

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

WHO WE ARE.....	5
HISTORY	5
MISSION STATEMENT.....	6
THE LEARNING PHILOSOPHY OF CASTLE ACADEMY.....	6
GENERAL CENTER INFORMATION	9
HOURS OF OPERATION:	9
CLASSROOM CAPACITY.....	9
RATIOS AND MAXIMUM GROUP SIZE	9
LICENSING	10
LAYOUT	10
<i>Downstairs</i>	10
<i>Outside Facilities</i>	11
<i>Parking</i>	11
<i>Gate Entrances</i>	11
GENERAL STAFF EXPECTATIONS	11
GUIDELINES OF EMPLOYMENT	11
PROBATIONARY PERIOD.....	12
PROFESSIONALISM	12
DRESS CODE	12
CELL PHONES.....	13
COMPUTERS	13
TIME CARDS AND PAYROLL	14
DIRECT DEPOSIT	14
PERSONAL BELONGINGS	14
FOOD/MEALS	14
HANDWASHING	15
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	15
REQUIRED TRAINING	15
STAFF MEETINGS	17
NEW STAFF ORIENTATION	17
EVALUATIONS.....	17
PERSONNEL POLICIES.....	17
CONFIDENTIALITY.....	18
CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING	18
GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE.....	19
CO-WORKER COMMUNICATION	19
SUPPLIES	19
SUGGESTIONS.....	19
PERSONNEL FILES	19
SUBSTANCE ABUSE.....	20
TOBACCO USE.....	20
REIMBURSEMENT	20
EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY	20
SEXUAL HARASSMENT.....	20
ATTENDANCE	20
ABSENCE DUE TO ILLNESS	20

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

SUBSTITUTES	21
SCHEDULES	21
NEWSLETTER/CALENDAR	21
DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE.....	21
UNACCEPTABLE JOB PERFORMANCE.....	21
STEP 1 Verbal Warning.....	22
STEP 2 Written Warning.....	22
STEP 3 Termination of Employment	22
VOLUNTARY RESIGNATION.....	23
HEALTH & SAFETY POLICIES	23
STAFF PHYSICALS	23
ILLNESS.....	23
NOTICE OF EXPOSURE & REPORTING DISEASE	24
MEDICATION AUTHORIZATIONS.....	24
ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS	25
DOCUMENTATION OF HEALTH INCIDENTS.....	25
DOCUMENTATION OF ALLERGIES.....	25
DOCUMENTATION OF SPECIAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS.....	25
ACCESS POLICY	25
BACKGROUND INQUIRY CHECKS	26
NATIONAL CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECKS.....	26
VISITORS.....	26
CURRICULUM PLANNING.....	26
CURRICULUM	26
DAILY SCHEDULE AND ACTIVITIES	27
THEMES	27
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	27
WORK TIME	28
OUTDOOR PLAY	28
NAP/REST TIME	28
MULTIMEDIA.....	28
PETS & VISITING ANIMALS	28
ASSESSMENTS	29
PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES.....	29
DAILY DUTIES FOR CLASSROOM STAFF.....	29
MORNING DUTIES	29
NOON/NAP-TIME DUTIES.....	29
AFTERNOON DUTIES	29
DRIVING THE BUS	29
ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE	30
ARRIVAL	30
DEPARTURE	30
LATE PICK-UP.....	30
GUIDANCE STRATEGIES	30
REASONS FOR MISBEHAVIOR	31
PREVENTING MISBEHAVIOR.....	31
RESPONDING TO MISBEHAVIOR	32

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

USEFUL PHRASES	33
BITING POLICY	34
REMOVAL OF A CHILD FROM THE CLASSROOM	35
MEALS AND NUTRITION	35
FOOD FROM HOME	35
INFANT, TODDLER AND TWO-YEAR-OLD PROGRAM INFORMATION.....	35
SIDS	36
PARENT RELATIONSHIPS	36
PARENT INTERACTIONS.....	36
HANDLING PARENT COMPLAINTS	36
POSITION DESCRIPTIONS.....	37
EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES	37
<i>Director</i>	37
TITLE: LEAD TEACHER.....	38
TITLE: TEACHER.....	39
TITLE: ASSISTANT TEACHER	40
TITLE: TEACHER’S AIDE.....	41
BENEFITS	41
PAID TIME OFF.....	42
HOLIDAYS	42
DISCOUNTED CHILD CARE	43
401K.....	43
HEALTH AND DENTAL INSURANCE	43
LIFE INSURANCE	43
EMERGENCY PROCEDURE	43
EMERGENCY MEDICAL/DENTAL PROCEDURE	43
EMERGENCY FIRE PROCEDURE	44
EMERGENCY TORNADO PROCEDURE.....	44
INTRUDER OR DANGEROUS ADULT	45
BLIZZARD/SEVERE WINTER WEATHER	46
LIGHTNING.....	46
MISSING OR ABDUCTED CHILD	46
POWER FAILURE	46
CHEMICAL SPILL.....	46
○ THE DIRECTOR OR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR WILL NOTIFY THE EMERGENCY PERSONNEL THAT ALL CHILDREN AND STAFF ARE ACCOUNTED FOR AND WAIT FOR FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS.	47
BOMB THREAT	47
EARTHQUAKE	48
GENERAL EMERGENCY PROCEDURES GUIDELINES	48
EXPOSURE CONTROL PLAN	48
PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION.....	49
EMPLOYEE EXPOSURE DETERMINATION	49
METHODS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND CONTROL	49
POST EXPOSURE EVALUATION	50
RECORD KEEPING	50
HAND WASHING PROCEDURE	51

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

DIAPERING PROCEDURE	51
PREPARING FOR DIAPERING	51
DIAPERING PROCEDURE.....	52
ADDITIONAL PRECAUTIONS	52
CLEANING, SANITIZING AND DISINFECTING OF EQUIPMENT	52
SANITIZING	53
DISINFECTING	53
PLAY AREAS.....	53
PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT IN FRONT	54
SANDBOX.....	54
BACK YARD	55
DECK AREA	55
INFANTS	55
INTRODUCTION	55
FEEDING.....	56
DIAPERING.....	56
TODDLERS AND 2'S.....	57
INTRODUCTION	57
DAILY SCHEDULE	60
SNACK/LUNCH.....	61
NAP.....	61
EARLY LEARNING CLASSROOM (ELC) AND PRESCHOOL/PRE-K CLASSROOMS	62
INTRODUCTION	62
PROGRAM GOALS:	62
SAFETY PRACTICES WITH MONTESSORI MATERIALS	66
SNACK/LUNCH.....	66
SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN.....	67
ON-TRACK (BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL).....	67
SCHOOL BREAKS/SUMMER	67
BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS.....	67
TRANSPORTATION.....	67

This handbook is intended to familiarize staff members with current Castle Academy policies, practices and standards. An electronic version (PDF) of the handbook is available on our website at www.castleacademy.com. A print copy of the handbook is available upon request. Castle Academy reserves the right to revise its policies, practices and standards as deemed appropriate by the Director and/or Owners. Staff members will be notified of updates to the staff handbook as they occur.

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

Who We Are

Castle Academy is privately owned by Jodi and Joel Green, both of whom are natives to Castle Rock. They both graduated from the University of Northern Colorado where Jodi received her degree in Psychology with a minor in Early Childhood Education and Joel a degree in Business Administration. After graduating from college, they returned home to Castle Rock to open Castle Academy and start a family. The Greens have four children, all of whom are an amazing example of the quality of care and love children receive at Castle Academy.

The center's leadership consists of the following people:

Director: Jodi Green

Assistant Director: Jessica Heaton

And most importantly, there are the teachers like you who have chosen to contribute their talents and expertise to Castle Academy. Without dedicated individuals, our Center could not serve the community at large. Welcome to the Castle Academy family!

History

Castle Academy opened in August of 2000 and consisted of four classrooms: Infants (6 weeks old to one-year-old), Toddlers (one-year-old to 2½ years old), Half-Day Preschool (2½ years old to 6 years old), and an Extended Learning Classroom – ELC (for full day preschool aged children) and only occupied the “castle building”. In the fall of 2002, we expanded into the east half of the middle building, moving our Half-Day Preschool into one of the classrooms and adding a Full-Day, Private Kindergarten. We separated our Infant Classroom putting our youngest six infants in one classroom and moving our older ten infants/toddlers into another classroom. Our Two-Year-Olds moved into the classroom on the south side of the “castle building.” In 2005, we expanded into the second half of the middle building and added a School-Aged-Program, two additional classrooms and an additional kitchen. It was at this time that we moved all classrooms for children over 2½ and potty-trained into the middle building. The ELC classroom moved to the west side of the middle building with the classroom next to it being a “transition” classroom for two-year-olds who were potty-trained, but not quite ready for preschool. The school-aged-children were in a gymnasium on the center of the building next to the kitchen. The “castle building” became solely for infants, toddlers and two-year-olds. In 2008, Castle Academy expanded into half of the building to the north-moving the Full-Day-Kindergarten and adding a Half-Day-Kindergarten for children to attend opposite their public-school kindergarten class. We also moved the School-Aged-Program into the gymnasium in the third building. We added another Half-Day-Preschool classroom in the room vacated by the Kindergarten class and used the gymnasium in the middle building as a lunch/nap room for preschool-aged-children. In the fall of 2010, we moved the School-Aged-Program into the second-half of the third building. In the spring of 2018, we moved all our operations to the one location in the Meadows that we currently operate from. And that is where Castle Academy stands today. All of these expansions and growth are a testament to our ability to adapt to the changing needs of Castle Rock and the families we provide child care for.

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

Mission Statement

We believe in the value of early experiences for a child's development. It is the mission of Castle Academy to provide the kind of environment and experiences that encourage children to become creative, independent, responsible, self-directed and emotionally resilient. As caregivers and educators, we provide a safe, positive and accepting atmosphere where children can explore their environments and their individual abilities.

The Learning Philosophy of Castle Academy

Our program is built around the concept that children are born ready to learn. As caregivers, we strive to create a learning environment that is safe, stimulating and encouraging.

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.

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, practical life, etc. and group times for creative movement, music, storytelling and dramatization.

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

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. Castle Academy is a Montessori Based school – 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 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

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

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.¹

¹ The National Commission on Children, May 1, 1991

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

General Center Information

Hours of Operation:

Castle Academy is open Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m.

The school is closed for the following holidays:

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

Classroom Capacity

Infant 1	6 weeks to 18 months	10 children
Infant 2	6 weeks to 18 months	10 children
Toddlers	12 months to 2 years	10 children
Toddler/Twos	1 year to 3 years	14 children
Two-Year-Olds	1 year to 3 years	14 children
Preschool	2½ to 13 years	24 children
Pre-K Classes (4 rooms)	2½ to 13 years	30 children
PDO	2½ to 13 years	30 children
School-Aged	2½ to 13 years	90 children

Ratios and Maximum Group Size

At Castle Academy, we maintain the following state required staff-to-child ratios at all times:

Infant 1&2	1 staff for every 5 children	10 children
Toddler	1 staff for every 5 children	10 children
Two-Year-Olds	1 staff for every 7 children	14 children
Preschool/PreK/PDO	1 staff for every 10 children	20 children
School-Aged	1 staff for every 15 children	30 children

- a. In other preschool age combinations, the maximum group size for the youngest child must be utilized if more than twenty percent (20%) of the group is composed of younger children. This does not apply to infants and toddlers. The group size for toddler groups is based on the youngest child in the group.
- b. Preschool age and school-age groups of children must be separated into developmentally appropriate activities. Groups are not required to be separated from each other by permanent or portable dividers or walls.
- c. Group size for children in preschool and school age classrooms may be exceeded for circle time, meal and snack time, special occasions and activities. The room capacity must not be exceeded.
- d. Toddler-age groups of children must be separated from each other by permanent or portable dividers or other methods as approved by the Department.

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

- e. At nap time, the child to staff ratio may be doubled for children 2½ years of age and older in preschool classrooms when the following conditions have been met:
 - I. At least half of the children are sleeping
 - II. Another staff member is onsite in the center and immediately available
- f. When combining age groups, not including individual child transitions, children must be cared for in the room. Each teacher in the classroom is responsible for the management of this requirement. The playgrounds are to be considered as part of the classroom. All areas that are being used by children need constant and direct supervision by staff. Ratios must be maintained on the playground. No child should be left alone for **ANY** reason. This includes on the playgrounds.

Licensing

As Castle Academy is a licensed center, we follow specific guidelines determined by the state of Colorado. As an employee of Castle Academy, you are expected to be aware of these guidelines and follow them as required by law.

These guidelines are available in the main office, in the staff break room and online at <http://www.sos.state.co.us>.

Weather Related Closings

Castle Academy will remain open during most severe weather. Any closures of the Academy will be posted on our Facebook page and will be emailed to all staff and families by 5:00 am.

If there is a need to close the school early, we will email parents to give them as much notice as possible of the earlier closing time. Parents are expected to pick up their children by this decided upon time.

Layout

Class Rooms:

Castle Academy consists of 12 main classrooms. The infant 1 room is for children ages 6 weeks to mobile (crawling). The infant 2 room is for children who are mobile up to 18 months. The toddler room is for children ages 12 months to 24 months. The two-year-old room is for children between the ages of 20 and 36 months. There are four Pre-K classrooms for children 2½ through 6 years and one Preschool classroom for children who are 2 ½ and potty trained. The Parents-Day-Out (PDO) classroom and the school age room are in the opposite end of the building from the entrance. The café is used for early morning drop offs, as a lunch room and a nap room.

Upstair

Located upstairs is storage, supplies and a staff lounge.

Contained in the upstairs storage are classroom materials for the classrooms, books and seasonal items. These items are cycled through the classrooms as determined by the staff. There is range of art supplies and crafts items which all staff are encouraged to explore in order to consistently improve their classroom environments. The staff lounge is made available to staff during breaks, a preparation area and kitchen storage.

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

Outside Facilities

Outside areas are plentiful and meet the needs of all children at Castle Academy. Along the younger side of the building are three areas for infants and toddlers. The back side of the property offers a play structure for 2 year olds, a preschool playground, a PreK play structure and a school-age play structure. There is a splash pad and a concrete area that can be used by all ages of children. Older children can use playgrounds designated for younger children, but younger children cannot use playground designated for older children. Children are not to mix ages/groups while on the playground and staff to child ratios must be maintained at all times.

Parking

All employees should park in the spots on the perimeter of the parking lot. If all those spots are filled, the movie theater allows us to use their lot. If parking in the movie theater lot, only park in the spots on the outside by the street.

Building Entrance

The entrance to Castle Academy is locked. Each staff member and family has a specific code to allow entrance to the school. Please do not open the door for someone who is unfamiliar to you. Security of the building is important and we do not want unknown persons in the building unaccompanied.

General Staff Expectations

Guidelines of Employment

1. All persons must fill out an employment application. The Director will then call to set up an interview, which will be scheduled at a convenient time. The Director may deem it necessary to attend two interviews, which may include another staff of The Academy. Any applicant who knowingly or willfully makes a false statement of any material, fact or thing in the application is guilty of perjury in the 2nd degree as defined in section 18-8-503, C.R.S. and upon conviction thereof, shall be punished accordingly
2. After an offer of employment has been made to the interviewee the following forms must be provided, to Castle Academy by the employee, prior to employee starting work:
 - Immunization records or written statement regarding current immunization
 - Fingerprints
 - Background Check form
 - Mandatory Reporter form
 - I-9 form and all supporting documents
 - W-2 form
 - Medical Statement form, signed and dated by a licensed physician

Castle Academy

Employee Handbook

- Signed copy of statement that the Employee has read and understands the State of Colorado Department of Human Services-Division of Child Care rules and regulations
- Signed copy of statement that the Employee has read and understands the Employee and Parent Handbooks
- Staff Training/Orientation Form

Probationary Period

All new staff shall serve a 90-day probationary period. At the end of the probationary period, staff will meet with the director and at that time a decision will be made as to whether the staff will be permanent or terminated. The director will give staff members a self-evaluation that needs to be filled out prior to the meeting. It is the staff member responsibility to schedule a time to meet with the director prior to any benefits being given.

Professionalism

Each Castle Academy staff member is a child care professional and is expected to act as such. The following general guidelines for professionalism should be maintained at all times. Each staff member is expected to:

- Arrive on time and stay entire shift, if needed.
- Not absent from work on a regular basis.
- Find an approved substitute when necessary to miss work.
- Dress appropriately for interaction with children. (see dress code)
- Take directions, suggestions and criticisms, and follow through to improve performance.
- Respect confidential information regarding children, families, and co-workers.
- Display a positive attitude toward the entire center (the program, children, families and co-workers).
- Attend staff meetings and other Center events.
- Keep personal staff file up to date with trainings and other requirements.

Dress Code

We encourage staff to dress comfortably in order to interact directly with children. Clothing that is professional, yet washable is appropriate. The following items constitute the basic dress code for employees of Castle Academy. Final determination of the dress code acceptability of an employee's attire shall be determined by the Director.

- Shorts and skirts must meet the middle of your thigh. Do not wear dresses or skirts if it will interfere with your ability to get down on the floor with the children.
- No midriff or low cut shirts.
- No underwear should be showing at any time.
- No skin should be showing between your top and bottom clothing (even when bending over, raising hands or sitting on the ground).
- Clothing should neither be too tight or too baggy.
- No clothing with logos or pictures that are inappropriate for children (profanity, sexual innuendos, violence, drugs or similar content.)
- If wearing leggings or yoga type pants, top must be long enough to cover entire buttocks area and reach the tops of the thighs.
- Hats are not appropriate unless worn outside.

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

- During swimming activities, staff should wear one piece swimsuits, or a two-piece swimsuit that has been pre-approved by the Director. Appropriate clothing should be worn over the swimsuit when transporting children to and from the Center and the pool.
- Teachers in the first building (infant, toddler, and two's) must wear a smock top at all times which will be removed if leaving the center for breaks.

Employees who are found to be in violation of the dress code may be asked to go home and change; the time required to do so is unpaid. A verbal warning will also be given and documented. Second and subsequent violations will result in a written warning, documentation of the incident, and may be subject to other disciplinary action, up to and including loss of employment.

Cell Phones

It is important that every staff member's attention remains on the children **at all times**. A second's lapse in attention could result in a serious accident, which, with appropriate supervision, would have been prevented. Therefore: **Cell phones are not permitted in any of the program rooms or hallways at any time!** Cell phones should remain turned off and stored in a purse, bag, coat, etc. while a staff member is clocked in. Cell phone use is permitted only during an approved break, and never in a classroom, hallway or anywhere children are present. It is never appropriate to make a personal phone call, send a text message, check voicemail, etc. while in the presence of children, even while on an approved break. If someone needs to get a hold of a staff member immediately, they may call the main Castle Academy phone number and someone from the office will notify the staff member. Calls may be answered only after a substitute has arrived to replace the staff member, and outside of the classroom. Ratios must be maintained at all times. If staff members are seen with cell phones, their employment will be terminated immediately.

It is expected that when leaving the center for any reason (walk, field trip, playground, etc.), one staff member will carry with them a cell phone. In this circumstance, the cell phone should only be used in the event of an emergency and not for personal calls/text messaging.

Computers

All Castle Academy-owned computers and or iPads are to be used for work purposes only. Under no circumstances may software be installed without the prior permission of the Director and/or Assistant Director.

The use of Center computers to access pornographic websites, send emails of an explicit or sexual nature, or develop online relations of a similar nature is strictly prohibited.

In the event that the Center provides online accounts to employees, such accounts will be reserved for Center-related use only, and all passwords to those accounts will be available to the Director.

In addition, two specific policies address the increasing influence of online interactions:

Social Media:

The posting of confidential and identifying information about the children, parents, or staff at Castle Academy on social media (e.g., Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, etc.) is

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

strictly prohibited. In no way, does Castle Academy wish to abridge the rights of its employees to engage in critical commentary and observations that may relate to the Center and its operations; however, when such commentary and observations occur within a public forum and contain confidential information, it may result in disciplinary action for the employee. The posting of non-confidential information (promotional materials and the like) shall be restricted to official channels of communication (the Castle Academy website/Facebook page, etc.) unless prior written approval from the Director has been obtained.

Pictures:

As with the use of social media, the publication of photos from the Center, whether online or otherwise, is generally prohibited without prior approval from the Director. In general, approval will usually be granted for pictures which advance the Center's mission, demonstrate the educational achievements of the Center or the children in our care, or which otherwise portray the Center's positive contributions to the community. Staff may take pictures of the activities in their classrooms to share with the families of the children in our care, as appropriate (to document a child's progress, etc.). As mentioned previously, some families have chosen to restrict photograph permissions, and it is expected that all employees will abide by those wishes.

Time Cards and Payroll

Each hourly staff member is responsible for clocking in and out each scheduled workday using the touch screen terminals located at each entrance. Staff members may not clock in more than 15 minutes before their scheduled shift and are expected to clock out immediately after their shift ends (unless asked by the Director to do so). If a staff member forgets to clock in or out, the Director and/or Assistant Director must enter the time and therefore should be notified promptly when this situation arises. Failure to follow the above guidelines may delay processing of a staff member's payroll check until the following pay date.

Paychecks will be distributed on the 5th and the 20th of each month. Paydays are ten days behind the pay period. (Ex – pay period: 12/26 – 1/10 checks distributed: 1/20; 1/11 – 1/25 checks distributed 2/5)

Direct Deposit

Direct deposit of payroll checks is available to all staff members. Interested staff should complete and return a Direct Deposit Authorization form to enroll. Processing may take one to two weeks; staff members will receive a paper check until direct deposit is processed.

Personal Belongings

Coats, backpacks, purses, etc. must be safely put on hooks, in closets/cabinets and out of reach of children. Personal belongings may also be stored in the staff break room. Castle Academy is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Food/Meals

Hot lunch is prepared Mondays through Friday at Castle Academy. Staff members are welcome (and even encouraged) to eat the same food that has been prepared for the children during lunch times as an example to students of proper table manners and willingness to try new food items. Staff members may store a small amount of food in the break room refrigerator upstairs. All food should be clearly labeled with the staff member's name and date. Food should be

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

removed or discarded after one week or when spoiled. Meals should be eaten and prepared only during lunch time, nap/rest time or during an approved break. Snacks are for students only. If you require a snack throughout the day, you need to provide this for yourself.

Handwashing

Staff members must wash their hands at the following times:

- Upon arriving at the center
- After **each** diaper change
- After helping a child use the toilet
- After wiping a nose, coming into contact with saliva or any other bodily fluid
- Before preparing meals and or bottles
- Before and after meal times
- Before and after using the sensory table
- After removing gloves
- After using the restroom
- After returning to the center from a break
- After coming indoors from the playground

Frequent hand washing with soap and warm running water for **at least 20 seconds is the most effective way to reduce and prevent the spread of illnesses like diarrhea, the flu, and conjunctivitis (pink eye).

Professional Development

Required Training

- A. The duties and responsibilities of each staff position and the lines of authority and responsibility within the center must be in writing.
- B. At the time of employment, staff members must be informed of their duties and assigned a supervisor.
- C. Prior to working with children, each staff member must read and be instructed about the policies and procedures of the center, including those related to hygiene, sanitation, food preparation practices, proper supervision of children, and reporting of child abuse. Staff members must sign a statement indicating that they have read and understand the center's policies and procedures.
- D. All staff must complete a pre-service training prior to working with children. The training must include:
 1. Building and physical premises safety, including identification of and protection from hazards that can cause bodily injury such as electrical hazards, bodies of water, and vehicular traffic; and,
 2. Handling and storage of hazardous materials and the appropriate disposal of bio contaminants.
 - 3.

Castle Academy

Employee Handbook

- E. Each staff member working with infants less than twelve (12) months old must complete a Department approved safe sleep training prior to working with infants less than twelve (12) months old. This training must be renewed annually and may be counted towards ongoing training requirements.
- F. Each staff member working with children less than three (3) years of age must complete a Department approved prevention of shaken baby/abusive head trauma training prior to working with children less than three (3) years of age. This training must be renewed annually and counts towards ongoing training requirements.
- G. All staff must complete a Department approved standard precautions training that meets current Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requirements prior to working with children. This training must be renewed annually and counts towards ongoing training requirements.
- H. Within thirty (30) calendar days of employment and annually, all employees and regular volunteers must be trained using a Department approved training about child abuse prevention, including common symptoms and signs of child abuse.
- I. Within thirty (30) calendar days of employment and annually all employees and regular volunteers must be trained using a Department approved training on how to report, where to report and when to report suspected or known child abuse or neglect.
- J. All staff members must be familiar with the licensing rules governing child care centers within thirty (30) calendar days of employment at the center.
- K. All staff who work with children must complete a minimum of fifteen (15) clock hours of training each year beginning with the start date of the employee. At least three (3) clock hours per year must be in the focus of social emotional development.
- L. Ongoing training and courses shall demonstrate a direct connection to one or more of the following competency areas:
 - 1. Child growth and development, and learning or courses that align with the competency domains of child growth and development;
 - 2. Child observation and assessment;
 - 3. Family and community partnership;
 - 4. Guidance;
 - 5. Health, safety and nutrition;
 - 6. Professional development and leadership;
 - 7. Program planning and development; or,
 - 8. Teaching practices:
 - a. Each one (1) semester hour course with a direct connection to the competency area listed in Section 7.702.33, I, 1-8, taken at a regionally accredited college or university shall count as fifteen (15) clock hours of ongoing training.
 - b. Training hours completed can only be counted during the year taken and cannot be carried over.

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

M. To be counted for ongoing training, the training certificate must have documentation that includes:

1. The title of the training;
2. The competency domain;
3. The date and clock hours of the training;
4. The name or signature, or other approved method of verifying the identity of trainer or entity;
5. Expiration of training if applicable; and
6. Connection to social emotional focus if applicable.

All fees for required training courses are to be paid by the staff member, unless otherwise arranged with the Director.

Staff Meetings

Because communication between the staff and the management is crucial to good practices within the Center, mandatory staff meetings will be scheduled on a regular basis. All employees are expected to attend these meetings; exceptions must be approved in writing by the Director, in advance of the meeting.

All staff meetings will be announced in advance and generally will occur after the Center has closed for the day.

New Staff Orientation

All new staff members will be asked to read the Castle Academy staff and parent handbooks. Prior to working in the classroom, the Director and/or Assistant Director will schedule an orientation meeting to complete required paperwork, and review center operation and policies.

Evaluations

Evaluations of a staff member's performance will be conducted by the Director and/or Assistant Director. The purpose of the evaluations is to provide staff members with feedback on performance and to examine, together with the director, the strengths and growth areas of an employee for the year. Evaluations will be performed annually. Informal evaluations will be performed throughout the year during scheduled and unscheduled classroom observations.

Employees will be given a blank copy of their evaluation. Two weeks before the evaluation date and time, employees should fill out this self-evaluation and turn it in to the Director. Employees are also encouraged to review their files and accumulate information their supervisor/director should be aware of for an annual review. These written evaluations will be shared with and signed by the Director and the employee. Each employee will be given a copy of his/her evaluation. Each employee will be given the opportunity to make a written statement in response to all or part of the evaluation. The Director will sign and date any statement made by a staff member and place it in his/her personal file.

Personnel Policies

The following policies are intended to protect the rights of staff members and to ensure maximum understanding and cooperation. Castle Academy staff members are expected to be:

- on-time and alert when scheduled to be at work. (no sleeping while on the clock)

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

- careful and conscientious in performance of duties, including the use of positive words and actions.
- respectful, thoughtful, and considerate of other people.
- courteous and helpful when dealing with children, parents, visitors, and other staff members

Confidentiality

The Academy keeps certain information on file regarding children, families and staff that may be considered personal in nature. It is important that all staff members be discreet in sharing information regarding the children and their parents in public areas. Names and identifying characteristics of children and families should not be shared with anyone other than staff members working in the classroom and the director and/or assistant director. Confidentiality is expected and required when grievances arise; staff members who discuss issues with individuals not directly related to the situation may be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure.

Staff is expected to maintain information in confidence and not discuss it or release it to persons outside the Academy's staff unless prior written permission has been obtained from the parties involved. Staff will also refrain from discussing confidential information concerning staff, the Academy or its families among themselves unless it has direct bearing on the welfare of the children.

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting

While Castle Academy provides a safe environment for children, other types of harm may come to a child despite our best precautions. The abuse or neglect of a child is of paramount concern. **To this end, all staff are required to read and sign all policies relating to identifying, documenting, and reporting child abuse. Mandatory training sessions on the subject are required.**

All Castle Academy employees are mandatory child abuse reporters. In the case of suspected abuse or neglect, you are asked to inform the director prior to making a report to Child Protective Services. If you feel that the director is not adequately protecting the child, you can call the number listed below and report the incident anonymously. Remember that abuse and neglect are serious allegations.

Suspected cases of child abuse or neglect must be reported to the local department of human services at (303) 688-4825 or to the Colorado Department of Human Services Division of Child Care at (303) 866-5958.

If a Castle Academy staff member is accused of abuse and/or neglect by a parent or co-worker, such an accusation will be reported to the Director and a determination will be made as to whether there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse and/or neglect. If there is reasonable cause, a report must be made to the Department of Human Services. Castle Academy will cooperate with any investigation. In addition, the accused staff member will be informed of the allegations and be given an opportunity to respond to those allegations. Termination of employment after a child abuse allegation is at the discretion of the Director.

Immunity from Civil or Criminal Liability

Any person who reports abuse or neglect, pursuant to the law, or testifies in a child abuse hearing resulting from such a report is immune from any criminal or civil liability as

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

a result of such action. As mandated reporters, employees of Castle Academy cannot be held liable for reports made to Child Protective Services which are ultimately determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in "good faith."

PENALTY FOR FAILURE TO REPORT

Any person who knowingly fails to report suspected abuse or neglect, pursuant to the law or to comply with the provisions of the law, may be subject to a fine of up to \$500.00, up to six months' imprisonment, or both.

Grievance Procedure

Staff members are encouraged to problem solve grievances in an informal fashion with the source of conflict. If a solution cannot be reached, staff members should approach their immediate supervisor with a description of the conflict and possible working solutions.

If the grievance is not resolved informally, the staff member should submit a signed and dated complaint to the Director. The Director and staff member will attempt to work out the problem. The Director will provide a written response within 5 working days.

Confidentiality is expected and required when grievances arise. Staff members who discuss issues with other staff members not directly related to the situation may be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure. This policy applies both during paid hours as well as on a staff member's personal time.

Co-Worker Communication

Open communication between staff members, parents, and children is crucial to a successful program. Before leaving a classroom for any reason (bathroom, making a copy, going to the basement/office) an employee should inform his/her cooperating teachers of the reason he/she is leaving. You may not leave the classroom if the classroom will be out of ratio while you are gone. For all involved, it is important that all issues be addressed and resolved as they arise. All employees are expected to function as a team member at all times.

Supplies

Lead Teachers are responsible for reporting to the Director and/or Assistant Director when supplies are running low so they can be replenished before supplies are completely depleted.

Suggestions

Castle Academy is always seeking suggestions that will: improve methods, procedures, and working conditions; reduce costs or errors; and benefit the children, staff, and center. Staff members who have suggestions or innovative ideas are encouraged to discuss them with the Lead Teacher or Director and/or Assistant Director.

Personnel Files

Castle Academy maintains a personnel file for each staff member. These files are confidential. Staff members are prohibited from accessing the personnel file of another staff member for any reason. Staff members should report to the Director and/or Assistant Director if there is a change in address, phone number, emergency contact, e-mail address, marital status, or number of dependents.

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

Substance Abuse

Any staff members reporting for work under the influence of alcohol, marijuana or any controlled substances will be asked to leave immediately. If the Director and/or Assistant Director or other staff member has probable cause to believe a staff member's faculties are impaired while on the job, the staff member may be suspended or terminated immediately.

Tobacco Use

Cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products are prohibited on Castle Academy premises, including parking lots and outdoor play areas. Smoking and the use of smokeless tobacco products is also prohibited in Castle Academy vehicles. It is strongly suggested that staff members who smoke do not do so immediately before or during their shift, as smoke can stay on clothing and hair for an extended period of time. If management can smell smoke on you, your clothing or your hair, you will be asked to change your clothing and/or wash your hair. Staff members must wash hands immediately after smoking, before returning to work.

Reimbursement

The Director must first approve all purchases made by a staff member using personal funds. Any unapproved purchases may not be eligible for reimbursement. Original sales receipts should be submitted to the Director and/or Assistant Director within one week of purchase to receive reimbursement. Receipts that are more than a week old will not be reimbursed.

Equal Employment Opportunity

It is the policy of Castle Academy to provide equal employment opportunities without regard to race, creed, color, age, sex, and national origin. This policy covers all phases of employment, including but not limited to recruitment, employment, placement, promotions, demotion, layoff, recall, termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is never permitted in the workplace. If a staff member feels like he/she is the victim of sexual harassment or if he/she is uncomfortable with a situation, said staff member will contact management immediately.

Attendance

Consistency is crucial to creating a successful program. We make every attempt to put as few staff members as possible in each classroom. Therefore, all staff members are expected to be in regular attendance, in order to provide a consistent environment and routine.

Instances of absenteeism and/or tardiness will be documented in the staff member's personnel file. Recurring absences or tardiness are subject to the Disciplinary Procedure. All absences must be reported to the Director and/or Assistant Director with the expectation that the staff member will arrange for their own substitute. If the staff member needs help in securing a substitute, he/she should speak with the Director and/or Assistant Director.

Absence Due to Illness

It is the responsibility of each staff member to find their own substitute if they are ill or absent for any reason. Once an appropriate substitute is arranged by the staff member, staff should notify management as to who the substitute will be. Staff who open one of the buildings should let

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

management know who their substitute will be ASAP before 6:00 a.m. If you are unable to find a substitute, contact management as soon as possible. Please be considerate as to the early hour when contacting management for any reason. In some cases, the Director and/or Assistant Director may request a note from the staff member's physician indicating the type of illness and when said staff member may return to work.

- Staff are encouraged to stay home on days that they are ill (whether paid or not) if they do not feel well enough to come to work or if they might endanger their health, the health of the children, or the health of other staff members.

Substitutes

Staff members will use an online communication program to find substitutes. Staff members are expected to use this program to find substitutes when unable to work for any reason (vacation, illness, appointments, etc.).

One full-time staff member must always be in the classroom. Situations in which all full-time staff members of a classroom are gone must be avoided. Staff members are expected to communicate with each other to ensure all full-time staff members are not absent on the same day. Substitutes should not be left alone without support at key times of the day – drop-off or pick-up times, particularly.

- If a staff member in your room already has scheduled the day off, you may not be absent. No more than one substitute allowed per room at the same time.
- Any absence that occurs without proper coverage will result in a write up. If you are a Lead Teacher, you must find a substitute who is Lead Teacher Qualified. Repeated occurrences will put your job in jeopardy. Termination will occur when absences affect the overall morale in the classroom.
- If you use more paid time off than you have yet earned, you will be docked pay for whatever used days/hours you had not earned.

Schedules

Castle Academy is open Monday through Friday, 6:00am to 6:00pm. All scheduling requests should be submitted in writing to the Director and/or Assistant Director. Schedules will be created based upon the needs of Castle Academy and the children, as well as staff member availability.

Castle Academy will give as much notice as possible when changes are made to the schedule.

Newsletter/Calendar

Newsletters and calendars to parent will reflect the “goings on” of the Academy. Newsletters are an important tool because parents may read them at their leisure. Calendars let parents know what their child will do every day at the Academy. They will be put out each month and will be posted on the Academy's web site. The head teacher in each classroom will need to contribute ideas of what will occur in their classroom in the coming month.

Disciplinary Procedure

Unacceptable Job Performance

Castle Academy uses progressive discipline as a positive way to correct unacceptable job performance. This is not a contractual obligation because all Castle Academy employees are “at

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

will” which means an employee can be terminated at the will of Castle Academy for any reason or no reason. The following are the steps, which are taken using progressive discipline.

STEP 1 Verbal Warning

If a staff member’s job performance is not meeting Castle Academy’s standards, or if a staff member is in violation of any policy stated in this handbook, he/she will be informed of the problem and the possible penalties if performance does not improve. Suggestions on ways to improve job performance are discussed. Verbal warnings may be given for violation of Castle Academy policies, failure to follow procedures, unsatisfactory performance, absenteeism or tardiness.

Verbal warnings will be recorded, discussed, and signed by both the staff member and Director and/or Assistant Director. After three (3) verbal warnings have been issued for any reason within a period of six (6) months, a written warning will be issued.

STEP 2 Written Warning

A written warning is given if a problem(s) identified by multiple verbal warnings has not been corrected. Written warnings will be recorded, discussed, and signed by both the staff member and Director and/or Assistant Director. A staff member may receive only one (1) written warning during a six (6) month period. After one (1) written warning has been issued, any further issues or actions subject to the Disciplinary Procedure may result in suspension or termination.

Written warnings will be issued immediately for refusal to follow lawful instructions or any other serious policy violation, which endangers the safety or integrity of a child or staff member.

STEP 3 Termination of Employment

Termination may result when using progressive discipline if steps have not produced satisfactory and acceptable performance. Termination may be immediate without using progressive discipline. Reasons for immediate termination may include, but are not limited to:

- Physically or mentally abusing any child
- Abuse of a parent/guardian of a child or another staff member
- Falsified documents (i.e. employment applications, transcripts, time cards, etc.)
- Harassment
- Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol while at work
- Theft
- Possession of a weapon at work
- Tobacco use in the Academy or on the Academy’s property
- Uncovered absences, frequent absences or tardiness
- Failure to carry out job description
- Dishonesty or fraud
- Failure to abide by the Castle Academy Staff Handbook and/or Colorado State Licensing Rules and Regulations (including cell phone usage)
- Violation of any policy which states that violation of such policy may result in termination

The above violations are only examples and are not meant to be all-inclusive. Disciplinary action up to and including termination may be taken immediately at the discretion of the Director or Owners.

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

If an employee's employment is terminated for any reason, all PTO is forfeited as well as all benefits.

Voluntary Resignation

An employee shall be expected to give at least two weeks written notice of his/her intention to resign.

Any unused PTO will NOT be paid out to employee upon separation of employment.

Health & Safety Policies

Staff Physicals

Each staff member must provide proof of a physical within the last year. Physicals must be updated every **2 years** unless stated otherwise by a health care professional. Staff members will have a "grace period" of 30 days to turn in updated physicals. After 30 days, staff members may be suspended without pay until updated physical is provided.

Illness

Our first priority at Castle Academy is providing a healthy, safe learning environment for all children. Children will be sent home as soon as possible if any of the following is experienced: an illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities (as determined by the staff); an illness results in a greater need for care than the staff can reasonably provide without compromising the health or safety of other children in the classroom; or a child is experiencing any of the following conditions:

- **Fever** accompanied by behavior changes or other signs/symptoms of illness
- Signs/symptoms of severe illness, including lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, inexplicable irritability or persistent crying, difficulty breathing, and/or wheezing
- **Diarrhea** (not associated with diet changes or medications) until diarrhea stops or the continued diarrhea is deemed not be infectious by a licensed health care professional.
- Blood in stools not explainable by dietary change, medication, or hard stools
- **Vomiting** until vomiting resolves or until a health care provider determines the cause for vomiting is not contagious and the child is not in danger of dehydration
- Persistent abdominal pain (continues more than 2 hours) or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs/symptoms of illness
- Mouth sores with drooling, unless a health care provider determines the sores are not contagious
- Rash with fever or behavior change, until a physician determines that these symptoms do not indicate a communicable disease
- **Pink eye** (conjunctivitis) until after treatment has been initiated
- **Head lice** from the end of the day until after first treatment
- **Scabies** until after treatment has been completed
- **Tuberculosis** until a health care provider states that the child is on appropriate therapy and can attend childcare
- **Impetigo** until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated
- **Strep throat** until 24 hours after initial antibiotic treatment and cessation of fever
- **Chicken pox** until all sores have dried and crusted (usually 6 days)

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

- **Pertussis** until 5 days of appropriate antibiotic treatment has been completed
- **Mumps** until 9 days after onset of symptoms
- **Hepatitis A virus**, until 1 week after onset of illness
- **Measles** until 4 days after onset of rash
- **Rubella** until 6 days after onset of rash
- Unspecified respiratory tract illness accompanied by another illness which requires exclusion
- **Herpes simplex** with uncontrollable drooling

A child who becomes ill while at Castle Academy must be removed from the classroom in order to limit exposure of other children to communicable disease. An ill child will be sent to the office to wait for his/her parent to arrive. If office is not adequately staffed, the child will remain in their classroom but be isolated from other children until parent arrives.

Castle Academy reserves the right to make the final determination of exclusion due to illness. Any exceptions to our illness policy will require a written note from a licensed health care professional stating that the child is not contagious.

Notice of Exposure & Reporting Disease

If a child or staff member is found to have a communicable disease, a notice will be posted on the door of all affected classrooms.

In the event a child is reported to have a communicable disease; the Director will notify the health department. Additional information regarding illness or disease may be obtained from our nurse consultant.

Medication Authorizations

Authorized staff members may not administer medication to any child unless a parent has provided a Medication Authorization Form which has been completed by the child's health care provider. The form must indicate a start date and end date, a reason for the medication, and the dosage of medication. The parent must also report the time of the last dosage when they drop the child off.

Medications must be stored in a locked box (refrigerated medications) or in a high cabinet (non-refrigerated medications) while in use at Castle Academy. The Medication Authorization Form must remain with the medication at all times. Unused medications must be immediately returned to the family and will not be stored at Castle Academy.

Only persons who have taken a Medication Administration training and who have been delegated by our school nurse will administer them to the children. When a medication is given, the staff will document the type of medication administered, the dosage, and the time it was given as well as any unusual reactions or circumstances. Castle Academy administers medication in compliance with Section 12-38-132, C.R.S., of the "Nurse Practice Act". Expired Medication Authorization Forms must be turned in to the office to be filed in the child's permanent enrollment file.

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

Accidents/Incidents

Minor accidents will be treated with soap, water, a Band-Aid when necessary or ice. No topical creams, ointments or cleaning agents will be used. With all minor accidents, teachers need to add it to the child's electronic daily report. When appropriate, accompany the note with a picture. If there is a serious accident, i.e.: lots of blood, a blow to the head, anything that could require medical attention, notify the director or director substitute immediately.

Staff members shall document accidents and incidents that occur at Castle Academy using HiMama. All reports need to be reviewed by the lead teacher or the office staff prior to the child being picked up for the day. If a bite breaks the skin of a child, an accident/incident report needs to be completed for the child who bit as well as the child who was bitten. Use detail when explaining events, but never include other children's names. If the injury is serious, a parent needs to be contacted by the office staff before pick-up.

Documentation of Health Incidents

Each time a parent is contacted regarding an ill child or symptoms of illness, office staff members should complete a make note on the Illness Surveillance Form. Castle Academy keeps record of all illnesses that occur at the school, as well as which classroom(s) the ill child us in. All parents will be notified of any communicable illnesses present in the center via a sign posted on the entrance to the classroom explaining the illness.

Documentation of Allergies

A child with allergies must have an Allergy Action Plan posted in the classroom. If the allergy is food-related, an Allergy Action Plan must also be posted in the kitchen area. All staff working in the classroom of child with allergies must review the Allergy Action Plan to ensure understanding of emergency procedures should the child have an allergic reaction. All allergic reactions must be documented with a Health Incident Form.

Documentation of Special Health Care Needs

An Emergency Care Plan will be on file for any child or staff member with special health care needs (seizures, etc). A copy of the Emergency Care Plan must be kept in the classroom emergency binder. All staff working in the classroom must familiarize themselves with this plan, should an emergency arise. If necessary, staff will receive training regarding a child's or staff member's specific health care needs.

Access Policy

Any person in the center who is not an owner, staff member, substitute, or subcontracted staff or volunteer who has had a record check and approval to be involved with child care **shall not** have unrestricted access to children for whom that person is not the parent, guardian or custodian, nor be counted in the staff to child ratio. **Unrestricted access** means that a person has contact with a child alone or is directly responsible for childcare.

Person who do not have unrestricted access will be under the direct supervision and monitoring of a paid staff member at all times and will not be allowed to assume any childcare responsibilities. The primary responsibility of the supervision and monitoring will be assumed by the Lead Teacher unless he/she delegates it to the Full Time Assistant Teacher due to a conflict of interest with the person.

Center staff will approach anyone who is on the property of the center without their knowledge to ask what their purpose is. If a staff member is unsure about the reason, take the person to

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

the Director or Assistant Director to get approval for the person to be on site. If it becomes a dangerous situation, staff will follow the “Dangerous Adult” procedure. Non-agency persons who are on the property for other reasons such as maintenance, repairs, etc., will be monitored by a paid staff member and will not be allowed to interact with children on the premises.

A sex offender who has been convicted of a sex offense against a minor (even if the sex offender is the parent, guardian or custodian) who is required to register with the Colorado sex offender registry:

- Shall not operate, manage, be employed by, or act as a contractor or volunteer at the childcare center.
- Shall not be on the property of the childcare center without written permission from the Director, except for the time reasonably necessary to transport the offender’s own minor child to and from the center. The Director is not obligated to provide permission and must consult with their DHS licensing agent first.
- If an unauthorized person or non-custodial parent tries to pick up a child from the Academy, it is your job to keep the children and yourself safe. Notify the director immediately, and if the director is not present at the Academy at the time of the incident, remove the child from the “danger”.

Background Inquiry Checks

Each staff member must complete a Background Inquiry Check Form prior to employment. This is a check of the Colorado Department of Human Services’ (CDHS) Trails database for confirmed reports of child abuse or neglect.

National Criminal History Checks

Each staff member must be fingerprinted prior to employment. Fingerprints are taken at 3rd party companies and are submitted to the FBI and a check of national criminal history records is conducted.

Visitors

All individuals who are visiting the center (i.e., someone who is not a parent or authorized pick-up person; or staff member) is required to sign in, giving their name, address and reason for the visit. The visitor is then required to sign out before leaving the building. Staff members should notify the Director and/or Assistant Director if expecting a visitor. If the visitor is unknown to the Academy’s staff, he/she will be asked to show at least one form of identification.

Curriculum Planning

Curriculum

Curriculum at Castle Academy includes the child-initiated and teacher-directed activities and experiences offered to young children that support and enrich their development physically, emotionally, socially, and cognitively.

- 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 understand things that are real

Castle Academy

Employee Handbook

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.

Each classroom is set-up in centers, which include blocks, dramatic play, books, gross motor, fine motor, and art. Outdoor play is important to a child's physical development and must be included in both the morning and afternoon schedule. Self-selection or "work" is a daily part of the curriculum and means a child has the opportunity to choose which center or activity he/she participates in. This promotes creative expression and development of important social skills.

Daily Schedule and Activities

The Lead Teacher, Teacher and Assistant Teacher work cooperatively to create a daily schedule and plan activities that meet each child's developmental abilities and needs. Every staff member is responsible for the carrying out the schedule and activities. The daily schedule and activities create a balance between active and quiet times; large and small group, and individual activities; small and large muscle activities; indoor and outdoor play times; as well as times for self-selection and teacher-directed activities.

Consistency from day-to-day is particularly important to the overall well-being of the children and classroom environment. Children **thrive** on consistency! Routines should be maintained whenever possible for arrivals and departures; meals and snacks; resting or nap times; personal care routines like diapering/toileting and hand washing; and transitions.

The daily schedule must be posted in the classroom and visible at all times.

Themes

The use of themes is a practical and logical way to begin curriculum planning. The themes should be based upon what the children know and see every day, as well as the children's interests. The themes must be age-appropriate and may span the length of one week, or one month depending on the interest level.

Teachers are encouraged to discuss with each other their themes and coordinate the sharing of materials and activities.

Physical Environment

The actual room arrangement of each program room is the responsibility of the program Lead Teacher, Teacher and Assistant Teacher. Space should be organized and inviting. Centers should include blocks, dramatic play, art, large and small motor, and books. In the Preschool/Pre-K classrooms, areas for language, mathematics, practical life and sensorial should be clearly defined with obvious boundaries. Quiet areas should be set-up as far away from noisy activities (blocks, cars, etc.) as possible. The room décor should consist mostly of child artwork and photographs of animals, people, food, and the children themselves at the

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

child's eye level. Room arrangement should take into consideration that staff must be able to see every child at all times.

The Director and/or Assistant Director must approve changes to the physical environment, including the room arrangement.

Work Time

"Work time" (a Montessori term for free choice, self-selection) must be incorporated into the morning and afternoon schedule. Teachers are expected to actively participate with the children during work time by giving individual or small group lessons, asking questions about what the children are doing, participating in their pretend play, reading books when prompted, encouraging children to try new activities or work with a new activity, etc.

Outdoor Play

Outdoor play must be incorporated into the daily schedule for both the morning and afternoon, in almost all weather conditions. In the event of rain, severe wind/cold, or extreme heat, children are permitted to remain indoors.

There is less structure in an outdoor learning environment; however, it is expected that staff members actively engage in activities when prompted by the children. Outdoor play is an opportunity for children to run, jump, climb and use their bodies in ways that would otherwise be unsafe in an indoor classroom. In addition, a large amount of social interaction takes place when children play outdoors. Because they are engaged in fewer teacher-directed activities and more child-directed play, children are able to choose their friends and who to interact with.

The outdoor learning environment is an extension of the indoor classroom. Concepts taught indoors can be expanded upon while outdoors. For example, building with blocks on an uneven surface outside, or playing with toy cars in the grass teaches children about different textures, sounds, and smells because the environment is naturally different from the indoors. Teachers must be walking around and observing children to ensure their safety.

Nap/Rest Time

The Colorado Department of Human Services requires that all children be provided a regularly scheduled nap or rest time. Children will not be forced to sleep but may be encouraged to lie quietly for a period of time. Children who do not fall asleep after 30 minutes of rest time must be allowed to move to another area of the classroom and be provided with quiet toys or equipment such as puzzles or books. Children must be allowed to leave their napping area within 10 minutes of waking.

Multimedia

Children are limited to a specified amount of time per week they may use or view multimedia:

*Infant, toddler, 2-year-old and ELC classrooms – **0 minutes/week**

*Preschool/Pre-K and PDO classrooms – **30 minutes per week** for recorded media or video **15 minute increments not to exceed 30 minutes per day** for interactive work time usage

School Age classroom – **30 minutes per week** – Exceptions must be approved by management

Pets & Visiting Animals

No pets or visiting animals are allowed on the Castle Academy premises at any time. Classroom pets are limited to fish only.

Assessments

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher conferences encourage effective communication and setting of children's goals. Teachers are expected to plan these conferences and to provide written documentation to the Director, which will be kept in the children's files. Conferences will be held in the spring and fall as determined by the Academy. The Lead Teacher should discuss suitable times to hold conferences with the Director and/or Assistant Director.

Daily Duties for Classroom Staff

Each classroom has a set of opening, nap time, closing and weekly cleaning tasks. Checklists are in each classroom with each staff members cleaning duties. Below are some general things that must be completed each day. Staff members are expected to familiarize themselves with the classroom specific duties.

Morning Duties

Make sure all program room doors are unlocked; mix new bleach water; put away sanitized toys; straighten toys and shelves; re-stock supplies such as soap, paper towels, toilet paper, diapers, wipes, etc.; and complete room set-up for the day's lesson plan.

Noon/Nap-Time Duties

Straightening of shelves; sanitizing toys; cleaning tables/chairs/floors; curriculum planning; wash dishes; complete daily activity sheets for children; and prepare for afternoon.

Afternoon Duties

Wash or spray toys that have been mouthed by children with bleach solution and air dry; take trash to dumpster, sanitize trash can, and replace trash bag; put toys and equipment away; check outdoor play area for equipment that needs to be put away; sanitize tables, chairs, and shelves; wash dishes; empty bleach solution; vacuum carpets; lock all program room doors after the last parent leaves for the day.

Driving the Bus

Fifteen-passenger vans are what Castle Academy uses to transport children in kindergarten through 6th grade to and from elementary school as well as when on field trips. Bus drivers are responsible for the safety and behavior of the children on their buses. Children on Castle Academy buses must adhere to the following rules at all times.

- Children will remain seated and buckled at all times when on the bus
- Children must face forward
- Noise level must not exceed a safe level for the driver to hear
- Doors should remain locked when the vehicle is moving.
- Smoking and the use of smokeless tobacco products is forbidden when transporting children.
- Children shall enter and leave the vehicle curbside unless the vehicle is in a protected area or driveway.

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

- Head counts shall be taken before leaving the center, after entering the vehicle, during a field trip, after taking children to the restroom, after returning to the vehicle, and upon returning to the center.
- When children leave the vehicle, **the vehicle shall be inspected to ensure no children are left in the vehicle.**

Bus drivers and designated staff are responsible for checking the children in and out of Castle Academy. If a child who is on the bus list does not come out of their public school, bus drivers must call The Academy and have management call the child's parent. A pre-trip inspection of the bus must be done prior to transporting children, which will include, but not be limited to: checking lights, tires and doors and windows for proper operation.

Any problem with the bus should be reported to the director immediately.

Arrival and Departure

Arrival

Staff members are expected to greet each child and parent by name upon their arrival to the classroom. Arrival is the opportune time to discuss how the child's night was, what he/she ate for breakfast, special instructions for the day, etc. Upon arrival, each child must have direct contact with a staff member. Staff should be looking for previous injuries, signs of illness, or unusual behavior.

Departure

During the enrollment process, each family completes an "Emergency Contact and Parental Consent" form. This form provides authorization for select individuals to pick-up children from the center. If you are not familiar with the person attempting to pick-up a child, you must request photo identification and check the with the office staff. At the end of the day, staff must check the attendance clipboard to verify all children have been signed out.

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.

Late Pick-Up

Castle Academy closes at 6:00 p.m. Late pick-up charges are \$1.00 per minute for the first five minutes and \$25.00 for every 10-minute interval after that. If parents do not arrive by 6:00 p.m. to pick-up their child, bring the child and all their belongings to the entryway, where attempts to contact the parents will be made. If we are unable to locate a parent, we will try and reach the child's emergency contacts or authorized pick-ups. If the staff cannot reach anyone, we will call the police department or the local division of human services.

Guidance Strategies

Every adult who cares for children has a responsibility to guide, correct and socialize children toward appropriate behaviors. At Castle Academy, we use the term guidance instead of discipline. Guidance is a positive term and implies working WITH the child to develop internal control of his/her behavior. Positive guidance is crucial because it promotes children's self-control, teach children responsibility and help children make thoughtful choices. The more

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

effective caregivers are at encouraging appropriate child behavior, the less time and effort adults will spend correcting children's misbehavior.

Effective guidance focuses on the development of the child. It also preserves the child's self-esteem and dignity. Actions that insult or belittle are likely to cause children to view their caregivers negatively, which can inhibit learning and can teach the child to be unkind to others. However, actions that acknowledges the child's efforts and progress, no matter how slow or small, is likely to encourage healthy development. Teaching children self-discipline is a demanding task. It requires patience, thoughtful attention, cooperation and a good understanding of the child. Castle Academy staff will use **only** positive guidance techniques. When interacting with young children, staff should ask themselves the following questions: "Am I..."

- Validating feelings?
- Asking open ended questions?
- Encouraging problem solving?
- Respecting children's choices?
- Using praise and positive reinforcement?
- Talking with children – not at them?
- Circulating throughout the classroom?
- At the child's eye level?

Reasons for Misbehavior

If caregivers understand why children misbehave, they can be more successful at reducing behavior problems. Listed here are some of the possible reasons why children misbehave.

- Children want to test whether caregivers will enforce rules.
- They experience different sets of expectations between school and home.
- A child does not understand the rules or are held to expectations that are beyond their developmental levels.
- They want to assert themselves and their independence.
- They feel ill, bored, hungry or sleepy.
- They lack accurate information and prior experience.
- They have been previously "rewarded" for their misbehavior with adult attention.

Preventing Misbehavior

Child misbehavior is impossible to prevent completely. Children, usually curious and endlessly creative, are likely to do things parents and other caregivers have not expected. However, there are many positive steps caregivers can take to help prevent misbehavior.

- Set clear, consistent rules. (*e.g., walking feet; gentle touches*)
- Make certain the environment is safe and worry-free.
- Show interest in the child's activities. (*e.g., participating in activities with the children so they stay interested for longer periods*)
- Encourage self-control and independence by providing meaningful choices. (*e.g., "You may pick up the blocks or art center."*)
- Focus on the desired behavior, rather than the one to be avoided. (*e.g., "Ashley, please use gentle touches with your friends."*)
- Build children's images of themselves as trustworthy, responsible and cooperative.
- Give clear directions, one at a time.
- Say "Yes" whenever possible.
- Notice and pay attention to children when they do things right. (*e.g., "Joey is playing so nicely. I like it when you keep the blocks on the table."*)

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

- Encourage children often and generously.
- Set a good example. (*e.g., using a quiet voice when children should be quiet*)
- Help children see how their actions affect others.

Teachers and staff members should be active participants in all activities with the children, including mealtime, indoor and outdoor play and work times. Plan on joining in activities and stimulating the children's interests by asking questions that help to extend their play, i.e. two children playing in the block area have built an elaborate system of roads for their cars but are beginning to lose interest in it. A teacher enters at this point and begins to re-stimulate interest in their play by saying, "Trevor, your car is running out of gas! What can you do about it?" The children may respond by saying, "I have to get to the gas station! Let's build one." It is important to develop "room awareness." That is, to be aware, at all times, of what is going on in the room. Teachers should move around the room and be where he/she is most needed. This includes turning your back on the children even for a second. Use a quiet, warm, yet firm voice when talking to the children. Always go to the child and speak directly to him/her on his/her level. It is important to always show respect for the child. Never embarrass or humiliate the child in front of another child or children or the whole group. Never yell at the children. You are the greatest teacher by your example and if you yell, why can't they? Use a quiet, firm voice. Use each child's name when speaking to him or her. It is recommended to give acceptable choices to the child that you already approve.

Allow and encourage the child to do things for him/herself. Set up activities designed to be independent of teacher supervision. Let the child work at things without interfering. If a problem arises, give the child sufficient time to try and solve the problem. Be ready to assist when it is necessary. Ask questions that will help the child arrive at a solution.

Along the same lines, at meal time, the staff should encourage proper table manners, stimulate conversations, encourage self-help skills, i.e. pouring, serving and cleaning up, and encourage children to try new foods by talking about the textures, ingredients, and how the food is grown and taken to market.

Teachers and staff need to be confident in following through with classroom rules.

Responding to Misbehavior

Below are strategies Castle Academy staff will use to respond to child misbehavior. Remember, however, that it's always a good idea if rules are explained fully and clearly understood before misbehavior occurs. Whenever possible, involve children in making the rules for the classroom.

➤ **Redirection**

This strategy should be used most frequently when working with young children. If a child is not following the rules or being uncooperative, quickly get the child's attention and introduce another activity. For example, "Kate, please help me water the flowers now. You've been riding the bike for a long time and it's now Logan's turn."

➤ **Logical consequences**

These are structured consequences that follow specific misbehaviors. The child should be able to see how the behavior and the consequence are directly related. For example, Andrew is standing on his chair at lunch. His teacher should remind him that if he stands on his chair, he could fall and get hurt; this will make him sad.

➤ **Participate in the solution**

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

If a child damages something, he/she needs to help in fixing it or in cleaning up. If a child causes someone distress, he/she should help in relieving that. For example, Samantha colors on the table, she will be asked to clean it up.

➤ **Natural consequences**

Allowing children to experience the consequences of their behavior is also called learning the hard way. For example, Laura does not put her books back in her school bag after she finishes reading. One day she loses a book, and therefore must find a way to replace it. *Only use natural consequences when they will not endanger the child's health or safety.*

➤ **“Take a break” or “Calm down chair”**

In some instances, a child may need to be removed from a particular situation in which he/she has become overwhelmed or violent. The child should be directed to “take a break” or sit in the “calm down chair.” This strategy gives the child a chance to calm down, regain control, and reflect quietly on her or his behavior away from others. Once the child has calmed down, staff should talk with the child about the actions that led up to and resulted in needing a break or being sent to the calm down chair. For example, “Hannah, we have talked often about how hitting is not acceptable. But because you hit John, please leave the blocks center and go to the calm down chair. I will talk to you when you are ready.”

If these actions do not help in reducing or changing behavior the following will take place:

1. Staff will report behavior and what strategies have been attempted to the Director and/or Assistant Director(s).
2. The Director and/or Assistant Director will observe the child and meet with the Lead Teacher to develop a behavior management plan.
3. The behavior management plan will be discussed with the parent and then put into practice.
4. The Director and/or Assistant Director, Lead Teacher and Assistant Teachers, and parents will evaluate the behavior management plan. If needed, adjustments will be made.

*** If a child's behavior becomes threatening to themselves, other children, staff or teachers, the child will be removed from the classroom and possibly the program for a period of time.*

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. Any such action by a staff member is grounds for immediate termination of employment.

Useful Phrases

The following phrases are useful when problem-solving with children.

Instead of	“No” or “Don’t”
Say	“Please stop”, “I don’t like that”, “That’s not OK”, or “That is not a choice”
Instead of	“That’s not nice”
Say	“That’s not OK”, “Please use gentle touches”, or “That hurts Jordan”
Instead of	“No running”
Say	“I need you to use your walking feet” or “You may run when we go outside”
Instead of	“Stop crying”
Say	“I need you to use your words to tell me what is wrong”
Instead of	“Can you put away your toys?” (If it is not a choice, do not pose it as a question)
Say	“You may help me pick up the blocks, or help Alyssa pick up the puzzles”
Instead of	“I said yes” (when a child tells you “no”)

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

Say "No is not a choice, I need you to..."

Remember that you are a model for the children to follow. Set a good example. Be empathetic, respectful and encouraging and always remember to have fun.

Biting Policy

Biting is a behavior that usually appears between the ages of one and three years. While biting is an age-appropriate behavior, it is important to remember it is also an unacceptable behavior in a childcare environment. Children bite for a variety of reasons: teething, sensory exploration, cause and effect, imitation, crowding, seeking attention, frustration and stress. Biting is not something to blame on children, their parents or their teachers. There are a variety of strategies we implement at Castle Academy to prevent and stop biting. This is the process followed when a child bites:

- The biting child is stopped and told, "Stop biting. Biting hurts" in a firm voice. Teachers should remain calm, being careful not to show anger or frustration towards the child.
- The biting child is removed from the situation. Depending upon the observed motive for the bite, the separation may include re-direction or meeting the child's needs. As little attention as possible will be placed on the biting child, to avoid reinforcing the behavior.
- Appropriate first aid will be provided to the child who was bitten. Bite will be washed with soap and water; cold compress will be applied to reduce pain and swelling. A bandage will be applied if necessary.

It is important to explore the reasons for biting when it occurs. Teachers need to work with parents to gather information about the child's behavior and begin observations to determine the reasons for biting. Examples of triggers would be communication deficits, transitions, hunger, lack of sleep, need for oral stimulation or teething pain. Once triggers are identified, staff can work on prevention strategies and start teaching replacement skills. Below are the steps the teacher will take to identify triggers and replace the behavior:

1. The teacher will examine the context in which the biting is occurring and look for patterns.

The following questions should be asked:

- Was the space too crowded?
- Were there too few toys?
- Was there too little to do or too much waiting?
- Was the child who bit getting the attention and care he/she deserved at other times?

2. The teacher will change the environment, routines or activities if necessary.

3. The teacher will work with the child who is biting to resolve conflicts and frustrations in more appropriate ways

4. The teacher will observe the child, to get an idea of why and when they are likely to bite.

5. The teacher will identify children likely to be bitten and make special efforts to reduce their chance of being bitten.

6. The teacher, parent and Director and/or Assistant Director will meet regularly to regulate an action plan and measure outcomes.

7. If biting continues the teacher will observe the group more closely and work with the parents to seek out additional resources as necessary to shadow the child who is biting.

All information is confidential, and names of the children involved in the incident are not shared between parents. In addition, biting is always documented on an Incident Report, for both the child who bit and the child who was bit, which is completed and signed by a teacher and parent. The original report is kept in the child's permanent enrollment file in the office.

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

Removal of a Child from the Classroom

Children cannot be removed from the classroom as we do not have extra staff available to correct ratios. In rare instances, children may be brought to the main office and the Director and/or Assistant Director will assist the child in calming down and/or help staff manage the classroom. Teachers must call the office and speak to the Director and/or Assistant Director before removing a child from the classroom.

If at any time a child's behavior becomes threatening to themselves, other children, staff or teachers, the Director and/or Assistant Director should be immediately notified.

Meals and Nutrition

Castle Academy follows the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) nutrition and practice guidelines for meals and snacks.

- Prior to each meal, tables must be washed with an all-purpose cleaner. Each table must then be sanitized with bleach water and air-dried.
- All staff and children must wash hands before and after each meal, for at least 20 seconds.
- Staff shall sit with children at the tables and supervise all mealtimes. Staff should encourage conversation by asking questions or talking about the food; good table manners should be modeled.
- First-serving child sized-portions will be provided for all staff. Each staff member is expected to eat the meal provided, in order to model good eating habits.
- Children will never be forced or bribed to eat. Children must have every food on their plate. However, if a child states that he/she does not like a particular food, they may place just a small amount (ex: one or two peas) on their plate.
- Following every meal, tables and chairs must be washed with all-purpose cleaner and sanitized with bleach water.
- Teachers may only eat in front of children during snack and mealtimes.

Food from Home

Children are welcome to bring in special treats to celebrate a birthday or holiday. Due to various food allergies and dietary restrictions in our classrooms, restrictions may be placed on what parents can bring in. Parents should check with their child's teacher before bringing any homemade snacks. A list of healthy snack options approved by the USDA and Colorado Department of Education is available from the Director and/or Assistant Director.

Infant, Toddler and Two-Year-Old Program Information

The following information is specific to the infant, toddler, and two-year-old program rooms:

- Castle Academy supplies all diapers and wipes. Parents must supply bottles, formula, baby food, extra clothing, pacifiers, blankets, and stuffed toys for rest time. All items must be labeled with child's first and last name.
- Infants may use pacifiers during rest time. To reduce the likelihood of spreading illness, pacifiers must be kept in a child's cubby or diaper bag during all other times of the day.
- If a mother is breastfeeding, please be sure to discuss with the mother when she would like her child to be fed breast milk, and when she would like to come in to breastfeed.
- Breast milk must be brought in plastic bags labeled with child's first and last name.

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

- We recommend that all new foods be tried at home first since a child could have an allergic reaction to foods they have not had before. Check with parents before introducing ANY new food.
- Children must be held when being fed – bottle propping is forbidden.

SIDS

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the unexpected, sudden death of a child under age 1 for which a cause of death cannot be identified. It is not known what causes SIDS, however several sleeping practices have been linked to an increased risk for SIDS. Therefore, Castle Academy has a strict policy for infant sleep placement.

All infants less than one year will be placed on their back to sleep.

Infants shall not be allowed to sleep in a car seat or swing for a period of longer than 15 minutes.

Once a child has been placed in his or her crib for nap, if the infant rolls from back to front - and is also able to roll from front to back - it is acceptable to leave the infant sleeping on his or her stomach. NO heavy blankets, stuffed toys or pillows may ever be placed in a crib. All parents need to provide a sleep sack for their child to be placed in during nap times.

A request for alternative sleeping positions must be accompanied by a signed and dated physician's note stating the reason for the request. Staff members found to violate this policy will be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure and possibly termination.

Parent Relationships

Parent Interactions

Work at developing a positive rapport with the parents. Be friendly and helpful, and always make them feel welcome in the classroom. Many of our employees will become well acquainted with the parents of the children. This is an important part of providing quality care, but there are a few guidelines to which staff members must adhere:

- ✓ Address parents by their first name.
- ✓ Talk with parents about an issue with their child only if you are not in the classroom with children.
- ✓ Never talk about concerns about a child in front of any other children.
- ✓ When stating a concern about their child, also state at least two positive things about their child. Don't focus only on the negative.
- ✓ Do not use other children's names when discussing behavior concerns and/or incident reports.
- ✓ Avoid the phrase "I don't know." Instead, say "I'm not certain of the answer for that; can I get back to you?" then find the answer and reply to the parent as soon as possible.
- ✓ Conversations at pick-up and drop-off should be brief; your chief responsibility remains the supervision of the children. If you feel a parent needs more time or attention, ask to schedule a time to meet outside the classroom.

Handling Parent Complaints

- ✓ Listen carefully. Many times, a person just needs an opportunity to air his or her feelings and feel they've been heard.
- ✓ Repeat what you have heard the other person say, trying to summarize it in one sentence. ("You're upset that Gavin isn't able to stay awake for dinner and seems crabby at night.")

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

- ✓ State the changes that you think the parent would like to have made. (“You would like us to make sure Gavin lies down for at least an hour every afternoon.”)
- ✓ State what you will do to solve the problem. (“I will speak with the other teachers and make a note on his chart to make sure the message reaches everyone.”)
- ✓ Follow through. If you tell a parent you will do something, do it promptly and follow up with them immediately afterward. (“I spoke with the other teachers last week; how are things going with Gavin? Did you notice a change?”)
- ✓ If you are unsure how to solve the complaint, refer the parent to the Director and/or Assistant Director. (“I’m not sure how to answer that; the Director and/or Assistant Director will be able to better help you.”)

Position Descriptions

Employee Responsibilities

Director

1. Oversee development of children by ensuring all children are receiving proper care and guidance.
2. Maintain and follow all regulations and guidelines set forth by the Colorado Department of Human Service – Division of Child Care.
3. Manage staff in a manner to comply with all regulations set forth by the Colorado Department of Human Service – Division of Child Care. Ensure staff is receiving training and proper guidance to provide the highest quality of care. Be available to talk to staff regarding concerns or accomplishments.
4. Be available for Parents/Guardians to discuss concerns or accomplishments regarding their children, The Academy, or staff.
5. Be a public figure in the Douglas County community and at local organizations ensuring Castle Academy is held in high regard.
6. Market the program by continually providing high quality childcare and have a visible presence in community media products.
7. Oversee curriculum development, reviewing it to ensure age appropriate activities.
8. Set all staff hours and ensure child to staff ratios are always in place.
9. Attend professional development training as stated in the Colorado Department of Human Service – Division of Child Care regulation book.
10. Plan and develop monthly staff meetings. Plan professional development training for the staff.

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

Title: Lead Teacher

Reports to: Center Director

Position Summary:

Responsible for developing and implementing a full-day, year-round, developmentally appropriate curriculum that promotes the social, emotional, cognitive and physical development of each child in a particular classroom that is in line with the philosophy of Castle Academy. Provide a safe, responsive, stimulating environment by actively engaging oneself in daily activities and routines. Form and maintain professional relationships with parents and families, assess all areas of development, develop and maintain a portfolio for each child and conduct two parent-teacher conferences per year with each family.

Position responsibilities and duties:

Responsible and accountable for overall classroom operations

- Curriculum/classroom program
- Knowledge and enforcement of State licensing rules and regulations
- Knowledge and enforcement of Tri-County Health guidelines
- Help maintain a safe and healthy environment
- Hold regular meetings with classroom staff to develop weekly plans and activities
- Liaison between classroom staff and office management
- Record information required to document growth and development of children
- Perform student evaluations and parent/teacher conferences bi-annually
- Be in classroom at all times
- Delegate to teachers and assistant teachers
- Mentor classroom staff
- Maintain all required documents and trainings for staff file

Qualifications:

Infant/Toddler/2-Year-Olds Classrooms:

- Lead Teacher qualified
- Minimum of 2 years' experience with children 6 weeks – 3 years in home or center setting

Preschool/Pre-K/School-Age

- Lead Teacher qualified
- Montessori Certificate in preschool classes
- Minimum of 2 years' experience with children 3 – 6 years in home or center setting

Working Conditions:

- Mental: Ability to communicate effectively (verbal and written); ability to maintain emotional control under stress
- Physical Demands/Environmental Factors: Ability to routinely lift children, move furniture in the classroom, and sustain long hours of active work

The aforementioned statements describe the general requirements for this job and are not an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties, and skills that may be required. Other duties may be assigned as appropriate.

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

Title: Teacher

Reports to: Lead Teacher/Center Director

Position Summary:

Responsible for working with the lead teacher in developing a full-day, year-round, developmentally appropriate curriculum that promotes the social, emotional, cognitive and physical development of each child in a particular classroom that is in line with the philosophy of Castle Academy. Help the lead teacher provide a safe, responsive, stimulating environment by actively engaging oneself in daily activities and routines. Form and maintain professional relationships with parents and families, help the lead teacher assess all areas of development, help develop and maintain a portfolio for each child and help the lead teacher with parent-teacher conferences bi-annually.

Position responsibilities and duties:

Responsible for working with lead teacher to ensure the following are adhered to.

- Curriculum/classroom program
- Knowledge and enforcement of State licensing rules and regulations
- Knowledge and enforcement of Tri-County Health guidelines
- Help maintain a safe and healthy environment
- Participates in meeting with lead teacher and other classroom staff to develop weekly plans and activities
- Record information required to document growth and development of children
- Help preform evaluations and parent/teacher conferences bi-annually
- Be in classroom at all times
- Delegate to assistant teachers when necessary
- Mentor assistant teachers
- Maintain all required documents and trainings for staff file
- Assumes responsibilities of Lead Teacher in his/her absence

Qualifications:

Infant/Toddler/2-Year-Olds Classrooms:

- Lead Teacher qualified

Preschool/Pre-K/School-Age

- Lead Teacher qualified

Working Conditions:

- Mental: Ability to communicate effectively (verbal and written); ability to maintain emotional control under stress
- Physical Demands/Environmental Factors: Ability to routinely lift children, move furniture in the classroom, and sustain long hours of active work

The aforementioned statements describe the general requirements for this job and are not an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties, and skills that may be required. Other duties may be assigned as appropriate.

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

Title: Assistant Teacher

Reports to: Lead Teacher/Teacher/Center Director

Position Summary:

Responsible for helping the lead teacher and teacher in implementing a full-day, year-round, developmentally appropriate curriculum that promotes the social, emotional, cognitive and physical development of each child in a particular classroom that is in line with the philosophy of Castle Academy. Help the lead teacher and teacher provide a safe, responsive, stimulating environment by actively engaging oneself in daily activities and routines. Form and maintain professional relationships with parents and families.

Position responsibilities and duties:

Responsible for working with lead teacher and teacher to ensure the following are adhered to.

- Curriculum/classroom program
- Help maintain a safe and healthy environment
- Participate regularly in meetings with lead teacher/teacher to understand weekly plans and activities
- Assist teacher in any way needs so the teacher is available to be with the children. This may include but is not limited to: Cleaning, making copies, getting supplies, etc.
- Be able to assist in carrying out classroom plans
- Maintain all required documents and trainings for staff file

Qualifications:

Infant/Toddler/2-Year-Olds Classrooms:

- At least 18 years of age
- 1 class in Early Childhood Education
- 1,820 hours of experience working with children ages 6 weeks to 6 years

Preschool/Pre-K/School-Age

- At least 18 years of age
- 1 class in Early Childhood Education
- 1,820 hours of experience working with children ages 6 weeks to 6 years

Working Conditions:

- Mental: Ability to communicate effectively (verbal and written); ability to maintain emotional control under stress
- Physical Demands/Environmental Factors: Ability to routinely lift children, move furniture in the classroom, and sustain long hours of active work

The aforementioned statements describe the general requirements for this job and are not an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties, and skills that may be required. Other duties may be assigned as appropriate.

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

Title: Teacher's Aide

Reports to: Lead Teacher/Teacher/Assistant Teacher/Center Director

Position Summary:

Responsible for helping the lead teacher and teacher in implementing a full-day, year-round, developmentally appropriate curriculum that promotes the social, emotional, cognitive and physical development of each child in a particular classroom that is in line with the philosophy of Castle Academy. Help the lead teacher and teacher provide a safe, responsive, stimulating environment by actively engaging oneself in daily activities and routines. Form and maintain professional relationships with parents and families.

Position responsibilities and duties:

Responsible for working with lead teacher/teacher/assistant teacher to ensure the following are adhered to.

- Curriculum/classroom program
- Help maintain a safe and healthy environment
- Participate regularly in meetings with lead teacher/teacher to understand weekly plans and activities
- Assist teacher in any way needs so the teacher is available to be with the children. This may include but is not limited to: Cleaning, making copies, getting supplies, etc.
- Be able to assist in carrying out classroom plans

Qualifications:

Infant/Toddler/2-Year-Olds Classrooms:

- At least 16 years of age (18 to work in the infant rooms)

Preschool/Pre-K/School-Age

- At least 16 years of age

Working Conditions:

- Mental: Ability to communicate effectively (verbal and written); ability to maintain emotional control under stress
- Physical Demands/Environmental Factors: Ability to routinely lift children, move furniture in the classroom, and sustain hours of active work

The aforementioned statements describe the general requirements for this job and are not an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties, and skills that may be required. Other duties may be assigned as appropriate.

Benefits

Eligibility for benefits is determined by employment status. Staff members working more than 32 hours per week are eligible for:

- ✓ Accrued Paid Time Off (PTO)
- ✓ Anniversary Paid Time Off
- ✓ Paid holidays
- ✓ Discounted childcare
- ✓ 401K
- ✓ Health and/or Dental Insurance
- ✓ Life Insurance

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

Benefits will be offered to employees without discrimination to any person on the basis of race, color, age, creed, sex national origin, religion, political affiliation, sexual orientation, physical/mental disabilities or marital status.

Paid Time Off

After the 90-day probationary period, full time employees (working more than 32 hours per week) will earn 1 hours of Paid Time Off (PTO) for every 40 hours worked in the preceding week. One-year after employees' probationary period, they will earn PTO as follows:

1 year of employment after probationary period	=	1 week of PTO/year
5 years of employment after probationary period	=	2 weeks of PTO/year
10 years of employment after probationary period	=	3 weeks of PTO/year

Only employees who have worked the previous 51 weeks regularly will qualify for annual PTO.

Any unused PTO will NOT be paid out to employee upon separation of employment.

If employee earns more than 2 weeks of PTO, no more than 2 weeks may be taken at one time. An employee may not accumulate more than 120 hours of PTO.

PTO will not accrue when an employee takes an extended leave of absence. Extended leave of absence will be any absence longer than 2 weeks. An employee's return to employment will not be guaranteed after an extended leave of absence. If an employee returns after an extended leave of absence, their return date will be their "new hire" date for PTO as well as yearly earned PTO.

If employees have accumulated PTO hours, they will automatically be used when employee is absent from work unless otherwise specified by employee when time off is requested.

Time off (weather paid or unpaid) will be given on a first come first serve basis. Please give the Director as much notice as possible. Time off must be approved in advance and employee's shift must be covered by an approved substitute. Time off is officially approved when it is on the calendar in the office.

Staff members are responsible for finding their own qualified substitute for all absences.

No planned time off will be given during the following blackout dates. The first week of school (first of August), the first week of summer (week after Memorial Day) and any dates that your classroom is hosting special events such as parties and parent programs. Specific dates are available in the office.

Class information for substitute teachers must be provided.

Only one full-time staff member per classroom may be absent at a time, unless there are unusual circumstances.

Holidays

Employees working more than 32 hours per week will be paid for their normal working hours on the following holidays if the holiday falls on a weekday (after 90-day probationary period):

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

New Year's Day	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	President's Day
Memorial Day	Independence Day (Fourth of July)	Labor Day
Thanksgiving Day	Christmas Day	

Other days The Academy is closed are uncompensated.

Discounted Child Care

All staff members working more than 32 hours per week are eligible for discounted childcare. This discount applies only to parents or legal guardians of children and only applies for days the employee is scheduled to work. Discounted childcare will be 50% of the normal cost for the employee's children to attend. Childcare costs will be deducted directly from employee paychecks in 2 equal installments. Available spots for children of employees is not guaranteed.

401K

Castle Academy offers 401K to eligible full-time employees. Employees should speak to the Director for more information on 401K enrollment.

Health and Dental Insurance

Castle Academy offers health and dental insurance benefits to all full-time employees after 60 days of employment. New employees can enroll in the insurance plan after the 60 days. Current employees who have waived coverage will need to wait until open enrollment times to sign-up. Castle Academy pays a percentage of the rates for employees only. Employees should speak to the Director for more information on the Insurance plans offered.

Life Insurance

Castle Academy pays 100% of a \$10,000 life insurance policy for all eligible full-time employees after 60 days of employment. Employees should speak to the Director for more information on the life insurance plan.

Emergency Procedure

Emergency Medical/Dental Procedure

It is important that parents complete and update, as needed, an Emergency Contact and Parental Consent Form. This form contains contact information for both the parents as well as the individuals authorized to pick up the child in the event of illness or emergency. In addition, the form allows Castle Academy staff members to seek emergency medical or dental care from authorized care providers in the event of serious injury. **It is the responsibility of the parent to complete this form and to make corrections to this information when necessary.**

- If a child becomes ill or injured after arriving at the center, classroom teachers will contact the main office. Office staff will attempt to contact the parent(s) at all available telephone numbers. If a parent cannot be reached, the individuals listed as emergency contacts/authorized pick up persons on the Emergency Contact & Parental Consent form will be called.
- Children who are ill or seriously injured will be brought to the office and remain under the supervision of the Director and/or Assistant Director until a parent arrives.

If the Child Requires Immediate Medical Attention:

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

- The staff member who witnessed the emergency situation will remain with the injured child and instruct someone else to call the main office. If no one is available, first ensure the child is stable and if possible, bring the child with you to call the office.
- **Office staff will CALL 911.**
 - Provide the center's name and location **Castle Academy, 1354 N. Park Street**
 - Provide the child's name and a description of the incident. Follow instructions as provided by the operator.
- A staff member who witnessed the emergency situation or the Director/Assistant Director will accompany the child to the hospital, bringing the child's physical exam, immunization records, and Emergency Contact & Parental Consent Form.
- **Staff may not transport an ill and/or injured child in a personal vehicle.**

Emergency Fire Procedure

- If you detect a fire, pull the nearest fire alarm signal (small red box mounted on the wall near the exits).
- If it is a small fire, attempt to extinguish the fire using the nearest fire extinguisher. (**IF YOU ARE ON DUTY IN A CLASSROOM** at the time of a fire, follow the instructions below and evacuate the children first.)
- Exit the building and proceed to the designated meeting place.
- **Call 911 as soon as you have reached the meeting place.**
 - Provide the center's name and location: **Castle Academy, 3760 Dacoro Lane**
 - Describe the location of the fire.

If the Fire Alarm Sounds While You are on Duty in a Classroom:

- Assist in the evacuation of the children from your classroom.
- Collect the classroom **first aid kit, classroom binder, and classroom iPad.**
 - Staff member closest to the outdoor exit is responsible for leading children out that exit and to the designated meeting place: All classrooms should exit the building through the door leading to the playground and move as far away from the building as possible. *Every classroom must stay together as a group.*
 - Staff member farthest from the outdoor exit is responsible for ensuring everyone has evacuated the classroom.
- The last staff member to exit the classroom must turn off all lights and close all doors.
- Once assembled at the designated meeting place, the Lead Teacher is responsible for using the classroom attendance iPad to ensure all children are accounted for.
 - *If the Lead Teacher is not present, the Teacher or Assistant Teacher will assume this responsibility.*
- The Director and/or Assistant Director will verify, as soon as possible, that all children are accounted for.
- **If unable to return to the building in a timely manner:**
 - The Director or Assistant Director will notify the emergency personnel that all children and staff are accounted for and wait for further instructions.

****FIRE DRILLS WILL BE PRACTICED MONTHLY****

The Director or Assistant Director will initiate all drills and maintain records of all drills.

Emergency Tornado Procedure

- If emergency weather radio tornado warning sirens are sounded, assist in the evacuation of the children from your classroom.

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

- Collect the classroom **first aid kit, classroom binder, and attendance iPad**.
 - Staff member closest to the hallway exit is responsible for leading children out that exit and to the designated shelter area: **Infant 1, Infant 2, Toddler 1, Toddler 2 and Two Year olds will move to the interior hallway near their room. Preschool and all Pre-K rooms move to the Cafe, PDO and School-Age classes move to the media area. Every classroom must stay together as a group.**
 - Staff member farthest from the interior exit is responsible for ensuring everyone has evacuated the classroom.
- Once assembled in the designated shelter area, the Lead Teacher is responsible for using the classroom attendance iPad to ensure all children are accounted for.
 - *If the Lead Teacher is not present, the Teacher or Assistant Teacher assumes this responsibility.*
- The Director and/or Assistant Director will verify, as soon as possible, with Lead Teachers that all children are accounted for.
- **All children and staff must remain on the floor in the designated shelter area and wait to receive an “all clear” from the Director and/or Assistant Director.**
- During a tornado warning, the Director and/or Assistant Director will be responsible for monitoring weather information by radio and will keep staff members informed of emergency weather changes.

****TORNADO DRILLS WILL BE PRACTICED BIANNUALLY****

The Director or Assistant Director will initiate all drills and maintain records of all drills.

Intruder or Dangerous Adult

A dangerous adult is considered someone who is displaying inappropriate or threatening behavior, carrying a weapon, or showing signs of intoxication from either drugs or alcohol. This also includes an individual that is prohibited by court order from picking up or having contact with a child.

If there is an intruder or dangerous adult in the center:

- Staff members in the immediate area will position themselves between the children and intruder/dangerous adult.
- A staff member will attempt to have the parent/intruder move to the hallway and close the classroom door, while a second staff member calls the Director or Assistant Director to assist with the situation.

IN THE EVENT OF AN INTRUDER OR DANGEROUS ADULT:

- Staff members will be notified by the Director and/or Assistant Director of the threat using the “All School Page” feature on the telephones.
- ALL staff and children must return to their classrooms; and sit on the floor away from doors and windows. Wait for an “All Clear” from the Director or Assistant Director before continuing with activities.
- The Director and/or Assistant Director, or a staff member designated by the Director and/or Assistant Director, will contact the **Castle Rock Police Department – (303) 663-6100** to notify them of the situation.
- The Director and/or Assistant Director will instruct the intruder or dangerous adult to leave the premises, maintaining visual contact with the individual until the police arrive, or until the individual leaves.

IN THE EVENT OF AN INTOXICATED PARENT:

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

- The Director and/or Assistant Director and Lead Teacher will talk with the intoxicated parent about alternative arrangements for pick up, while another authorized pick up person is contacted.
- If another authorized pick up person cannot be reached, the child must be released to the intoxicated parent.
- The Director and/or Assistant Director, or Lead Teacher will inform the parent that the police will be notified.
- Call the **Castle Rock Police Department – (303) 663-6100** and inform them of the situation. Provide as much information as possible, including parent's name, make/model of the car, and license plate number.

Blizzard/Severe Winter Weather

The Director and/or Assistant Director will monitor the weather and local news stations throughout the day to determine when it is appropriate to close the center early or cancel care for the following day.

Office staff is responsible for contacting parents to inform them of the situation. Routine classroom activities will continue until parents arrive.

Lightning

All children must immediately return indoors when lightning is observed. Children playing under or around a tree must be immediately removed from the area.

Missing or Abducted Child

- In the event of a *missing* child, the Lead Teacher will search for the child in the immediate area, while another staff member calls the Director and/or Assistant Director to help with the search.
 - If the child cannot be located in a reasonable amount of time, the Director and/or Assistant Director will notify the **Castle Rock Police Department – (303) 663-6100** and the child's parents.
- In the event of an *abducted* child, the Lead Teacher must **immediately** contact the Director and/or Assistant Director, the Castle Rock Police Department, and the child's parents.

Power Failure

Staff members and children should remain in the classroom and if possible, proceed with activities as usual, or may go to the outdoor playground until power resumes.

If power cannot be restored within a reasonable amount of time, the center will close, and parents contacted.

- Office staff is responsible for contacting parents to inform them of the closing and of the need to immediately pick up their child.
- Activities will resume as possible until parents arrive.

Chemical Spill

ENVIRONMENTAL OR OUTDOOR CHEMICAL SPILL:

If the center receives notification from the Castle Rock Police Department that there has been a chemical spill in the area, or if staff members observe an unusual odor while outdoors:

- Staff members and children must immediately return to their classrooms.
- All doors and windows must be immediately closed.

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

- The Director and/or Assistant Director will monitor the situation and provide information to staff members as it is available. Further action taken will depend on instructions received from the Castle Rock Police Department.

INDOOR CHEMICAL SPILL: (including the mixing of chemicals which creates hazardous fumes)

- Immediately notify the Director or Assistant Director of the situation then assist in the evacuation of the children from your classroom.
- Collect the classroom **first aid kit, classroom binder, and attendance iPad.**
 - Staff member closest to the outdoor exit is responsible for leading children out that exit and to the designated meeting place: **playground as far from building as possible.** *Every classroom must stay together as a group.*
 - Staff member farthest from the outdoor exit is responsible for ensuring everyone has evacuated the classroom.
- The last staff member to exit the classroom must turn off all lights and close all doors.
- Once assembled at the designated meeting place, the Lead Teacher is responsible for using the classroom attendance clipboard to ensure all children are accounted for.
 - *If the Lead Teacher is not present, Teacher or Assistant Teacher will assume this responsibility.*
- The Director and/or Assistant Director will verify, as soon as possible, with Lead Teachers that all children are accounted for.
- The Director or Assistant Director will contact the **Castle Rock Police Department – (303) 663-6100** to inform them of the situation. Further action taken will depend on instructions from the Castle Rock Police Department.
- If unable to return to the building in a timely manner:
 - The Director or Assistant Director will notify the emergency personnel that all children and staff are accounted for and wait for further instructions.

Bomb Threat

If a staff member receives a bomb threat or locates a suspicious package, the Director or Assistant Director must be immediately notified. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO MOVE A SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE. The Director or Assistant Director will contact the **Castle Rock Police Department – (303) 663-6100**

IF YOU ARE ON DUTY IN CLASSROOM:

- Position yourself between the children and impending threat, as much as possible.
- Collect the classroom **first aid kit, classroom binder, and attendance iPad.**
 - Staff member closest to the outdoor exit is responsible for leading children out that exit and to the designated meeting place: : Infant 1 & 2 go to the parking lot of the castle building by the dumpster, Toddlers & Two-Year-Olds go through the back playground of the castle building and into the playground between the 2nd and 3rd buildings, Preschool East and West go to the playground between the 2nd and 3rd buildings, ELC and the far west Preschool go to the sidewalk on the west side of the middle building, both PDO classrooms and the school age children go to the playground between the 2nd and 3rd building. *Every classroom must stay together as a group.*
 - Staff member farthest from the outdoor exit is responsible for ensuring everyone has evacuated the classroom.

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

- Once assembled at the designated meeting place, the Lead Teacher is responsible for using the classroom attendance clipboard to ensure all children are accounted for.
 - *If the Lead Teacher is not present, Teacher or Assistant Teacher will assume this responsibility.*
- The Director and/or Assistant Director will verify, as soon as possible, with Lead Teachers that all children are accounted for.
- If unable to return to the building in a timely manner:
 - The Director or Assistant Director will notify the emergency personnel that all children and staff are accounted for and wait for further instructions

Earthquake

In case of an earthquake, staff members will assist children in seeking shelter under tables or outdoors and away from buildings. The first aid kit, classroom emergency binder and classroom attendance clipboard should remain with the Lead Teacher at all times. When notified by the Director or Assistant Director that the situation is safe, the Lead Teacher must use the classroom attendance clipboard to verify all children are accounted for. Parents will be notified as soon as possible.

General Emergency Procedures Guidelines

- A First Aid kit is located in each classroom. An additional First Aid kit is also available in the office. Staff members are responsible for reporting when additional items are needed.
- All incidents or accidents (including biting) are reported to the parents, Lead Teacher, Director and/or Assistant Director using the Incident/Accident Report form. A completed form must be signed by a parent on the day of the incident. A copy will be given to the parent (if requested) and the signed original given to the Assistant Director to be filed in the child's enrollment folder. In some cases, (i.e., there is a large cut, bruises or a bite mark visible on the child's body) staff members are required to notify the office so that office staff can call parents before picking up to inform them of the incident.
- Parents are discouraged from trying to pick up their child during an emergency. However, if a parent arrives during such a situation, the child must be released to the parent.
- **In the event of an emergency, it is important to remain calm.**
- **As a staff member, your first responsibility is ensuring the safety of the children in your care.**

Exposure Control Plan

Castle Academy is committed to providing a safe work environment for all employees. In pursuing this endeavor, Castle Academy is providing a Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Control Plan (ECP) which meets the requirements of Occupational Health and Safety Organization (OSHA)'s Bloodborne Pathogen Standards. This ECP includes the following information:

- Employee exposure determination
- Methods of implementation and control
- Training and communication of hazards to employees
- Post-exposure evaluation
- Record keeping

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

Program Administration

Management is responsible for:

- Implementing ECP and reviewing the plan at least annually and updating it as needed.
- Assuring that written clean up procedures are developed and that an appropriate disinfectant is available and used.
- Maintaining ongoing controls such as labeling biohazard bags and solutions and provide all personal protective equipment (PPE), and other needed supplies, such as sharps containers and “spill kits”. (“Spill Kits” refers to a kit made up of disposable medical gloves, resuscitation bags, eye protection or goggles, aprons, disinfectant, disposable towels, red/biohazard labeled bags. **Red/Biohazard bags are needed only for items which release blood when compressed.**
- Ensuring Universal Precautions training is available for employees
- Documentation of completed training
- Making the written ECP available to employees

Employee Exposure Determination

The following is a list of job classifications in which employees will be expected to handle blood or OPIM:

1. Director/Owner
2. Assistant Director
3. Teachers (Leads, Assistants and Aides)
4. Volunteers/Interns
5. Kitchen Manager

Methods of Implementation and Control

- **Universal Precautions** procedures must be used by employees when handling blood or OPIM. Universal Precautions means an approach to infection control in which all human blood and certain bodily fluids are treated as if known to be infectious with HIV, hepatitis B, and other bloodborne pathogens.
- **Exposure Control Plan (ECP)** is available to all employees and volunteers.
- **Work Practice Controls** include:
 - Accessible handwashing facilities
 - No eating drinking, smoking, applying cosmetics or lip balm, and handling contact lenses when blood or OPIM is present
 - No food or drink shall be kept in areas (such as on countertops) where blood or OPIM is present
 - All surfaces contaminated with blood will be cleaned with bleach and water solution
 - Most items used in cleaning a blood spill (i.e. paper towels) will be placed in the regular trash unless saturated with blood. Items saturated with blood to the point that blood is released when compressed shall be placed in a leak-resistant bag labeled with the biohazard symbol.
 - Containers for “sharps.” All needles and syringes will be discarded in container immediately after use. Needles must not be recapped.
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** shall be available to employees. The following PPE is available at Castle Academy:
 - Single-use non-latex gloves
 - Mouthpieces for resuscitation (CPR)

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

- Gloves shall be used when handling blood or OPIM and replaced if torn, punctured, contaminated, or if their ability to function as a barrier is compromised.
 - Hands and any exposed skin shall be washed immediately or as soon as feasible after removal of gloves. Unless saturated with blood, gloves may be placed in the regular trash. Gloves saturated with blood shall be placed in a leak-resistant bag labeled with the biohazard symbol.
- **Training** in Universal Precautions and Bloodborne Pathogens is required of all employees annually. The training must cover, at a minimum, the following elements:
 - A copy and explanation of the OSHA standard.
 - Epidemiology and symptoms of bloodborne pathogen
 - Modes of transmission
 - Methods to recognize exposure tasks and other activities that may involve exposure to blood.
 - Use and limitations of engineering controls, work practices and PPE.
 - PPE-types, use, location, removal, handling, decontamination, and disposal
 - PPE-selection and basis
 - Hepatitis B vaccine (stated to employee that vaccine is free of charge prior to offering vaccine).
 - Use of “spill kits” and location of kits with quick access.
 - Procedures for limiting exposure to blood or OPIM
 - Post-exposure evaluation and follow-up

Post Exposure Evaluation

Should an exposure incident occur, the Director must be immediately notified, and a medical evaluation will be provided by a Castle Academy approved medical provider at no cost to the employee. Castle Academy will see that the following elements are performed:

- Documentation of the route of exposure and how the exposure occurred
- Identification of the Source (person's blood that employee was exposed)
- Obtain consent and test source individual for HIV and/or Hepatitis B antibody as soon as possible
- If source does not give consent, **document** that consent could not be obtained

Castle Academy will ensure that the medical care provider is given the following information:

- A description of the employee's job duties relevant to the exposure incident
- Route and circumstances of the exposure
- If possible, the results of the Source antibody testing
- Relevant employee medical records, including hepatitis B vaccination status
- Copy of regulation

The medical provider will be requested to provide the facility with the following:

- If Hepatitis B is indicated and if employee has received vaccine.
- Whether or not the employee has been informed of the results of medical and any medical condition that may require further evaluation and treatment.

Record Keeping

Employee medical records and records of exposure will be kept on site for a minimum of 10 years.

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

Training records will be maintained in each employee's personnel file for a minimum of 3 years. Training records must include date of training and name of trainer.

Hand Washing Procedure

All adults in Castle Academy classrooms need to follow ALL the steps identified below to prevent the spread of disease to children and staff members.

HOW TO WASH YOUR HANDS MOST EFFECTIVELY

- ✓ Use soap and warm (between 60- and 120-degrees F), running water
- ✓ Rub hands vigorously **for at least 20 seconds** (sing the "ABC's").
- ✓ Wash all surfaces, including backs of hands, wrists, under fingernails with fingers pointed to the sink drain
- ✓ Rinse hands well with the water running
- ✓ Dry hands with a disposable towel
- ✓ Turn off water with the paper towel

WHEN TO WASH YOUR HANDS

- ✓ Upon arrival in the classroom
- ✓ When changing from one group of children to another
- ✓ Before preparing or serving food
- ✓ After eating food
- ✓ After diapering/toileting a child
- ✓ After contact with bodily fluids (vomit, blood, mucus)
- ✓ Before and after administration of medication
- ✓ Before and after sensory play, including water play
- ✓ After coming indoors or returning from a break
- ✓ After handling pets
- ✓ After using the restroom

WHEN TO WASH CHILDREN'S HANDS

- ✓ Upon arrival in the classroom
- ✓ Before eating, drinking or preparing snacks for others
- ✓ After eating
- ✓ After using the toilet or having their diapers changed
- ✓ After contact with bodily fluids (vomit, blood mucus)
- ✓ Before and after sensory play, including water play
- ✓ After returning indoors from the playground
- ✓ After handling pets

If they are too young to do it themselves, YOU wash the children's hands. Older children should get into the habit of hand washing to stop disease from spreading. Remember: they will learn by watching YOU.

Diapering Procedure

Preparing for Diapering

To minimize contamination outside of the diapering area, prepare for a diaper change *before* bringing the child to diapering area, for example, by having ready:

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

- Enough wipes for the diaper change including wiping the bottom and hands after taking the soiled diaper away from the child's skin)
- A clean diaper, plastic bag for soiled clothes, and clean clothes of soiled clothing is anticipated
- Non-porous gloves if they will be used, and a dab of diaper cream on a disposable piece of paper or tissue if cream is being used

Diapering Procedure

1. Prepare for diapering as indicated above.
2. Place child on diapering table. Remove clothing to access diaper. If soiled, place clothes into plastic bag.
3. Remove soiled diaper and place into lined, hands-free trash container used only for diaper waste. (To limit odor, seal in a plastic bag before placing into trash container.)
4. Use wipes to clean child's bottom from front to back.
5. Use a wipe to remove soil from adult's hands.
6. Use another wipe to remove soil from child's hands.
7. Throw soiled wipes into lined, hands-free trash container.
8. Put on clean diaper and redress child.
9. Place child at sink and wash hands following the "handwashing procedure."
10. Spray diapering surface with bleach-water solution and wait more than 10 seconds before wiping with disposable towel or allow to air dry. Flip the diaper changing pad over, if possible. It should be noted that the recommended practice is to wait for 2 minutes to allow the solution to kill the germs. The surface cannot be sprayed and immediately wiped.
11. Adult washes hands using the "handwashing procedure," without contaminating any other surfaces.

Additional Precautions

- The diapering surface must be sanitized after each diaper change with a bleach-water or other approved sanitizing solution (all surfaces must be to be sanitized – e.g., no quilted pads or safety straps, no containers that are stored on the diapering surface). The bleach-water solution must be allowed to stay on the surface for 2 minutes to allow the solution to kill the germs. So it is best for staff to spray the surface as the last step of the diapering procedure before washing their own hands. After the time lapse, the surface can be dried (no additional handwashing required at this time) or allowed to air dry (and wiped dry if still damp) before use with another child.
- Diapers are disposed of in a hands-free covered can (usually one that has a step pedal that lifts the lid) to prevent further contamination of surfaces.
- Toys that are played with or objects that are touched, while children's diapers are changed, must be put aside to be sanitized.
- Note: Both child's and staff's hands must be washed after the diapering procedure is completed.

Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting of Equipment

Cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting are important steps to removing dirt and reducing the spread of germs in childcare settings. Routine **cleaning** with detergent soap and water removes dirt and grime from surfaces. Floors, carpets, walls and windows are cleaned. **Sanitizing** removes dirt or filth and small amounts of germs. Bedding, bathrooms, kitchen counters, dishes

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

and eating utensils are clean (to remove dirt) then sanitized. But some childcare items and surfaces require the added step of **disinfecting** after cleaning to kill the germs on a surface. Diaper changing tables, hand washing sinks, tabletops, and some toys should be cleaned then disinfected.

Using regular household bleach and water solution is an inexpensive, effective and easy way to remove or kill germs found on surfaces in childcare. Bleach and water solution may be used in several ways:

- Dipping the object into a sink or pan filled with the bleach and water solution then letting the item air dry.
- Using paper towels soaked in bleach water solution to wash surfaces, then letting the surface air dry.
- Using spray bottles to thoroughly wet a surface, then allowing the surface to air dry.

All containers of bleach/water solution should be clearly labeled with the contents of the container and the date. *Example:* Bleach and Water Solution, March 3, 2016. Remember to keep all containers of cleaning and disinfecting products out of the reach of children.

A solution of bleach and water loses its strength and is weakened by heat and sunlight. Bleach solutions should be tested every day, using test strips located in each kitchen. If needed, a fresh bleach and water solution must be mixed. Unused bleach and water solution should be poured down a drain at the end of the day. Do not discard bleach water solution where other cleaners or chemicals are used. **Do not mix household bleach with other household chemicals** such as toilet bowl cleaner, rust removers, acids or products containing ammonia. Mixing these chemicals with bleach will produce toxic and hazardous gases.

Sanitizing

When using bleach and water for sanitizing eating utensils or toys that are mouthed, a weaker bleach and water solution may be used.

- **1 teaspoon bleach to 1 quart of cool tap water**
- Dishes, eating utensils and toys should be submerged in the bleach and water solution for at least 1 minute then allowed to air dry. Food preparation and food service items should not be towel dried.

Disinfecting

Use a stronger bleach and water solution on diaper changing tables, hand washing sinks, toilets, and other surfaces that need disinfecting. Use the following recipe to mix bleach and water for disinfecting.

- **¼ cup household bleach in 1 gallon of cool water OR**
- **1 tablespoon bleach to 1 quart of cool water**
- **Allow the surface to remain wet for 2 minutes**

Play Areas

The play areas are constructed so that a child may safely explore their own physical abilities and challenge them to new activities as they grow. Following is a list of rules that will help to keep the children safe while they are on the playground. It is important for each teacher to help the children adhere to these rules to guarantee consistent safety.

Children are encouraged to wear their coats if they are sent to school with one. If it is needed, we have a few extras available for those whose parents forgot to bring one. Children will tend to

Castle Academy

Employee Handbook

want to take off the coat as they warm up from playing. We feel that children, preschool aged and older are smart enough to know if they are cold or not. Please remind the children to take their coats back inside when outside time is over.

Staff to Child ratios are to be maintained on the playground at all times. There should never be children outside unattended.

Playground equipment in front

The large structure outside of the “castle” consists mainly of a large slide, two adjoining small slides and two adjoining bars of various heights. If the playground equipment is wet or iced over, it should not be used.

Rules:

- For all slides, children must ride down on their bottoms, feet first. There is no walking or climbing up the slide.
- Slides are to be used one child at a time. Chains of children are not allowed.
- Bars are to be used only by children who can reach them. Teachers may not help the child up to a bar.
- No sitting is allowed on any bar.
- No wild swinging is allowed on any bar.
- The children may hang upside down as long as they have a secure grip of the bar with their hands at all times.
- Bars are to be used one child at a time. Encourage the children to form a line if needed.
- The corkscrew and fireman’s pole are to be used one child at a time.
- No hanging on, shaking or touching of the trees is allowed.

Sandbox

Shoes and socks are to be removed and neatly placed outside of the sandbox. Toys (buckets, shovels) are stored in the toy box next to the sandbox. These toys should be returned to the toy box next to the sandbox after use.

Rules:

- Absolutely NO throwing, tossing, or flinging sand.
- The adjoining tunnel may be used while children are playing in the sandbox. Children must have their shoes on while playing in the tunnel.
- No standing on top of the tunnel.

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

Back Yard

The back yard is ideal for educational outdoor activities. It is also used in place of the playground equipment at the discretion of the teacher.

Rules:

- No hanging on, shaking or touching of the trees is allowed.

Deck Area

The deck area may be used at the discretion of the teachers for outdoor educational activities and also for water days during the summer.

Any equipment that is taken onto the deck area must be removed at the end of your time there and put away in the appropriate spot.

Infants

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

Castle Academy

Employee Handbook

- ◆ To be supportive of parents, encouraging involvement, education, and open, honest communication while using tact and discretion

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.

Feeding

Infants are fed on demand throughout 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.

Diapering

Diapers are checked at least every 2 hours. If diapers are found to be wet or dirty, they will be changed promptly.

Toddlers and 2's

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 mealtimes, 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
- ❖ To promote intellectual growth
- ❖ To instill a sense of curiosity

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- ❖ 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

* 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.

Castle Academy

Employee Handbook

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 | Puppet plays |
| Tape recorder | Object labeling |
| Simple directions (up, on, over) | Story time |
| Nursery rhymes | Memory games |
| Counting games | Color matching |
| Alphabet games | Dolls |
| Sorting activities | |

*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

*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

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

Fine Motor Development

Pouring and sifting	Cutting playdough with scissors
Filling and dumping	Puzzle work
Peg boards	Shape sorting
Nesting	Sewing cards
Stacking	Lego blocks
Putting shapes through holes	Button and snap boards
Snap Beads	Twisting jar lids, nuts and bolts
Stringing beads	Art activities

Gross Motor Development

Dancing and marching	Swinging
Outside when weather permits	Pulling toys and wagons
Sliding	Circle games and songs
Climbing stairs	Crawling under and through
Climbing	Jumping
Hanging off bars/ropes	Stretching exercises
Playing ball	

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

Painting with brushes	Creating:
Easel painting	Collages and montages
Finger painting	Murals with chalk, crayon, paint
String painting	Potato prints
Sponge painting	Food coloring pictures
Marble painting	Mobiles
Q-tip painting	Tearing paper
Salt painting	Crayon activities
Water painting	Coloring with crayon and chalk

Daily Schedule

The Toddler room and 2-Year-Old room daily schedule will be similar to the sample one below:

Open-7:30	All ages meet in Toddler room & play
8:00-8:45	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

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

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 midafternoon. Snacks are nutritiously based, combining fruits, vegetables and grains, offering a balanced menu. Every Friday is sack lunch day!

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, use utensils and cups appropriately and are encouraged to practice good table manners. All children in the toddler and 2-year-old rooms will wear bibs at all snack and mealtimes.

Nap

Nap time will follow lunch and last about 2 hours.

Early Learning Classroom (ELC) and Preschool/Pre-K Classrooms

Introduction

Curriculum for preschool children 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 3-4-5-6-year-old stage:

One of the most important jobs for adults working with preschoolers is 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
- 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

Castle Academy

Employee Handbook

- 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

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.

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.

Vocabulary growth

Listening skills

Reading readiness skills

Oral language skills

Interest in and respect for books

Appreciation of good literature

Imagination

Increased attention span

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

Castle Academy

Employee Handbook

Learn to appreciate and enjoy good books
Learn to enjoy being alone

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.

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:

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.

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

Manipulative/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.

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:

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Employee Handbook

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

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.

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

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 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

Outdoor Play Area:

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

Castle Academy Employee Handbook

Fosters safety awareness

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 – Castle Academy offers Spanish to children one time each week. The Spanish teacher works with the children on numbers, colors, greetings, family members, body parts and animals during Spanish time.

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.

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

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

Safety practices with Montessori materials

Some of the materials used in practical life, science and math can be considered chokable. Use of such materials must be closely monitored by an adult at all times. We also display some our works in glass containers. Children must be trained to utilize such items in a gentle safe manner and teachers must provide constant supervision in areas that contain these items. If accidents do occur the area must be cleared of all children until the glass is cleaned up and the area is safe.

Snack/Lunch

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

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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.

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 ample homework time after school. Homework time is followed by 20 minutes of silent reading. After that time they can choose to play in the activities room or on the playground.

School Breaks/Summer

Since the majority of Castle Rock Schools are following a modified 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 day will consist of hikes, lunches, trips to museums, the zoo, etc. Some fieldtrips may require the children to be split into 2 groups and travel on different days. There will be planned activities for the remaining group at the center.

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/GameBoy
- ✓ Weapons
- ✓ Inappropriate materials (books, music, pictures)
- ✓ Inappropriate language
- ✓ Treating other children with disrespect
- ✓ Treating teachers with disrespect

Transportation

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. No smoking is allowed on the busses at any time. When the children are transported to and from their public school they need to be clocked in and out on one of the computers. This helps us keep track of each child's attendance.