



1121 NW 6th Street, Gainesville, Florida 32609

352.505.0144

Monday - Friday 7:00am - 5:00pm

Parent Handbook

Mission Statement

Persimmon Early Learning Academy's mission is to create a strong educational foundation and a lifelong love of learning by providing a safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate environment through which children feel secure in their explorations of the world around them.

**** Please see attached addendum regarding COVID-19 policies and procedures

Welcome to Persimmon Early Learning Academy. We offer classes for children ages one through second grade with both full and part time options. Our program operates on a ten-month calendar with summer programs available to accommodate families needing year-round care.

We value early learning and the immeasurable impact positive school experiences can have on a child's life. Our purpose will be to provide your child with a high quality curriculum combining free exploration and purposeful play. We will encourage your child's natural curiosity and desire to investigate the world through art, music, literature, science, physical play, cooking, sewing, and gardening.

Our aspiration is for all of our students to develop independence, critical thinking and problem solving skills. We will provide a safe environment, which nurtures these skills and ensures all children feel valued and understand their importance in our community.

We welcome you to come in for a tour or to sit in on a portion of our day. Please contact Bonnie Bowman at 352-505-0144 to schedule an appointment. We look forward to joining you on the beginning of your child's educational journey.

Tuition and Fees

Tuition must be paid in advance. Payments can be made on a biweekly or monthly basis. Biweekly payments are due on the Friday of the preceding week and monthly payments are due on the first day of the month.

One month advanced notice is required when withdrawing. Tuition must be paid through the end of the final month of enrollment, even if your child does not attend for the entire month.

A morning snack, lunch, and an afternoon snack must be brought from home. Please send a water bottle or sippy cup labeled with your child's name. Children will be encouraged to drink water throughout the day and will be served water with snack and lunch, unless a drink is a provided by you for lunchtime.

Please see tuition contract for current rates.

VPK:

Follows the SBAC Calendar 180 instructional days from 9:00am - 12:00pm

Each family will also be responsible for a \$50 materials fee that must be paid with the first tuition payment. This fee will be charged annually. VPK only students do not pay a materials fee.

Drop Off

All children need to arrive at school by 9:00am. If you are going to be later than 10:00am, your child **may not** attend that day. If you have an appointment or have made a previous arrangement with Ms. Bonnie, an exception will be made.

Snack, Cooking Projects, and Celebrations

Each child will bring a nutritionally balanced lunch from home and two healthy snacks. (Half day students only need to bring a morning snack.) Please be sure that you take into consideration your child's appetite and provide an adequate amount of snack and lunch for the amount of time they will be at school.

We value whole real foods and plan snacks to provide your child with nutritious food while in our care. All cooking projects and food experiences will use food that is organic, natural, and/or GMO free, and will always be vegetarian.

We ask when bringing in a special treat to celebrate your child, that you also try to limit the amount of sugar and processed ingredients in the food. These snacks must be store bought and individually packaged.

We love to celebrate and we appreciate a sweet treat on occasion, but they will be very limited. It is our philosophy that parents should be able to make the majority of the decisions about what types of treats their children enjoy.

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Behavior Management and Discipline

All teachers at Persimmon Early Learning Academy manage behavior in their classrooms in a non-punitive, age appropriate manner. Staff will receive ongoing training in the areas of discipline and behavior management. Positive Behavior Supports will be used to teach children the value of making good choices and problem solving skills.

Situations in which children may be endangering themselves or others, destroying property, or continually making inappropriate choices may result in a time out with reflection afterwards with the teacher. Teachers will continue to be an active listener and support the child with conflict resolution. Time out will never be longer than one minute for each year of the child's age.

Parents will be notified of the behavior management strategies used and receive an incident report. If a child continues to struggle with behavior, an individual behavior management plan may be implemented. We will work with the family to create a plan through which the child will learn to manage his or her behaviors and have positive experiences while at school.

No child shall be subject to physical corporal punishment, humiliated, frightened, verbally abused, or denied food, rest or bathroom facilities. Children will never be disciplined for toileting accidents, sleep habits, or food consumption.

Any violation of this discipline policy should be reported to the director immediately.

Potty Training

We will begin to assist your child with potty training when in the Two Year Old classroom. Our teachers will work closely with you to ensure consistency between home and school. Children must be potty trained before moving up to the Three Year Old classroom.

When your child is beginning to learn how to use the toilet we will need them to wear pull-ups or diapers to school until they have used the toilet successfully (pee and poop) for one full week at home and at school (excluding night time).

We want to do everything we can to assist in this process. This is an exciting time for you and your children because they are becoming more independent. We understand that accidents happen and are to be expected. For the first month of wearing underwear, please send pull-ups or diapers and wipes to school for your child. We will need to use them if a child has two consecutive accidents in a day. Please keep three full changes of clothes in your child's cubby during this period.

Potty training can be a stressful time for both children and parents. We are here to support this transition and make it the most positive experience possible for our families. I am always available to discuss these guidelines further. I understand that each family may take a different approach to potty training at home, but please understand that these guidelines are what we have found to work best at school.

Dress

Dress your child in comfortable, practical clothing for painting or playing outdoors. Send your child each day dressed for outside play. Tennis shoes are preferable. Dress-up shoes have slick soles. Sandals and flip-flops can be dangerous and inappropriate for active play.

Children's clothing should be uncomplicated so that they can easily use the bathroom by themselves. Please label all sweaters, jackets, coats, lunch boxes, sippy cups, water bottles and backpacks with your child's name.

Severe Weather Plan / Emergency Plan

In the event of a hurricane or other severe weather, we will notify you that the school is closing or will be closed. You may be asked to come and pick your child up before the end of the school day.

Once the weather system passes, please check Brightwheel and email for information about when the school will reopen. If the Alachua County Schools are closed, we will also be closed.

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If the school is closed due to severe weather or damages, we will not make up those days as our calendar has very little flexibility. There will not be any reimbursement for missed days due to these closures. Thank you for your understanding in this matter.

In the event of an emergency evacuation from the building, parents can meet us in the parking lot of the Bailey Village Apartments. It is located half a block north of Persimmon.

Rest

All children will be expected to have rest or quiet time if they attend past 12:30. You may send in a blanket and small stuffed animal for your child to use during this time. These items will be sent home to be washed on Friday. Please return them with your child the following week.

Parent Access Policy

Parents and guardians will be assured access to their child(ren) at any time, while they are in care.

Authorization to Release

Children will be released only to those persons listed on the Enrollment Form. Identification will be required of any person picking up the child. The Director/Lead Teacher should be notified in advance, in writing, if someone other than the parent is to pick up your child. If there is a discrepancy, the child will be kept at school until the Director/Lead Teacher can contact the parent by telephone. Temporary changes for the child's release cannot be authorized over the telephone.

Health Practices

Children may not attend if exhibiting any signs of illness at home including coughing, respiratory illness, difficult or rapid breathing, stiff neck, diarrhea, temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, vomiting, pink eye or

discharge from the eye, exposed or open skin lesions, unidentified rashes, unusually dark urine and /or gray or white stool, yellowish skin or eyes, or any other unusual sign or symptom of illness.

All symptoms must be gone for a minimum of 24 hours WITHOUT medication for a student to return to class. In some instances the school may require a note from the doctor for the child to return to class.

Children in care shall be observed on a daily basis for signs of communicable disease. Any child suspected of having an illness as listed below, will need to be picked up by someone listed on the enrollment form. Children who become ill while in care will be placed in an isolation area (the director's office) and observed by staff until they are picked up. Children may not return without medical authorization or until the signs and symptoms of the illness are no longer present - a minimum 24 hours symptom free without medications. Parents or legal guardians will be contacted immediately. Signs and symptoms of a suspected communicable disease include the following:

1. Severe coughing, causing a child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound;
2. Difficult or rapid breathing;
3. Stiff neck;
4. Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stool within a 24 hour period);
5. Temperature of 101 degrees Fahrenheit or higher;
6. Pink Eye;
7. Exposed, open skin lesions;
8. Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool;
9. Yellowish skin or eyes; or
10. Vomiting;
11. Any other unusual sign or symptom of illness.

A child identified as having head lice shall not be permitted to return until the following day, and only provided that treatment has occurred and has been verified. Verification of treatment may include a product box, box top, empty bottle, or signed statement by a custodial parent or legal guardian that treatment has occurred.

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We do not issue refunds or make up days for student sick days.

BB 1/4/21