Patience is essential as a toddler struggles to master skills (developing independence at this stage occurs after much repetition and encouragement). Realistic toys will enable children to engage in increasingly complex types of play and practice.

Toddlers are learning to produce language rapidly. They need simple books, pictures, puzzles and music, plus time and space for active play such as jumping, running and dancing. Toddlers are acquiring social skills, but in groups there should be several of the same toy because egocentric toddlers are not yet able to understand the concept of sharing.

Program goals for children approximately 18 months to 36 months are:

- ❖ To provide a nurturing, flexible and calm environment where physical affection is freely given, self-concept is enhanced, independence is encouraged and expectations are made clear
- ❖ To meet each child's physical needs while setting the stage for future independence in self-care. i.e. toilet teaching, putting on coats, putting on shoes, etc.
- ❖ To establish respect for the environment, the equipment and materials
- ❖ To promote emotional growth
  - a. To build self-confidence and a sense of self-worth, by allowing choices within limits and to build on successful experiences
- ❖ To provide a warm, accepting environment in which children can work and play
- ❖ To encourage curiosity and a sense of wonder with an environment that is designed to limit the use of "no"
- ❖ To promote social growth
  - a. To promote and instill a sense of caring for, and sensitivity towards others; foundations for respect are established
  - b. To model acceptable behavior which is critical to the toddlers who are practicing and learning cooperative and group play

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- ❖ To promote intellectual growth
- ❖ To instill a sense of curiosity
- ❖ To provide an atmosphere where children discover and explore
  - a. To provide experiences with open-ended questions and where process, not product is emphasized
  - b. To provide a wide variety of activities within an outline where cooperative play is encouraged. Curriculum areas of art, math, science, cooking, music and movement, large muscle, practical life, dramatic play, language arts and fine motor activities are provided. Through these activities, children are learning to be able to trust their own desires/choices about what they learn, hear, see and do. They also begin to share these experiences with others.
- ❖ To promote physical/motor development
- ❖ To provide a variety of active ways children can use their bodies to participate in fine and gross motor activities both indoors and outdoors.
- ❖ To encourage participation in simple games and songs
- ❖ To provide for the language development that is so important at this stage of development
- ❖ To make available a good variety and quantity of materials on the shelves at the child's level i.e. manipulative, dramatic play, pull toys, puzzles, books, etc.
- ❖ To develop self-help skills in order to create a feeling of independence and confidence in the child (this can be accomplished by toilet training, encouraging them to try to help dress themselves and letting them help serve food at meals, etc.)
- ❖ To provide care in small groups in order to give each child more personal attention, prevent under/over-stimulation, allow more freedom of choice and maintain a more relaxed atmosphere

The toddler group is a diverse one. Providing a variety of activities with many choices is essential to enhancing each child's developmental progress. Activities will be designed with the developmental level of each child in mind. The following are such activities:

\*Introducing sensory experiences with materials such as:

|                            |                            |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Pudding                    | Tasting and smelling boxes |
| Jell-O                     | Cornstarch                 |
| Water table                | Music/rhythm instruments   |
| Sand table                 | Bubbles                    |
| Rice/Macaroni              | Play dough                 |
| Flour                      | Textured books             |
| Corn meal                  | Flashlights                |
| Karo syrup finger painting | Shaving cream              |
| Noise makers/Bean shakers  | Silly putty                |

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\* Encouraging cognitive development and language acquisition by:

Reading and re-telling favorite stories

Working on recognizing and naming the teachers and children in the classroom using photographs of the children

Reinforcing aspects of the routines, such as: snack time, lunch time, nap time, etc.

Working with the older toddlers on learning the words and actions to the songs we sing: i.e. by singing to the children and encouraging them to sing along.

Encouraging the toddlers to talk more by:

using puppets

asking lots of questions (open-ended)

reading stories and asking lots of questions

\* Verbalizing with the children while they are playing so as to provide a springboard for the children's own verbalizations. Language should be incorporated into every activity throughout the day, using:

Simple songs and finger plays

Tape recorder

Simple directions (up, on, over)

Nursery rhymes

Counting games

Alphabet games

Sorting activities

Puppet plays

Object labeling

Story time

Memory games

Color matching

Dolls

\*Increasing the child's ability to recognize common objects, using:

Picture books

Picture cards of simple, common objects

Object boxes

Shape sorter

Lotto games or matching games

Three basic shapes – circle, square and triangle

Art activities with these shapes (pasting)

Simple cooking activities – mixing, pouring and sorting

\*Providing the child with opportunities to participate in self help activities designed to promote the growing independence desired by toddlers, such as:

Washing hands and face

Eating with spoon and fork

Throwing away cup and napkin

Taking off /putting on socks and shoes, coats, etc.

Putting away toys

Washing and drying dishes

Bathing and drying dolls

Becoming aware of the rules of safety

Potty training where appropriate

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\*Enhancing social and emotional development, by:

Setting limits in such a way that the child learns self-regulation

Enforcing the rules: you may not hurt yourself; you may not hurt others; and you may not hurt the materials, equipment, or other things in the environment.

Using the methods of distraction, substitution, alternative activity or corrective guidance when necessary

Encouraging the children to use words rather than pushing or hitting other children

Helping children play well independently among a larger group of children

\*Providing materials and activities important in advancing a child's coordination, focusing on:

## Fine Motor Development

Pouring and sifting

Filling and dumping

Peg boards

Nesting

Stacking

Putting shapes through holes

Snap Beads

Stringing beads

Cutting play-dough with scissors

Puzzle work

Shape sorting

Sewing cards

Lego blocks

Button and snap boards

Twisting jar lids, nuts and bolts

Art activities

## Gross Motor Development

Dancing and marching

Outside when weather permits

Sliding

Climbing stairs

Climbing

Hanging off bars/ropes

Swinging

Pulling toys and wagons

Circle games and songs

Crawling under and through

Jumping

Stretching exercises

\*Scheduling daily activities that encourage children to express themselves creatively by participating in basic art activities such as:

Painting with brushes

Easel painting

Finger painting

String painting

Sponge painting

Marble painting

Q-tip painting

Salt painting

Water painting

Creating:

Collages and montages

Murals with chalk, crayon, paint

Potato prints

Food coloring pictures

Mobiles

Tearing paper

Crayon activities

Coloring with crayon and chalk

## ***What is done in this room?***

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The Toddler and 2 year old room daily schedules may look something like this:

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Open-7:30   | All ages meet in Toddler room & play               |
| 7:30-8:45   | Free play in Toddler room                          |
| 8:45-9:00   | Diaper & potty                                     |
| 9:00-9:30   | Circle time. Sing, ABC's, count, colors and shapes |
| 9:30-10:00  | Flash cards & reading                              |
| 10:00-10:15 | Diaper and potty                                   |
| 10:15-10:30 | Snack  |
| 10:30-11:30 | Crafts & outside play                              |
| 11:30-11:45 | Diaper & potty                                     |
| 11:45-12:15 | Lunch  |
| 12:30-3:00  | Nap  |
| 3:00-3:15   | Snack  |
| 3:15-4:15   | Outside play                                       |
| 4:30-4:45   | Circle time  |
| 4:45-5:15   | Free play in Toddler room                          |
| 5:15-6:00   | Move to 2's room                                   |

## ***Snack/Lunch***

The Toddler room offers two snacks daily, one mid morning and one mid afternoon. Snacks are nutritiously based, combining fruits, vegetables and grains, offering a balanced menu.

Our lunches are served family style. A teacher sits at each table assisting the children with passing and serving. Children learn to serve themselves, pass the food and are encouraged to practice good table manners.

FRIDAYS ARE SACK LUNCH DAY

## ***Nap***

Nap time starts around 12:30, following lunch.

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## Preschool

### *Introduction*

The preschool classroom is for children ages 3 to 5 or 6 depending on when they start kindergarten.

### *What is done in this room?*

#### **School Work**

Activities are referred to as “work” because we want the children to view work as fun and interesting, something they want to do. Materials are attractively arranged on shelves according to subject—language, math, geography, history, science, music, and art. Each piece of material has a special, permanent place so that children know where to find it and where to put it away for the next person when finished.

#### **Practical Life**

Children work on fine motor skills by introducing to them activities such as pouring, scooping and dressing frames. The three main areas of "Practical Life" activities are:

- (1) care of the environment—cleaning, sweeping, washing clothes, gardening, etc.,
- (2) the care of the person—dressing, brushing teeth, cooking, setting the table, etc., and,
- (3) grace and courtesy—walking carefully, carrying things, moving gracefully, offering food, saying "please" and "thank you" and so on.

#### **Sensorial**

Children use all five senses to recognize width, depth, length, size, shape, color and textures. There are special sensorial puzzles in the class, such as the "pink tower", the "color tablets", and the "sound boxes", which give very clear experiences of important concepts such as "large and small", "hot and cold", "loud and soft" and so on.

#### **Language**

Language activities are everywhere in the classroom. Children are read to in large and small groups and books are available for children to read on their own. Vocabulary is taught for items in children's worlds such as names of fruits and vegetables. Hand coordination is worked on through puzzles and drawing to prepare the children for writing activities. The sounds each letter makes are taught individually at each child's own pace.

#### **Math**

Children naturally have an interest in all aspects of mathematics, weight, order, systems, series, time, quantities and symbols, and so forth. We can serve the development of the mathematical mind by feeding this interest, giving sensorial experiences first, and only then their representatives on paper. Math activities include: counting, sorting, classifying objects, experiences with series of sizes and colors, weighing and measuring. Hands on experiences help the child understand the abstract concepts of math.

#### **Geography/History**

Children are introduced to continents, countries and states using globes, puzzles and flags. Children easily "absorb" and memorize the relative sizes, the shapes, the location of continents

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and countries of the world. Puzzle maps give practice in recognizing the shapes of continents, and oceans. They combine the child's need for movement and shape recognition with developing awareness of the earth.

We also introduce national songs, dances, instrumental music, costumes, pictures of state birds, flowers, flags, architecture, inventions, and adults and children carrying out the many aspects of life. We are very careful not to give the impression that any culture is superior in any way to any other. Each culture has its own strengths and weaknesses, its own gifts to the whole. Flags of the world are used with the children to introduce different countries and cultures.

The seeds of the study of history are given through experiences, such as ethnic foods and music, and through objects, pictures, and books. Biographies of famous people are used to teach the importance of the past.

The final element of history and geography is the interconnectedness of humans with the earth, the plants and animals, and with each other

### **Science**

Children are introduced to the outdoors; trees, leaves and plants, as well as gardening fruits and vegetables. Beautiful things found in nature such as fallen nest, a rock, fossils or shells, leaves are added to the classroom to help the children gain an appreciation of nature. Plants and plant parts are studied and animals are introduced.

### **Specials**

Music –There is no such thing as a nonmusical child, there are just nonmusical adults who did not get this practice as children. Songs give children a way of expressing emotions, and the very act of singing is a physical release. Children listen to music to all types of music to gain an appreciation. Instruments are played and rhythms are practiced.

Sign Language – The alphabet, numbers, colors, greetings, family members, body parts and animals are taught to the children in a large group.

Spanish – Numbers, colors, greetings, family members, body parts and animals are taught to the children during circle times.

Art – Children benefit from having a variety of art materials available to them at all times and a space to work, uninterrupted, when they are inspired. It is important to provide the best quality that we can afford—pencils, crayons, felt pens, clay, paper, brushes—and to teach the child how to care for them. Art appreciation is also taught to the children through reproductions of great masterpieces.

### **Snack/Lunch**

The Preschool offers two snacks daily to be “served yourself” after two “works” are completed, one mid morning and one mid afternoon. Snacks are nutritiously based, combining fruits, vegetables and grains, offering a balanced menu.

Our lunches are served family style. A teacher sits at each table assisting the children with passing and serving. Children learn to serve themselves, pass the food and are encouraged to practice good table manners.

## Early Learning Classroom

### ***Introduction***

Curriculum for 2 ½ to 3 year-olds should emphasize language, activity and movement, with major emphasis on large muscle activities. Appropriate activities include dramatic play, working with wheel toys, climbers, puzzles and blocks, and opportunities to talk and listen to simple stories.

### Significance of 3-4-5 year-old stage:

The most important area is for adults to promote preschooler's self-esteem. In every area of his development: physical, cognitive, psychosocial, the child strives and looks for adult support. Children need periodic adult reinforcement in the form of one-on-one time, a hug, smile or touch.

Preschoolers have a greater capacity than younger children for learning and abiding by simple rules and clear consequences.

They enjoy playing with peers. The beginning of cooperative play and sharing develops. Conflicts can begin to be addressed with simple problem solving techniques.

Preschoolers develop in many areas and independence is promoted by providing choices in a wide range of activities for this age group.

### Program Goals:

- To build self-confidence and a sense of self worth, by allowing choices within limits and to build on successful experiences
- To promote and instill a sense of caring for, and sensitivity towards others
- To provide a nurturing, relaxed and non-sexist environment with caring adults where self-esteem is enhanced; independence encouraged; free choice decisions offered; social skills acquired; and individuality respected
- To provide large portions of time where the child can be alone or with friends participating in a range of different and satisfying activities. The activities will be planned for the following curriculum areas: art, science, history, geography, wood working, cooking, music and movement, practical life, dramatic play, language arts, and mathematics.
- To provide children with opportunities to gain competence in a variety of skills and techniques that increase their interest and control over their environment
- To provide for each child's physical well being while in our care
- To provide opportunities to develop gross motor skills and coordination through physically active play

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- To develop in the child an active curiosity about the world in which he/she lives, and an enthusiasm for learning which stimulates exploratory behavior and creativity
- To help the child gain self-discipline in an environment where he/she knows the limits and expectations
- To develop in each child an appreciation for beauty and nature
- To provide an atmosphere in the classroom which promotes respect for self, others, and materials
- To provide a wide variety of activities within a routine where cooperative play/work is encouraged and multiple skills are developed. Through these activities, children are learning to trust their own desires/decisions about what they will learn, hear, see and do and to begin sharing these experiences with others.

Many times when parents observe or visit preschools/child care centers, they think that children are “just playing”. However, the way children learn best is through play. Robert Fulghum states, “Learning is taking place at all times in all circumstances for every person.” Maria Montessori used the word work instead of the word play. She said that “work” has a higher respect than “play”.

Montessori taught that what looks like play to an adult, is truly work for a child. She taught that work is any activity, which involves the whole child, and that work has as its unconscious aim the construction of the personality. As children are going around the room, playing/working with the different centers/materials, they may acquire some of the skills that are fostered by exploring the different learning areas.

“Children do not absorb knowledge- they construct it actively.”

-Eric Oddleifson

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## ***What is done in this room?***

The ELC (Extended Learning Classroom) offers a variety of learning experiences through art, creative construction, dramatic play, hands-on science and cooking.

**Art** – ELC offers opportunities for open-ended creativity through mediums such as watercolor, tempera paint, stenciling and drawing.

**Creative Construction** – ELC has a variety of materials that allow the child to build, construct and create using their fine and large motor skills.

The Extended Care daily schedule is as follows:

## ***Snack/Lunch***

ELC offers two snacks daily, one mid morning and one mid afternoon. Snacks are nutritiously based, combining fruits, vegetables and grains, offering a balanced menu. Our lunches are served family style. A teacher sits at each table assisting the children with passing and serving. Children learn to serve themselves, pass the food and are encouraged to practice good table manners.

## ***Nap***

Nap time starts at 12:30, following lunch. Children are asked to lay quietly for a minimum of 30 minutes if they are unable to fall asleep.

## Kindergarten

### ***Introduction***

Five and six year-olds are developing interest in community and the world outside their own. They also use motor skills well, even daringly, and show increasing ability to pay attention for longer times and in large groups, if the topic is meaningful for them. They have a greater sense of the world around them. Their gross and fine motor development increases greatly. Physical coordination improves, and this along with increased cognitive development allows kindergarten-aged children to understand outside games and their rules. Fine motor skills are also increasing during this stage, which help with writing and drawing skills. A child's reasoning and logic skills are increasing along with short-term memory. Moral development is another area that increases in kindergarten-aged children. They are more able to understand "right" and "wrong" and they become more concerned with the feelings of others.

### ***What is done in this room?***

#### **Language Arts Center promotes:**

- Vocabulary growth
- Listening skills
- Reading readiness skills
- Oral language skills
- Interest in and respect for books
- Appreciation of good literature
- Imagination
- Increased attention span

#### **Outdoor Play Area:**

- Develops large muscle coordination
- Increases social development and communication skills
- Provides opportunities for sharing
- Provides opportunities for roll playing
- Fosters safety awareness

#### **Math Centers help a child:**

- Recognize numbers, counting items
- Understand the relationship between a numeral and a set of objects
- Learn that counting is both meaningful and fun
- Understand such terms as big/little, more/less, etc.
- Recognize and name basic geometric shapes
- Become aware of and begin to appreciate the practical uses of numbers seen around him/her every day, e.g. clocks, calendars, money, etc.

#### **Practical Life Areas:**

- Encourage the children to do tasks on their own
- Promote eye hand coordination, patience, waiting turns, etc.

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Give opportunities for hand washing, practicing proper meal manners, grace and courtesy lessons  
Help children explore zipping, snapping, buckling, scooping and pouring, sorting, wiping tables, using materials properly  
Provide opportunities for pouring milk, juice, cereal; setting tables, preparing food, taste and smell comparisons, sharing

## **Art Centers:**

Provide opportunities for creativity and imagination  
Develop small and large muscle skills  
Develop color concepts  
Provide a release for positive and negative feelings  
Develop reading readiness skills  
Develop prewriting skills  
Encourage an appreciation for the arts

## **Manipulative/Sensorial Activities:**

Develop small muscle coordination  
Increase social development and communication skills  
Foster imagination  
Teach mathematical concepts (shapes, size, counting)  
Provide opportunities for problem solving

## **Dramatic Play Areas:**

Provide an opportunity to role play home/life experiences  
Increase social development and communication skills  
Develop small and large muscle coordination  
Develop self awareness  
Develop visual discrimination skills

## **Block Play:**

Provides practice with social skills  
Develops gross and fine motor skills  
Teaches mathematical concepts (shape, size, balance, counting)  
Increases creativity and decision making skills  
Develops visual discrimination skills  
Provides an opportunity for role play  
Increases communication skills and oral vocabulary

## **Reading Readiness Centers:**

Develop and improve listening skills  
Provide opportunities for following directions  
Teach the letters of the alphabet and their sounds, as children become interested  
Help a child notice likeness and differences  
Develop the skill of sequencing  
Develop the skill of matching  
Provide quiet areas and the opportunity for a child to:  
Learn to relax  
Learn to appreciate and enjoy good books

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Learn to enjoy being alone

## **Science Centers:**

Develop an awareness of and respect for the natural environment

Develop observation and discrimination skills

Encourage a child's curiosity

Encourage sorting and classifying skills on the basis of size, shape and texture

Develop an awareness of their bodies

## **Music and Movement:**

Develops listening skills

Encourages children to learn musical tunes, which they can sing, and words which they can repeat

Helps a child learn to control motor impulses

Promotes enjoyment and appreciation for music

Expresses freedom of movement and awareness of the body and space

Provides exploration and familiarity with different musical instruments.

## ***Snack/Lunch***

The kindergarten class offers two snacks daily, one mid morning and one mid afternoon. Snacks are nutritiously based, combining fruits, vegetables and grains, offering a balanced menu.

Our lunches are served family style. A teacher sits at each table assisting the children with passing and serving. Children learn to serve themselves, pass the food and are encouraged to practice good table manners. There are two lunch times in the kindergarten to accommodate those children who attend the public schools.

## ***Nap***

The kindergarten children do not take a nap. There is a quiet, relaxation time after lunch when the children can lay quietly and listen to music; however most kindergartners no longer require a nap time during the day.

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## School-Aged Children

### ***On-Track (Before and After School)***

Children who are at Castle Academy before school will have a variety of inside activities to keep them busy. If they are here before 7:00 A.M. they will get breakfast. If your child attends Castle Academy after school they will be given a snack and will have 15 – 30 minutes of homework time after school. After that time they can choose to play in the activities room or on the playground. If your child is transported by Castle Academy to and/or from school, you will be given a schedule with the bus departure and arrival times. It is important that you have your child here prior to the departure times so that they don't get left at the school. Please add 5 – 10 minutes to departure/arrival times when the roads are bad.

### ***Off-Track/Summer***

Since the majority of Castle Rock Schools are following the traditional calendar, the bulk of our off-track program revolves around the summer. During the summer months (June, July and half of August) the school-aged children will go on outings two days per week and stay at Castle Academy three days per week. One day will be a swimming day, where we will take the children to a local public pool, weather permitting. The other outing days will consist of hikes, lunches, trips to museums, the zoo, etc.

### ***Behavior Expectations***

Castle Academy strives to maintain a very high quality program, and therefore we have certain expectations of the children. The following is a list of items/behaviors that will not be permitted at Castle Academy:

- ✓ Fighting
- ✓ Cell Phone
- ✓ PDA/Game Boy
- ✓ Weapons
- ✓ Inappropriate materials (books, music, pictures)
- ✓ Inappropriate language
- ✓ Treating other children with disrespect
- ✓ Treating teachers with disrespect