



# PARENT HANDBOOK of Policies and Procedures

## **Our Philosophy and Mission:**

At Wheat Ridge Learning Academy our philosophy is to create a place for children where they can run, play, explore, learn and grow – physically, mentally and spiritually.

Our goal is to provide a child care program that offers children a healthy, safe, loving environment to enhance each child's unique spirit.

Our mission is to provide children the opportunity for educational experiences along with emotional social, physical and cognitive growth under the loving guidance of our long-term, highly qualified staff.

We strive to enrich children's lives by offering a basis for learning which improves self-esteem and encourages individual creativity.

We believe that parents are an important part of children's learning experiences and are partners in the education and care of the children.

## **About Us:**

Wheat Ridge Learning Academy is licensed by the Colorado Department of Human Services to care for children between the ages of six weeks to seven years old.

We welcome all children regardless of race, religion, sex, or national origin and fully comply with federal regulations, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA). In accordance with the ADA, we ensure equal access to our facilities and services for individuals with disabilities and proudly support the inclusion of children with special needs in our program.

## **ADMISSION, REGISTRATION, FEES**

Due to limited space and staffing, classroom sizes are restricted. If immediate enrollment is unavailable, your child will be placed on our waitlist in the order received once the Waitlist Fee is paid. We will contact you as soon as a spot becomes available. For updates on your waitlist position, please email [info@wheatridgelearningacademy.com](mailto:info@wheatridgelearningacademy.com).

Once a spot is offered and a start date is confirmed, parents must submit a non-refundable tuition deposit and complete all required forms. The Colorado Division of Child Care requires that all forms and documents be completed before your child can attend:

- Completed Enrollment Forms including permissions for field trips, sunscreen, photographs, laying on mats and watching videos;
- Signed & dated Emergency Medical Care Authorization Form;
- Health Appraisal signed by physician stating that your child is well enough to attend;
- Copy of updated immunizations;

Children who are not fully immunized due to medical, religious, or personal reasons may still be admitted, in compliance with state regulations, but must submit a signed exemption form. The Center will follow the local and state health guidelines, including exclusion from the Center during outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases.

An annual activity fee (per child) is charged each September to cover classroom supplies, teaching materials, special visitors, performances, and events like pizza parties.

## **NON-ENGLISH-SPEAKING FAMILIES**

WRLA is committed to ensuring families who speak languages other than English have equal access to our services, activities, and programs. We will provide meaningful communication with all enrolled families and offer translation of information in all WRLA communications. All necessary interpreters, translators, and aids will be provided at no cost to families, who will be informed of this free service. Language assistance will be available through bilingual staff, interpreters, local organizations, or technology-based services. WRLA will regularly assess families' language needs and update this policy as necessary to ensure effective communication.

## **CHILDREN WITH DIFFERENT NEEDS**

WRLA does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, or ability and is committed to supporting the Americans with Disabilities Act. Children with disabilities will be integrated into regular classroom activities, as long as they can function within our established ratio. If additional support is needed, parents must provide and pay for a classroom aide.

When enrolling children with special needs, we will consult with parents, staff, the center's nurse consultant, and other relevant individuals to ensure their needs are met. Periodic assessments may be conducted to ensure adequate care. If a child's needs are not being met, parents will be supported in finding alternative care or have the option to pay for an additional aide. For special accommodations, please email [info@wheatridgelearningacademy.com](mailto:info@wheatridgelearningacademy.com).

## **HOURS OF OPERATION AND HOLIDAYS OBSERVED**

WRLA is open Monday through Friday, from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The center will be closed twice annually for Staff In-Service Training to meet the Colorado Department of Childcare's continuing education requirement. These closures will be announced at least one month in advance.

The center is also closed on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the Friday after Thanksgiving, and Christmas Eve through New Year's Day. If a holiday falls on a Saturday, the center will close on Friday; if it falls on Sunday, we'll close on Monday.

To support our staff, we charge full tuition for in-service days and holidays, regardless of attendance, as this ensures they can spend the holidays with their families and receive paid time off.

## **ATTENDANCE**

To maintain proper staff-to-child ratios, please notify the office of any changes to your child's attendance schedule. Email [Info@WheatRidgeLearningAcademy.com](mailto:Info@WheatRidgeLearningAcademy.com) to confirm availability before making changes. We will do our best to accommodate your requests.

Wheat Ridge Learning Academy is not a drop-in childcare center. Children are enrolled based on an agreed-upon schedule. Without prior approval from the Director, children cannot be dropped off outside of their regular schedule. If your child has not maintained regular attendance and you wish to have them attend, please email [Laura.Hartley@WheatRidgeLearningAcademy.com](mailto:Laura.Hartley@WheatRidgeLearningAcademy.com).

## **VACATION DAYS AND DAYS OFF**

**Tuition secures your child's spot and is not based on attendance.** No discounts are given for vacations, days off, school closures, or other absences, as this allows us to continue to pay our staff.

## **TUITION**

Tuition is due on or before the first of the month. A \$25 late fee will apply if payment is not received by the 3rd. If payment is not made by the 7th, your child will not be allowed to return until the balance is paid. Past due balances may be reported to credit agencies.

Tuition is required even if your child is absent for illness, vacations, or any center closures, including snow days, holidays, public health outbreaks, and emergencies, to ensure staff and overhead costs are covered.

A \$25 fee will be charged for returned checks. If multiple checks are returned, payments must be made by cash or money order. Cash payments must be made at the office for a receipt.

CCAP parental fees are due on the 1st of the month. If care is denied, you will be responsible for full tuition. Families must swipe their child in on the POS machine within one week of enrollment and ensure the receipt shows "approved" to drop off. If the CCAP card is declined, tuition must be paid for that day before drop-off. Families must back swipe on Fridays for the week's attendance to avoid tuition responsibility.

The Center's tax ID is 45-4085768, and tuition receipts are available upon request.

## **TUITION DISCOUNTS**

We offer a 10% discount on the older child's tuition for families with more than one child enrolled full-time at our center. Additionally, we provide a 10% discount for first responders and military personnel.

## **TRANSITIONING INTO OUR CENTER**

Separation can be stressful for both parents and children, especially during the initial transition to a new environment. Sometimes children are upset during their first few weeks and some don't express anxiety until a few weeks later, which is completely normal as they adjust to new people and surroundings. Building bonds with teachers and peers takes time.

We understand that transitions—whether starting daycare, moving to a new age group, or preparing for school—require patience, planning, and support. We are committed to helping families navigate these changes smoothly.

We will comfort and reassure your child, acknowledging their feelings and encouraging you to do the same. Children are sensitive to their parents' emotions, so a positive and supportive attitude is key. When you leave your child at the Center please don't sneak out. Make the "good-bye" and hug something he/she can count on even if it brings some tears at first. When it's time for you to leave the classroom, after you say your good-byes, make the departure definite. Lingering can make a child uncertain of what is expected of him/her. It is helpful when parents develop a routine (leave after reading a book together, washing hands, greeting the teacher, etc.).

Consistency is the key. Over time your child will be accustomed to this routine and learn that you always come back when you say you will. Together we will work through this important developmental process.

## **TRANSITIONING INTO NEW AGE GROUPS AND NEW CAREGIVERS**

Transitioning children to new classrooms requires careful planning, patience, and communication. Teachers will discuss the transition with parents first, considering factors such as age, development, and classroom availability. Children will have short visits to the new classroom to meet the teacher, interact with peers, and become familiar with the space. This helps teachers assess emotional readiness.

Our transition process includes:

- Talking with parents about their child's needs before the transition.
- Offering children time to explore the new classroom and meet the teacher.
- Supporting both children and parents throughout the transition, keeping communication open.
- Ensuring parents are informed of their child's caregivers and encouraging discussions about any concerns.
- Providing verbal and written communication, with the option for parents to contact the Director and Primary Caregiver.
- Informing parents when their child is ready for the transition and working with the new teacher to ensure a smooth process.
- Maintaining ongoing communication throughout the transition to ensure a seamless experience for the child.

### **ITEMS SUPPLIED BY THE CENTER**

Meals at Wheat Ridge Learning Academy follow USDA guidelines and feature a rotating menu. Children aged 1-2 receive 2% milk, while children over 2 get 1% milk. Juice is 100% juice with no added sugar and is offered no more than twice a week. Children have access to water whenever they are thirsty.

### **ITEMS SUPPLIED BY PARENTS**

- Parents of infants not drinking whole milk must provide bottles with formula, breast milk, or a combination, all labeled with the child's name. Any specific brand preferences (e.g., soy or organic items) must also be supplied by parents and labeled. Meals provided by parents must meet USDA guidelines; if not, the Center will supply the missing components.
- Parents of children not fully potty trained must provide diapers, pull-ups, and wipes. For cloth diapers, a waterproof bag and covered diaper pail must be supplied. Soiled cloth diapers or clothing cannot be rinsed by WRLA staff.
- Diaper cream, sunscreen, medications, or ointments must be provided by parents, labeled with the child's name, and accompanied by a consent form.
- Every child must have a complete change of clothes at the Center, including underwear and socks. Potty-trained children should have at least 1 change, and non-potty-trained children should have 3 extra changes in their cubby. Parents must check for soiled clothing daily.
- Licensing requires a sheet and blanket for nap time. Infants may bring a sleep sack instead of a blanket.
- Toddlers and preschoolers may bring a special blanket or security toy, but items like weapons or fighting toys are not allowed. The Center is not responsible for lost or broken toys.

### **CHILD SUPERVISION AND AUTHORIZED PICK UP**

Teachers will monitor children throughout the day in the classroom and on the playground. Please follow the Center's procedures to support this:

- All children must be signed in and out daily via the BrightWheel app to maintain an accurate attendance record.
- Children may not sign themselves in or out.
- Children will only be released to individuals on the authorized pick-up list, unless parents provide authorization via messaging in BrightWheel.
- Authorized individuals not known to staff must show a photo ID before the child is released.
- If an unauthorized or incapacitated person attempts to pick up a child, we will ask them to leave and/or contact 911.

### **CLASSROOM RATIOS**

WRLA uses the following ratios in our classrooms:

Infants	Ages 6 weeks to 14 months	Ratio is 1 teacher to 4 children
Toddlers	Ages 14 months to 2 ½ years	Ratio is 1 teacher to 5 children
Preschool	Ages 2 ½ years to 5 years	Ratio is 1 teacher to 8 children

### **LATE DROP-OFFS**

If dropping off after 10:00 a.m., please call ahead to ensure proper staffing and lunch planning. Without notice, your child may not be able to attend, unless arranged with the Director.

### **LATE PICK-UP/FAILURE TO PICK UP**

If you are going to be late, please contact the Center. A \$1 per minute late fee per child will be charged and must be paid before your child returns. After 30 minutes, the child may be placed with local authorities. Repeated late pick-ups may lead to disenrollment.

### **CUSTODY SITUATIONS**

The parent or guardian who signs the enrollment paperwork is presumed to have legal custody. If there are any custodial arrangements that may impact the child at the Center, the enrolling parent must provide written documentation of these arrangements.

### **CHILDREN WHO BECOME ILL**

It is not our intent to allow children who are truly sick to stay at the Center but it is also not our intent to exclude children who are only mildly ill. We rely on parents to make decisions based on their child's health. Staff will monitor children's health and may determine if a child is too ill to participate. Please provide accurate health information to help make the best decision. A child will be excluded if:

- They cannot participate comfortably in all daily activities. If medication or inability to play outside is necessary, the child is not well enough to attend.
- The child is in greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the care, health and safety of other children.
- Their illness is contagious.

Parents will be contacted if a child becomes ill during the day. If a parent cannot be reached, an emergency contact will be called to pick up the child.

**Children must stay home for at least a full school day without symptoms before returning (e.g., sent home Wednesday, return Friday). In some cases, the nurse consultant or health department may advise a longer exclusion due to community outbreaks (48-72 hours). WRLA follows these recommendations for the health and safety of all.**

A doctor's note may be required for suspected contagious illnesses to reduce the risk of spreading.

The following is a partial list of reasons why a child might be sent home:

- Fever of over 101 degrees (or 100 degrees if child is under 3 months old);
- Lethargy that is more than expected tiredness;
- Uncontrolled persistent coughing;
- Inexplicable irritability or persistent crying;
- Wheezing or difficulty breathing;
- Diarrhea (3 times in one day or 2 times within one hour);
- Vomiting;
- Mouth sores with drooling until a physician determines the child is noninfectious;
- Rash until a physician determines that these symptoms do not indicate a communicable disease;
- Pediculosis (head lice) until child is nit free;
- Strep throat until a full 24 hours after treatment has been initiated;
- Chickenpox until all sores are dried and crusted (usually 6 days);
- Scabies, Tuberculosis, Impetigo, Pertussis, Mumps, Hepatitis A virus, Rubella until cleared by a doctor to return;
- Other symptoms or signs unusual for the child;
- Any diagnosis of a communicable disease not referred to above;

Parents must report any exposure to communicable illnesses outside the Center (flu, strep, pink eye, ringworm, lice, norovirus, etc.). Children may be excluded based on local health department recommendations. The Center follows all State Health Department guidelines in regards to reporting cases of communicable disease.

#### **REQUIRED CONDITIONS FOR A CHILD TO RETURN TO THE CENTER AFTER BEING ILL**

A child excluded due to illness may return when:

- Free of fever, vomiting, and diarrhea for at least a full school day (e.g., if sent home on Wednesday, return on Friday).
- Has completed 24 hours of antibiotic treatment.
- Able to participate in usual activities, including eating, drinking, napping and outdoor time.
- Free of open, oozing skin conditions or drooling (not from teething) unless a healthcare provider states it is not contagious, or the area can be covered with a bandage.

In cases of differing opinions, WRLA will follow the guidance of our nurse consultant or the health department.

#### **ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES AT SCHOOL**

Our goal is to prevent accidents and respond effectively if they occur. At least one staff member with advanced first aid training will be on-site at all times and accompany children on excursions. Parents must sign a release for ambulance transport at their expense. This disclaimer is a part of the Center's enrollment forms.

If a child receives an injury or has an accident while in our care trained staff will administer first aid (e.g. cleaning, band aids, ice). An incident report will be documented in the BrightWheel app. For serious injuries, parents or emergency contacts will be called. If they cannot be reached, the child will be transported by ambulance to the hospital. In all accidents, staff will care for the injured child while ensuring others are supervised. A report will be filed in compliance with Licensing Regulations and the Occupational Health and Safety Act, and the Childcare Licensing Division will be notified if necessary.

#### **STORING AND ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION**

Notify the Director if your child requires medication or special medical care for allergies. A Health Care Plan and proper paperwork must be completed in advance. If not, parents will need to administer the medication. In compliance with Colorado State regulations and the Nurse Practice Act, all medication requires a written order from a healthcare provider with prescriptive authority and parental consent. Home remedies or homeopathic medications cannot be administered.

Medications must remain in the original labeled container, with prescription medications bearing the pharmacy label and over-the-counter medications labeled with the child's name. Long-term medications require annual reauthorization, and any changes need a new order. Acetaminophen or ibuprofen can be administered for up to three consecutive days with a signed multi-use order.

Topical preparations like sunscreen can be applied with written consent but not on open wounds unless prescribed. Only trained staff may administer medication, which is stored in a locked cabinet except for emergency medications.

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN**

Staff are trained in safety procedures, with regular drills for fire, tornadoes, severe weather, lockdowns, and active shooters, as required by Colorado Childcare Licensing. In an emergency, children are escorted to safe spots, attendance is taken, and they return once the all-clear signal is received. The Emergency Plan includes accommodations for children with disabilities and those with access and functional needs, ensuring tailored evacuation and support during emergencies. Additionally, the Continuity of Operations Plan ensures that essential services, including staffing and communication with families, will be maintained or quickly restored following an emergency or disaster.

While children are actively supervised, if a child is missing, the following steps will be taken:

1. A thorough search of the school and grounds.
2. After ten minutes, parents/guardians and the police will be contacted.
3. A search of the surrounding area will begin.

## **UNFORESEEN EVENTS**

The Center aims to operate every day of the year, except for designated holidays and planned closures. However, if a vital resource (e.g., water, electricity) is disrupted, the Center may need to contact parents to pick up their children.

Ensuring a safe, secure environment in compliance with State regulations is our top priority. The Jefferson County Health Department and Colorado Childcare Licensing require the Center to have working electricity and plumbing to remain open.

In the event of a disruption, the following steps will be taken:

1. Children will be moved to a safe area, and staff will calmly reassure them about the situation.
2. The Director will contact the relevant authority (e.g., Denver Water, Xcel Energy) for updates on resource restoration.
3. If the issue will not be resolved promptly, parents will be contacted to pick up their children.
4. Parents will be notified if such an incident occurs during or outside the school day.

## **CONDUCT IN THE CLASSROOM AND DISCIPLINE**

To ensure a positive experience for all children, we ask that three basic principles be followed:

1. Keep yourself safe.
2. Keep others safe.
3. Keep materials and equipment safe.

Our teachers use positive guidance methods to encourage independence and responsibility. Redirection helps guide children from inappropriate to appropriate activities, and teachers communicate clearly when solving problems. Behavior issues are addressed individually as they arise.

For repeated behavior issues, staff will create a plan of action, which may include:

- The child taking a break with the teacher (not punitive, but calming).
- Discussing the behavior before returning to the group.
- Notifying parents of any concerns.

## **CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS**

We will work with every child to address discipline issues, but if severe, disruptive, or aggressive behaviors persist, parents will be called in for a conference with the teachers and Director. Our goal is to collaborate on finding solutions, and we may involve our Nurse Consultant if necessary. In some cases, we may require parents to seek additional services. Parents must cooperate with these efforts; failure to do so may result in discontinuing childcare.

For challenging behaviors, the following steps will be taken: the teacher and Director will meet with parents, strategies will be implemented in the classroom, referrals and recommendations will be made, and alternative options like changing classrooms or reducing hours may be considered. While it's never our goal to discontinue childcare, it may be necessary if we cannot meet the child's needs or if their behavior creates an unsafe environment. Each situation will be assessed individually, and the final decision will be made by the Director.

## **REFERRAL FOR SERVICES**

WRLA collaborates with a nurse and mental health consultant to support children's needs. We may refer children for social, mental health, educational, or medical services like dental, vision, or hearing screenings if necessary.

Staff report concerns about a child's development to the Director, who will assess the situation and determine actions. A plan will be documented, and parents will be informed of the referral, with observations made by the center. With consent, the Director will assist with referrals and coordinate with service providers and families to support goals like those in an IFSP, IEP, or other plans. The Director also maintains a list of local resources and is available to answer questions.

## **HEALTH SCREENINGS, MEDICAL INSURANCE AND MEDICAL HOMES**

Upon admission, WRLA inquires about children's hearing, vision, and dental screenings, offering referrals and annual screenings at minimal cost. We also ask if children have medical insurance and a medical home, providing referrals if needed.

## **PARKING AND SAFETY**

Parents may park in the back lot and use the entrance to their child's classroom. Please avoid parking behind nearby businesses. Never leave children unattended in cars, and keep them on the sidewalk—off rocks and landscaping. For safety, ensure children are properly secured in car seats, as required by licensing.

## **SNOW DAYS, INCLEMENT WEATHER AND CENTER CLOSURES**

The Center will close on snowy or very cold days, typically following Jefferson County or Denver Public Schools for closures, late openings, or early dismissals. Announcements will be made via the BrightWheel app, Facebook, and local TV stations starting at 5:00 a.m. In extreme heat, rain, lightning, or a tornado warning, outdoor activities will be moved indoors. If the Center closes early for weather, parents will be notified by phone.

## **STAFF**

Our staff includes qualified Directors, an Assistant Director, an Infant Toddler Supervisor, Early Childhood Educators, Staff Aides, and a Cook. Our staff members have on average fifteen years experience working with young children and they all meet or exceed state requirements. They are dedicated to teaching, loving, and providing for the children. To ensure safety, background checks and fingerprinting are completed for all staff. Teachers are certified in First Aid and CPR, and all Directors and teachers complete at least 15 hours of continuing education annually.

## **FAMILIES HIRING WRLA STAFF OUTSIDE THE CENTER**

We strongly discourage employees from making independent child care arrangements with families at the Center. If you choose to hire a WRLA employee for babysitting outside school hours, it must be done privately, and the employee is acting as a private citizen, not as a WRLA staff member. We are not responsible for any actions outside of school hours, including transportation.

If you hire a staff member to work for you and that employee resigns their position with us in order to accept your employment offer, you will be charged a \$5,000 finders fee due within 14 days of that staff member's last day of employment with WRLA. Failure to pay the Center the finders fee will result in a case being filed in small claims court or being sent to collection. Families are responsible for all legal fees including attorney costs.

## **TRANSPORTATION AND FIELD TRIPS**

Children transported by the Center will be driven by a licensed, insured driver trained in safety procedures. All children must use appropriate car seats or booster seats and remain securely buckled. Most field trips are local, with children walking or meeting at the destination. For trips requiring transportation, permission slips will be sent home for parent signatures. If a child arrives after their class has left, they must stay with their parent until the class returns.

## **VIDEOS AND MOVIES**

We follow Childcare Licensing rules regarding the use of videos in the classroom. Videos are rarely used but may be shown if they enhance the lesson plan. On days when outdoor play isn't possible, movies may be played.

## **PICTURES**

Professional portraits may be taken for purchase. Teachers will also take classroom photos throughout the year. If you wish to exclude your child from these, please inform the Director in writing.

## **CHILDREN'S BELONGINGS**

Please label all children's belongings and store them in their cubby. While we monitor items, the Center is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items. Toys from home should only be brought for pre-arranged sharing time; comfort toys for nap may stay in the cubby.

## **APPROPRIATE CLOTHING**

Please dress your child in play clothes, as we cannot guarantee they won't get stained or soiled. Children go outside daily (weather permitting), so dress them appropriately for the weather, including boots, a warm coat, and hat/mittens in cold weather. We do not go outside if the temperature is below 30°F, above 90°F, or in rain or snow. Safe, appropriate footwear is required for outdoor play (no flip-flops). Children should wear clothing they can manage independently and avoid complicated outfits. Each child should have a complete set of labeled extra clothes, including socks and underwear. The Center is not responsible for lost items.

## **SUNSCREEN**

Apply sunscreen to your child before arrival. Provide sunscreen for your child at the Center and initial the Enrollment Form to consent to staff assisting with reapplication as needed.

## **MEALS AND NUTRITION FOR INFANTS**

Label infant formula and breast milk with the child's name and date received. Provide enough bottles for the day, and ensure bottles are washed, rinsed, and sanitized after each use if reused. Unused formula or breast milk must be discarded or returned to the parent, except for frozen breast milk. Bottles of formula, milk, or breast milk cannot be fed over a period exceeding one hour. Frozen milk will be thawed under cold running water, in a crock-pot/warming device, or refrigerator, but never in a microwave. Bottles cannot be left in cribs.

Cereal should not be mixed with formula unless instructed by a healthcare provider. Older infants should be given solid foods to encourage self-feeding, with varied meals that include cereal, vegetables, fruit, and protein. Infant food provided by parents must be in labeled, covered containers.

## **MEALS AND NUTRITION FOR TODDLERS AND PRESCHOOLERS**

The Center provides breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack following USDA food program guidelines. Milk or a substitute is required for all toddlers and preschoolers (2% for infants/toddlers, 1% for preschoolers). Weekly menus are posted in the front entryway. If a child cannot eat the provided meal, parents must supply a substitute that meets all USDA requirements, including milk, fruit, and grain for breakfast/lunch, and a meat/meat substitute and vegetable for lunch. If any required components are missing, WRLA will provide them. Staff cannot force children to eat or withhold food as punishment per licensing regulations.

## **NAP TIME**

The Department of Human Services requires a rest period for all enrolled children, allowing them to follow their natural sleep patterns. **Staff cannot force children to stay awake or wake them up prematurely per parental requests.** Rest duration is age-based. Each child needs a sheet, blanket, and may bring a comfort item like a stuffed animal or doll. Drop-offs between 12:00–2:00 p.m. are discouraged, as nap time can be disruptive. Parents must take home sheets and blankets weekly for laundering.

## **DIAPERING AND TOILET TRAINING**

Colorado Childcare Licensing requires toilet training once children can indicate their need, manage clothing, and access facilities. Since our Infant Classroom lacks toilets, training begins in the Toddler Classroom and varies in duration. Regressions are common due to illness, relocation, or family changes.

Toilet training stages include:

1. Awareness (learning vocabulary, observing others, role-playing).
2. Communication ("I'm wet" or "I need to use the potty").
3. Sphincter control (staying dry for 2–3 hours).
4. Willingness to use the toilet.

Staff will inform parents of readiness signs, and parents should update staff on progress at home. Once transitioning from diapers, parents must provide at least three sets of clothes and underwear. Easy-to-remove clothing is appreciated. Accidents are expected and handled with care. Soiled clothes are sent home in a plastic bag. If no spare clothes are available, the Center will provide loaner clothes (to be returned washed) or request parents bring a change.

Parents must supply diapers, pull-ups, wipes, and extra clothing, replenishing as needed. If a child runs out, the Center will provide them for an additional charge.

## **CURRICULUM**

We are dedicated to providing high-quality childcare and Infant, Toddler, and Preschool programs. Following Qualistar's best practices, we structure each child's day with group activities, individual play, outdoor time, and quiet periods, all tailored to support physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development while nurturing imagination and curiosity.

Our preschool program was an original pilot school for the Connect4Learning (C4L) Pre-K curriculum, developed with National Science Foundation funding and support. Through a two-year partnership with Denver University, our staff received direct training from the curriculum creators. C4L integrates literacy, science, social-emotional skills, and math through a project-based approach. Children engage in meaningful activities, such as transforming their classroom into a museum or playing a coral-reef scavenger hunt. Daily lessons include interactive learning centers, individualized instruction, and teacher observations. As a result, our Pre-K graduates often test at a first-grade level in literacy and math.

Our curriculum promotes positive relationships between children, staff, and families, fostering a supportive environment for children's mental health, social, and emotional well-being. C4L also implements strategies that encourage positive behavior, pro-social interactions, and overall emotional competence. For children who need additional support, individualized interventions and behavior plans are provided, aiming to reduce challenging behaviors and prevent suspensions or expulsions. These efforts ensure a nurturing and inclusive environment for all children.



## **DIVERSITY AND REPRESENTATION IN THE CLASSROOM**

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) advocates for diversity in early childhood education, highlighting the importance of inclusive, equitable environments. This includes curricula and teaching practices that reflect children's cultural, racial, ethnic, linguistic, and family backgrounds, as well as non-traditional family structures and gender roles.

At WRLA, we follow NAEYC guidelines, ensuring that all children feel valued and respected while promoting fairness and opportunity. We recognize the importance of children seeing themselves and their families reflected in the materials and experiences they encounter. Research shows that representation plays a critical role in developing a child's sense of identity and belonging, fostering confidence and respect for diversity.

Our curriculum intentionally includes diverse representations of families and non-traditional gender roles, avoiding common stereotypes. This approach helps foster empathy, respect, and acceptance among children, preparing them to engage with the world in an open-minded and inclusive way. We are committed to providing educational materials and experiences that reflect the diversity of the world around us, ensuring all children see themselves represented and respected in their learning environment.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY**

Our program is built on the belief that children learn best through play—engaging with peers, adults, and materials. Hands-on experiences with real objects and events help build a foundation for understanding symbols like letters and numbers. Teachers create an environment that encourages exploration, choice, and experimentation. Each day includes a mix of planned and spontaneous learning moments, with time for outdoor play, imaginative games, independent discovery, and group activities.

## **SAMPLE SCHEDULE**

6:30 am – 8:00 am	Greetings, Arrivals & Free Choice
8:00 am – 9:00 am	Breakfast, Diapers/Potty, Wash Hands & Free Choice
9:00 am – 10:00 am	Outdoor Time, Gross Motor Play & Free Choice
10:00 am – 11:00 am	Group Time, Projects & Free Choice
11:00 am – 12:00 pm	Story Time, Lunch Set-Up, Diapers/Potty & Wash Hands
12:00 pm – 2:30 pm	Rest Time & Quiet Activities
2:30 pm - 3:00 pm	Diapers/Potty & Wash Hands
3:00 pm – 3:30 pm	Snack & Free Choice
3:30 pm – 4:30 pm	Outdoor Time, Gross Motor Play & Free Choice
4:30 pm – 5:00 pm	Diapers/Potty & Wash Hands
5:00 pm – 6:00 pm	Departures, Free Choice, Diapers & Wash Hands

*\*Exact mealtimes, naptimes, outdoor and free play times will vary according to age groups. Please refer to the schedule posted in your child's classroom for specific times.*

## **END OF THE DAY CLOSING PROCEDURE**

At the end of each day, teachers will check the BrightWheel app to confirm all children have been picked up and conduct a final classroom walkthrough. The closing teacher will also review BrightWheel for all classrooms and inspect the entire building before closing.

## **VISITORS, VOLUNTEERS AND SAFE SCHOOL POLICY**

Parents, our health inspector, and our licensing representative may visit anytime. As part of our Safe School Policy, all other visitors must have an appointment, check in at the office, and sign the Visitor's Log in Preschool. Those unknown to staff must provide a state-issued photo ID. Volunteers must complete an application and background check. To volunteer, contact the Director.

## **COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS**

We value an open-door policy and encourage parent involvement in their child's learning. Parent conferences can be scheduled anytime. Preschool and Pre-K conferences are typically held once a year to discuss progress and goals. Some may coincide with Curriculum Nights, and individual conferences are available upon request.

Please notify staff of any events that may impact your child's day, such as issues at home, birth of a new sibling, death or illness of someone important (including a pet) or upcoming events/trips/visitors, to help us better support your child. Teachers keep parents updated through monthly calendars, brief conversations at drop off and pick up, written notes, phone calls, and messages on the BrightWheel app.

## **SAFE SPACE POLICY**

At Wheat Ridge Learning Academy, we are dedicated to creating a welcoming, inclusive environment for all families, regardless of immigration status. We understand the challenges and stress that can come with immigration issues, and we want every child and family to feel safe, respected, and valued in our center. We do not discriminate based on immigration status, country of origin, or nationality, and we embrace diversity in all its forms.

Our staff will not inquire about, document, or share immigration status information. Families are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect. While immigration enforcement actions are unlikely at our center, we recognize that immigration agents may be in the surrounding area. Our Safe Space Policy outlines procedures to follow if immigration agents are at or near the center, or if we become aware of immigration activity nearby.

Staff are trained to respond appropriately, including denying entry without proper credentials or a signed judicial warrant, contacting our attorneys, and ensuring children remain safe and calm. If necessary, staff will make sure children are not visible to agents. Parents will be notified immediately if any immigration-related activity occurs that may impact their child's safety or well-being.

No child will be separated from their parents or guardians due to concerns about immigration status. We understand that family unity is crucial, and we will work to maintain the best interests of the child at all times. If you have concerns about immigration issues or any other challenges affecting your family, we encourage you to reach out to the Director or your child's teacher.

## **PROGRAM EVALUATION**

WRLA conducts anonymous program surveys to gather feedback from families. This allows families to share comments, compliments, ideas, and suggestions. Survey results are used to inform our Quality Improvement Plan and are shared with staff, families, and stakeholders.

## **DISENROLLMENT**

The removal of a child from the program will always be a last resort after following the appropriate steps for the situation at hand. Reasons for dismissal may include:

- Non-payment of tuition or excessive late payment of fees;
- Required paperwork not up to date;
- Unreported absences of two weeks or more;
- Not following the center's Illness Policy;
- Not observing any of the other policies of the Center as outlined in the Parent Handbook;
- Physical and/or verbal abuse of staff or children by a parent/guardian;
- On-going chronic discipline problems;

## **WITHDRAWING YOUR CHILD**

To withdraw your child, please provide 30 days' written notice to the office. If notice is not given, full tuition is due for the 30 days, regardless of attendance. Any remaining balance after withdrawal and unpaid arrangements will be sent to collections or small claims court, with legal fees the responsibility of the family.

## **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

If issues arise, parents are encouraged to schedule an appointment with the Directors to address concerns or conflicts. Open communication helps resolve problems more effectively. Please take the time to get to know the staff and share your thoughts.

## **FILING A COMPLAINT**

If you suspect licensing violations at this or any licensed childcare center, you may report your concerns to the Colorado Department of Childcare Licensing at 710 S. Ash Street, Denver, CO 80246, or by calling (303) 866-5958.

## **REPORTING CHILD ABUSE**

As a childcare facility each staff member is required to read and sign a statement clearly defining child abuse and neglect pursuant to state law and outlining the staff member's personal responsibility to report all incidents of suspected child abuse or neglect according to state law.

Should you suspect child abuse at our facility or any other childcare center a report of suspected child abuse must be made to the County Department of Social Services, Police Department, or other law enforcement agency in the county in which the facility is located. The phone number for the Denver County office is (720) 944-3000.

## **CHANGE OF POLICY**

The Center reserves the right to adjust the policies and procedures with proper notification to parents/guardians.

## **REPORTING ABUSE/MAKING A COMPLAINT**

Dear Parents,

Your child is enrolling in a child care program licensed by the Colorado Department of Human Services and by the Department of Excise and Licenses. These licenses indicates that at the time of inspection the provider has met standards needed to operate a licensed Family Child Care Home, Child Care Center or School Age Child Care Center program.

These standards include:

- Written policies and procedures;
- Communications, emergency and security procedures;
- Personnel requirements for education, experience, and training and supervision.
- Requirements including procedures for admission: health care; personal hygiene; physical care; food and nutrition; discipline; overnight care; field trips and transportation; holiday schedules; and fee policies.
- Activities;
- Equipment and materials;
- Facility requirements;
- Fire and other safety requirements;
- Maintaining children's records;
- Administrative reports and records;

In addition to the above standards all licensed child care providers are required to report suspected physical, emotional, or sexual abuse of any of the children in their care.

As parent of a child/children in licensed child care, you may report any suspected abuse by calling CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE AT 844-264-5437.

If you wish to make a complaint or have a concern regarding your provider you may call:  
COLORADO DIVISION OF CHILD CARE 303-866-5958  
JEFFERSON COUNTY HEALTH INSPECTION DIVISION 303-271-5700

Your providers State Child Care License and Denver Department of Business and Excise License should be posted and available for you to see at your request. You may also review inspection reports at the facility upon request.

We hope the services you and your child/children receive in this licensed child care facility will be both positive and productive.

# WHEAT RIDGE LEARNING ACADEMY

## Infant Safe Sleep Policy

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the unexpected death of a seemingly healthy baby for whom no cause of death can be determined based on an autopsy, an investigation of the place where the infant died, and a review of the infant’s medical history.

We believe that a safe sleep environment for infants helps lower the chances of an infant dying from SIDS, and that parents and child care providers can work together to provide a safe sleep environment. Wheat Ridge Learning Academy follows the following Safe Sleep Policy.

<p>1. All child care staff caring for infants and child care staff that may potentially care for infants will receive training on Infant Safe Sleep Policies.</p> <p>2. Infants will always be placed on their <b>backs to sleep</b>, unless there is a signed <i>Alternate Sleep Position Waiver</i>-Health Care Professional Recommendation in the infant’s file. A copy will also be posted on the infant’s crib.</p> <p>3. When babies can easily turn over from the back to the stomach, they will be placed to sleep on their backs and then allowed to adopt the sleep position they prefer. This is in accordance with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommendations. Child care staff can further discuss with parents how to address circumstances when the baby turns onto their stomach or side.</p> <p>4. Sleeping infants will be visually checked daily, every 15-20 minutes, by assigned staff. We will be especially alert to monitoring a sleeping infant during the first weeks the infant is in child care. We will check the infant for normal skin color, normal breathing by watching the rise and fall of the chest, his or her level of sleep and signs of overheating including flushed skin color, increase in body temperature (touch the skin), and restlessness.</p> <p>5. Staff will reduce the risk of overheating by not overdressing infants. Bibs and garments with strings or hoods will not be allowed while infants are in cribs.</p> <p>6. All parents/guardians of infants cared for in the facility will receive a written copy of our Infant Safe Sleep Policy.</p>	<p>7. To promote healthy development, awake infants will be given supervised “tummy time” for exercise and for play.</p> <p>8. The temperature in the room where the infant(s) sleep will be kept between 68-75°F and monitored by the thermometer kept in the infant sleeping room.</p> <p>9. Infants will not be covered with blankets or bedding. A sleep sack may be used at the parents’ request only if it allows the infant’s arms to be loose.</p> <p>10. No loose bedding, pillows, bumper pads, toys, stuffed animals, etc. will be allowed in cribs.</p> <p>11. Pacifiers must be offered to infants while in their cribs if the parents have provided one to the center. The pacifier is the only object allowed in a crib.</p> <p>12. A safety-approved crib with a firm mattress and tight fitting sheet will be used.</p> <p>13. Each infant will sleep have his or her own crib. Only one infant will be in a crib at a time, unless we are evacuating infants in an emergency.</p> <p>14. Infants who fall asleep in a car safety seat, bumbo, highchair or other piece of equipment must immediately be moved to their approved sleep area and placed on their back to sleep. Infants may not be placed in car seats to fall asleep.</p> <p>15. Music played in the Infants classroom must not be at a loud volume that would prevent infants from being heard by staff. Music equipment must not be placed under a crib or within three (3) feet of the sleeping infant.</p> <p>16. No smoking is permitted in the infant room or anywhere within the building.</p>
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**Distribution:** Parents and staff will review the policy and be informed of changes 14 days before the effective date. A copy of this policy is in every parent handbook.

**Effective date(s):** 7/1/14

**Revision date(s):** 1/27/2020

**References:** CO Rules & Regulations for Childcare Centers 7.702.73 E, G & I

# WHAT YOU SHOULD BRING ON YOUR FIRST DAY

## **Wheat Ridge Learning Academy will provide:**

- 2% milk for infants and toddlers; 1% milk for preschool;
- Breakfast, lunch and snack (table foods following USDA food program guidelines);

## **All families should provide on the first day & then continue to supply:**

- Completed Enrollment Forms (if not previously turned in);
- Immunization form signed by doctor showing all immunizations are up to date OR a signed Medical/Personal/Religious Exemption Form;
- Current Health Appraisal signed by the parent and their pediatrician (within 30 days of enrollment);
- Tuition for the first month;
- At least one change of clothes;
- Sunscreen labeled with your child's first and last name;
- A family picture;
- A water bottle labeled with your child's first and last name (except Infants);
- Food for your child if they are on a special diet, have food allergies or are not on solid table food;

*\*Within 30 days of enrollment all parents are required to provide a current Health Appraisal signed by a physician. Wheat Ridge Learning Academy is required to have new Health Appraisals and Immunization Records for your child based on the Academy of Pediatrics schedule for routine health assessments & immunizations.\**

## **Parents of Infants should bring:**

- Diapers and wipes;
- However many bottles you think the baby will need for the day (maybe even an extra bottle);
- Pacifier (if used);
- Sleep sack with arms loose (if you want your child covered during nap);
- Diaper cream labeled with your child's name (if you choose & with a pediatrician's written authorization);
- Infant Tylenol/Ibuprofen in the original container labeled with your child's name (if you choose & with a pediatrician's written authorization);
- A pack and play sized fitted sheet;
- If the child is eating solid foods, baby food (jars, pouches, snacks, etc.);

## **Parents of Toddlers should bring:**

- Diapers/ pull-ups and wipes;
- Change of clothes (if potty training please bring in more than one change of clothes);

## **Parents of Preschoolers should bring:**

- Just the items listed above for all families: a change of clothes, sunscreen, a family picture, a crib sheet & blanket (taken home weekly to launder) and a water bottle labeled with your child's first & last name.