

A-2-Z

Academy of Early Learning

Parent Handbook



Revised 10/11/2021

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Welcome to A-2-Z Academy of Early Learning

ABOUT US

Mission and Purpose

A-2-Z Academy of Early Learning (referred to A-2-Z in this handbook) offers a developmentally appropriate early childhood program. We provide safe, healthy and reliable child care options for working parents. A-2-Z maintains a dedicated, professional staff through competitive salaries, benefits and ongoing professional development training. We aim to develop and maintain partnerships with parents, staff, community, local and state.

Philosophy

Our philosophy is that children learn best through play. Our student activities during their time with us are geared towards developing a love for learning. The main goal is to help create an environment where our students learn a sense of community. Our experienced staff help accomplish this through utilizing Creative Curriculum by Teaching Strategies. This is a research based curriculum which shows that a whole child approach to education – one where children develop not only math and literacy skills necessary to communicate, think both critically and creatively, solve complex problems- is developmentally appropriate and better prepares children for life well beyond their time in a classroom.

COVID-19

As we are all aware by now there are major changes in our life styles and child care is no exception. So our industry like many others has to go through some necessary changes. Students will be received from your vehicles in the morning. Their temperatures will be taken and recorded and you will be asked several question each day regarding symptoms. These regulations have been put forth by the CDC and Office Of Licensing. It is for everyone's protection. Please be patient and give yourself ample time.

Please note that our sickness policy is updated regularly and will be adhered to strictly for everyones' safety. All staff members and children above of 5 years old must wear masks while at the center. All masks are provided by A-2-Z. There are no parents or visitors permitted inside the building during the hours of operation (6:30am -5:30pm).

We will be providing all bedding material which will be laundered at the school. Please prohibit from sending any items from home (lunch boxes, Bags, toys and so on).

Hand washing and social distancing rules goes without saying. A-2-Z has always prided itself in rigid cleaning rules and will continue to do so.

This Covid-19 Policy does affect some of our existing policies.

Thank you for your patience and understanding

Certification

A-2-Z is a Grow NJ Kids candidate.

We are licensed through the state of New Jersey Department of children and families.

Our license capacity is 122 students

Hours of Operation

Child care services are provided from 6:30 AM to 5:30 PM Monday through Friday.

Holidays

We are closed for the following holidays:

New Year's Day	Labor Day
Martin Luther King's Birthday	Thanksgiving
Good Friday	Christmas Eve
Memorial Day	Christmas Day
Independence Day	Winter Break

If a holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday we will close the previous or following day.

Inclement Weather

A-2-Z follows the Long Valley Public School District in regards to closings or delayed openings. We will post closings on our Facebook page, The Bright Wheel App and through the Nixle text app. Text 07840 to 888777 to enroll, smart phone is not needed.

Definition of Family

In this handbook we refer to family as a parent, a legal guardian, a sponsor, or anyone else who provides for the well-being, best-interest, and responsibility of the child in our care.

Admission & Enrollment

All admission and enrollment forms **MUST** be completed and returned to the office **PRIOR** to your child's first day of attendance. There is a self assessment included in the registration packet that is compiled through "Strengthening ASQ Families". These assessments will be completed on a yearly basis along with the universal health record.

Based on the availability and openings, our facility admits children from newborn to 5 years of age.

Inclusion

A-2-Z believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in child care. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on his/her individual capabilities and needs.

Non-Discrimination

At A-2-Z, equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

Family Activities

Each Family is a child's first teacher. We value families as partners in the growth and development of children in our program. We encourage parents and other family members to be involved in the program, visit children's classrooms, participate in events, and provide feedback on the program. We offer a variety of ways in which families can participate in helping us establish and reach our program goals.

Confidentiality

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released with the exception of that required by our regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children at our program are confidential.

Other exceptions that allow disclosure without written consent:

- Office Of Licensing or any other regulatory agency

Staff Qualifications

All incoming staff members participate in an orientation interview and ongoing training in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism.

All teachers must possess the following:

- A clear criminal background check with fingerprinting
- CPR/First Aid certification
- Training in Fire Safety
- Training in the Basic Core classes including Recognizing Child Abuse, Infectious disease, and Positive Discipline
- All teachers must also complete 20 hours of ongoing training per year,
 - 60 hours within 3 years
- Staff is trained to implement the standards of Creative Curriculum and how it should be used.

We strongly discourage families from entering into employment arrangements with staff (i.e.babysitting). Any arrangement between families and our caregivers outside the programs and services we offer is a private matter, not connected or sanctioned by A-2-Z.

Child to Staff Ratios

Age	Child to Staff Ratio
Birth to 18 months	4 : 1
18 months – 2.5 years old	6 : 1
2.5 years old – 4 years old	10 : 1
4 years old	12 : 1
5 years old	15 : 1

Communication & Family Partnership

To build a solid foundation, it is imperative to establish ongoing communication between our parents and the staff. We welcome your comments, concerns and suggestions. Please feel free to contact the Director regarding any questions or concerns that you might have. We utilize many communication methods besides the fact that you can speak to us face to face. Our parent app “Bright Wheel”, Newsletters, Facebook are a few additional methods for communication. You can also visit our website that has valuable information such as special events, staff information and much more. Visit our website at **a2zearlylearning.education**.

Throughout the year, we will hold a minimum of 2 formal and informal opportunities for communication. Open house will be held at the beginning of each year so that you can meet your child’s teachers. Please get to know your child’s teacher and visit the center whenever you can. Take time to discuss the day with your child, talk about the work he/she has accomplished, making sure he/she realizes that it is very important to you. We look forward to a great relationship with you and your child as part of A-2-Z Academy of Early Learning.

We understand that parents are the most important people in a child’s life and we encourage our parents to participate in activities throughout the year. Listed below are many questionnaires and surveys which are forwarded to you during the year. Please help us by returning all in a timely manner. These items help us provide a quality program.

Please keep in mind rest time is from 12-2pm. The most updated place for information would be our Facebook page at A-2-z Academy of Early Learning.

Community Participation (3.3.5)

We encourage our parents to be involved in their community such as participation in local and regional advisory councils. A-2-Z provides parents with a list of counsel meetings, organizations, times, and places that might be of interest to them and encourages active parent participation. A-2-Z sends out a parent community involvement surveys on an annual basis for our review.

A list of organizations that parents may participate in the community is located in the resources section of handbook. Some of Examples of Parent participation in the community that is child/ family focused are : ***PTA , Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, YMCA, Library and or Church or other Religious Youth Programs, Coaches, Referees, Officials etc.***

Strengthening Families Protective (3.3.1)

The strengthening Families Protective is used to assess engagement of and interaction with parents and families. On an annual basis a survey is distributed to our families. We would very much appreciate you involvement.

Parent Education (3.3.3)

A-2-Z offers parent workshops on many different topics such as:

Positive parent/child relationships, developmentally appropriate interaction, cultural awareness and much more.

If there is a subject that you or your family is interested in please contact the director.

Parents will receive an invite via Bright Wheel App when each class is offered

Home Visits (3.3.4)

A-2-Z will offer at least two home visits throughout the year. These visits are to be used to give teacher and families feedback on your child’s development or center questions. We will also have information on community resources and classes if parents are interested. These meetings are to help the children in their transition from home to center. Resources are also available at the end of this packet. **(Due to COVID 19 only curbside available)**

Open Door Policy

We have an open door policy and we are delighted to have family members participate in our program. Parents/ Guardians are welcome to visit the program any time during regular program hours.

Open Door Policy does not mean the doors will be unlocked. For the safety and protection of the children, external doors will be kept locked at all times. Parents are always welcomed to have lunch, read a story, or help with an art project or special parties in the classroom.

CURRICULA & LEARNING

Learning Environment Assessment (2.3.2)

Structured Observations

Teacher performance evaluations

To ensure that developmentally appropriate learning experiences are provided to our students, all teachers will have a classroom observation conducted by the director or assistant director twice a year. These observations will help our teachers enhance both their teaching skills and practices. Action plans are put into motion for furthering our teacher's trainings which is collectively agreed upon between teachers and director.

This formal performance evaluation will provide the opportunity to discuss job tasks, identify and correct weaknesses, encourage and recognize strengths, and discuss positive, purposeful approaches for meeting 10 goals. Staff will be given a blank evaluation form to give themselves a self-assessment which they will then turn into the Director. The Director will then complete the performance evaluation on the staff. The Director will coordinate a meeting with the staff to compare and discuss the performance evaluation results with the self-evaluation. Classroom evaluations/assessments will be used during the performance evaluation. Additional training may be recommended to staff based on their need and areas identified as needing improvement.

Classroom evaluations

Environment rating scales (ERS) measures what researchers refer to as "Global Quality" in an early childhood classroom. Items are scored on a 7 point scale from 1-7. Subscales include space and furnishing, personal care routine, Language, Interaction, program structure, parents and staff. ERS is performed in classrooms with students over the age of three. ITERS evaluation is for the infant/ Toddler classroom. These assessments are conducted semi annually by director/assistant director. Material checklists are given to all staff members to ensure there are plenty of materials in all interest centers. The results of ERS observations are used to create an action plan for the staff to work together on improving areas that may have been recognized as needing improvement.

Performance-Based Assessment (2.3.3)

Through our observations with the Creative Curriculum standards, we will input our findings into the Gold Assessment Tool. This program is used from infancy up till 3rd grade in the public school system for individual progress. Every 3 months the data is put into a report and we will use it to see which techniques work and the best teaching practices to hit the scale standards set by Creative Curriculum. These results are also available to each parent through the teaching strategies website. Parents are only able to see their child's development.

In addition to Gold the center utilizes POCET (Preschool Observation and Evaluation Tool.)

Developmental Screening Policy (1.3.6)

Evidence shows that the earlier development is assessed, the greater the chance the child has to reach their full potential. In order to ensure that the needs of each child in our care are being met, our center conducts developmental screening at least twice a year. The first screening is conducted within 30 days after the beginning of the school year and six months thereafter. If you are a new family beginning at any other time the screening tool will be given to you at registration and you may return it in two weeks time.

The screening tool A-2-Z uses is the Ages and stages Questionnaire, Third Edition ASQ. This tool looks at developmental progress of the children between the age of one month and five and half years. As parent/parents you are the experts on your child/children. The ASQ -3 understands the importance of parent participation in the developmental screening process, therefore you are being asked to take 10-15 minutes to complete the screening tool provided to you by us. Please return the completed forms to the director within two weeks. We will score the tool and then discuss the results with you.

If a concern is brought to our attention via the developmental screening tool, we will then conduct an additional screening with 4-6 months as recommended by the ASQ-3 and decide on the next course of action. Recommendations can begin with the child's pediatrician. Additional referrals may be provided by the center director for Early intervention (if a student is under 3 yrs of age) or after the age of three the Child Study Team at the local public school where the student will be attending once they are in kindergarten.

Screening and Referral Policy (2.4.4)

A-2-Z has a system in place to link families to services needed to address the developmental and behavioral concerns of children identified through developmental screenings and performance-based assessments.

Policy & Procedure – Referral to Outside Resources

Policy

This policy applies to all staff and is strictly enforced by the director. Staff will be trained in this policy during orientation and the policy will be reviewed with staff annually. Failure to comply with this policy is grounds for written warning and corrective action. Repeated failure is grounds for termination.

When a program staff member determines a family is in need of outside services such as medical, dental, developmental, financial, mental health, clothing, food, shelter, etc. The staff member will assist the family by following the procedure below.

Procedure

1. The staff member will communicate the need, in confidence, to the director.
2. The director will maintain a list of approved organizations and resources for outside services. If no resources are on the list for the particular need, the director will make inquiries to find the appropriate resources.
3. The staff member and director will confer on the subject and determine if the circumstance indicates need for a third party professional. If a professional is required, the director or administrator will contact the professional and assume responsibility for the referral.
4. If no third party professional is required, the director will confer and agree who will communicate the referral to the family.
5. After a reasonable amount of time, the person who communicated the outside resource will check back with the family to make sure the referral was helpful. If it was not, additional resources will be sought.

Referral to Outside Services

Child Name: _____

Referral give to (family member name): _____

Name of outside service to which family was referred: _____

Referral Date: _____

Name of individual who made the referral: _____

How referral was made (verbal, written, email, etc.): _____

Names of other individuals consulted if any: _____

Reason for referral: _____

Follow up/ results after referral: _____

Others note: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Transition (2.4.5)

Your child's transition into child care should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. We will work with you and your child to ensure the smoothest possible transition within the school setting. Students are placed in a class based on their date of birth and consequently the graduation date. This minimizes the amount classroom changes. Once the decision has been made (based on the child's age and ability) to transition a student, the transition folder will follow the child from room to room. The transition folders have all the information regarding each student (Screening forms, work samples and much more). This will allow the teacher in the new room to familiarize themselves with their new students.

Transition from Home to Center

Prior to your child's first day, you will have an opportunity to tour the center, meet with your child's peers and teachers, and communicate any anticipated concerns. At this time please share the best communication methods that the teacher may use to reach you. We also encourage parents to bring children in to get familiar with the center before their first day.

Transition Between Learning Programs

Children are transitioned to the next program based on age, development readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. During the transition, current and future teachers will meet with you to propose a plan to introduce your child into the new program.

Multiculturalism (3.5.2)

Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment we inhabit. A-2-Z collaborates with community partners to create a culture of respect toward linguistic and cultural differences for all of our enrolled families.

Our Calendar highlights specific cultural events that represent all ethnicities within our school population and also plan generic activities that all students and parents can participate. We utilize books, music, games, and a wide range of activities as aids to teach our students respect for our world and the diversity within our community. Families are more than welcome to send in ethnic treats for the children to experience.

Home Language

A-2-Z will encourage your child's home language through reading, writing, speech and music. Parents are encouraged to let us know if a second language is spoken at home during the application process. If a second language is used our staff is encouraged to learn and teach their class new cultural words. Labeling items in the class room is also encouraged.

Celebrations

Special holiday parties will be given by the center. Parents are more than welcome to donate items. Birthday celebrations are one of the most special events in a child's life. We encourage our families to celebrate with us. We recommend a pizza party and a cup cake store brought in original packaging to ensure food allergies are respected.

Rest Time

Infants sleep according to their own schedule and are put to sleep on their backs as per safe sleep practices. Children under Age 1 sleep in cribs. Children above age 1 sleep in cots. After lunch, all children less than 4 years of age participate in a quiet rest time. Children are not required to sleep and may be given quiet activities after 30 minutes and not falling asleep.

Physical Activity Policy

We understand the importance of physical activity in a child's life as exercise can reduce the likelihood of childhood obesity and promote the development of gross and fine motor skills. Children will be provided with opportunities to play outdoors daily unless prevented by inclement weather. If inclement weather prevents outdoor play, the children will still be provided with time for active physical play indoors. Water will be available at all times both indoors and outdoors.

- **Infants:** minimum of two-30 minute periods of active physical play daily and will have many opportunities throughout the day for tummy time, crawling, walking, and climbing
- **Toddlers:** minimum of two-30 minute periods of active physical play daily
- **Preschool/Pre-K:** minimum of two- 45 minute periods of active physical play daily

Toilet Learning

The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.

GUIDANCE

General Procedure

A-2-Z is committed to each student's success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our center works to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the school community.

Thoughtful direction and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people, of property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions.

Challenging Behavior

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self control and kindness.

Each student at the school has a right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place
- Be treated with respect
- Receive the help and support of caring adults

Guiding Behavior

Discipline at A-2-Z will always be directed from a loving atmosphere in a positive manner. By teaching right from wrong, establishing routines, setting limits and stating the rules our staff will help your child develop self-discipline and self-control over their own actions.

At **NO TIME** will physical or verbal abuse be used. No child will be denied food, bathroom privileges, rest periods or active playtime as a means of discipline.

Our staff is instructed that all recurring discipline problems must be brought to the attention of the director. At which time, the director will discuss the problem with the student's parents/guardian.

Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with the parents as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

Policy of Social Media & Technology

Purpose: This policy is created to assure that information disclosed from A-2-Z early learning academy and its employees ensure timely accurately, comprehensively all aspects of the New Jersey Department of Children and Families.

Definition: Social media used in this policy refers to all forms of on-line tools or services in which virtual communication is created to allow users to share information, ideas, personal messages and other content including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Bright Wheel, Television, Interactive board

Policy

Any breaches of this policy must be reported to the Director immediately.

Texts, pictures, video, audio or other information in digital form are uploaded to Facebook, Bright Wheel and other social media platforms.

Children

Children under 2.5 years old will not be exposed to any screen time in the center. The AAP has determined that use of hand held devices and screen time can actually have an adverse reaction to brain development.

Children over 2.5 years will be allowed to use the schools interactive board, however they are limited to 15 minutes and the content must be related to the centers curriculum.

Employees & Staff

Faculty and employees are personally responsible for content that is published online. Please be mindful of what you publish and remember that your online activity should reflect the same standards of honesty and respect that you would use face-to face.

Information and update must be approved by the director. Posting any photos or information from prior students or families is absolutely prohibited.

Employees who violate this policy may be subjected disciplinary actions consistent with schools agreement including suspension, dismissal and termination.

Parents & Staff

Parents and staff are limited to the centers approved applications. This includes but is not limited to Facebook, Twitter and other social media platforms. The use of any other sites is prohibited when working with children.

Tuition & Fees

Payment

- Annual re-registration fee of **\$50 per child** is due the first week of September
- New enrollment fee of **\$50 per child** is due at time of enrollment
- All tuition payments are due by the **5th** of each month

A-2-Z will make every effort to keep the cost of child care as reasonable as possible. However when it is absolutely necessary, we will raise our rates according to the circumstances at hand. For your convenience, we accept all major credit cards (credit card processing fee will be added according), check, or money order. All tuition is due regardless of inclement weather, sickness or vacation.

Late Pick-Up Fees

Late pick-up is not a normal program option and will only be considered an exceptional occurrence. Late fees of \$1 per minute will be assessed beginning at 5:30pm and will be due upon arrival.

Late Payment Charges

- Any payments submitted after the **15th** must be accompanied by a **\$25** late fee.

Any accounts that remain unpaid as of the **21st** of each month will be subject to dismissal until the account is paid.

Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges

All returned checks or rejected ACH (automatic debits) or credit card transactions will be charged a fee up to the maximum amount allowed by law. Two or more returned checks or rejected transactions will result in your account being placed on “cash only” status.

Attendance & Withdrawal

Absenteeism Policy (3.3.6)

We care about the health and well being of our students. If your child is going to be absent or arrive late please notify us via the Bright Wheel app. We track and monitor the absences of our students. If your child is not feeling well please contact the center at (908) 684 - 3510 or via Bright Wheel app. This will give us a chance to thoroughly disinfect our center and take the proper precautions.

Please update the status of your child daily if they are not to attend school the day they are sick, as we would like to know how they are feeling and if they will be attending school. If your child is absent for 3+ days, we will follow up with a message on Bright Wheel and/ or phone call and may require a doctors note to return to school.

Vacation

One free week is given to every family who has been with us for one full year.
After one full year, the free week is between Christmas day and New Years Day.

Withdrawals

A written notice, 2 weeks in advance, is required by the center when a child is being withdrawn.
Failure to notify will result in additional fees.

Transfer of Records

Whether transitioning to the next program setting or to a new classroom, your child's records will be transferred internally.

If your child is transitioning to a new school, a written request from you with instructions to where the records should be sent is required.

Drop-Off & Pick-Up

General Procedure

We open at 6:30 AM. Please do not drop-off your child prior to the opening. There is no drop off after 9:00 am without a doctor's note or prior approval from the center. NJ law states a Parent/Guardian is expected to accompany their children and sign them into the center on the log in the lobby.

We close at 5:30 PM. Please allow enough time to arrive, sign your child out, and leave by closing time.

(Due to COVID drop off is from your vehicles only)

Cell Phone Usage

The times you spend in the center dropping off and picking up your child are the primary windows of time we have to communicate with you about your child. In order to make the best use of these opportunities, as well as to be attentive to your child and other children, we ask that you do NOT use your cell phone at anytime while visiting the center.

Authorized & Unauthorized Persons

Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. If you would need a person who is not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick-up your child, you must notify us in advance, in writing. Your child will not be released without prior written authorization. The person picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy. No person under the age of 18 is authorized to pick up any student in the center.

If a child has not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. Provisions will be made for someone to stay with your child as long as possible. However, if after 2 hours we have not been able to reach you or a person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency.

Right to Refuse Child Release

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up the child or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child.

Reoccurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

Expulsion Policy/Termination of Care

In unfortunate circumstances, it may be necessary for A-2-Z to terminate a child's attendance if all efforts have been exhausted for (a/multiple) continuous issue(s).

We will make every effort to correct these issues before a termination decision is made. As a center we will always use the best interest of the child, classmates, and overall environment in our decision.

Reasons for suspension and termination may include(but not limited to):

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to him/herself or other children & staff
- A parental conflict that includes physical or verbal threats or intimidating actions toward staff members
- Continuous failure to pay or lateness of tuition
- Failure to complete necessary paperwork for child's enrollment such as information and health records.
- Parent/Guardian tardiness at pick up
- Child has not adjusted to the center in a timely manner
- Child is physically and or verbally abusive to other children and staff
- Excessive biting
- Continuous breaking of A-2-Z policies

A child **WILL NOT** be terminated for these reasons:

- Parent/Guardian made a complaint against the center to the Office of Licensing regarding violations of licensing standards
- Parent reported abuse or neglect to authorities
- Questioning the center about certain policies and rule

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Please label EVERYTHING

What to Bring for INFANT/TODDLER: (0-30 Months)

- 0-12 Months require a fitted play yard sheet and a sleeveless sleep sac as blankets are not best practices while sleeping. No pillows or stuffed animals permitted
- 12-30 Months require a fitted crib sheet and a blanket. No pillows or stuffed animals permitted
- Parents of infants need to supply all formula, pre-mixed in bottles. All bottles and top should be marked with your child's name, date and content. It is also recommended that you leave an "emergency" can/packet of formula or breast milk at the center at all times
- Diapers and wipes should be brought in on a weekly basis. Please check your child's belongings
- Diaper creams with medical authorization forms
- Please make sure to fill out the Feeding Plan and make changes as your child grows. Additional forms are available from the teachers
- Two changes of clothes labeled. If your child has stomach issues/drools excessively please supply extra clothes
- Pacifiers must be labeled with your child's name
- When your baby begins eating cereal and baby food, you may bring in a box or jars of food to last a week. The teachers will let you know when your supply is low. Please be sure that all these items are marked clearly with your child's name
- Daily information sheets for infants are sent home that list diapering and feeding schedules and to make you aware of items needed

What to Bring for PRE-SCHOOL:

(30 Months – 4 Years Old)

- Two changes of labeled clothing/underwear/socks
- Pull-ups & wipes if not yet potty trained
- All bedding is provided by the center
- Cups are sent home daily and labeled
- Please send a morning snack, a lunch and an afternoon snack. If your child will be picked up after 5pm, we also serve another small snack.
- Weekly sheets will be sent home on Friday with your child's weekly activities.

Jewelry

A-2-Z prohibits necklaces and bracelets. These items can create a choking hazard and we do not want to risk losing them. Earrings should have secure screw backings as so children cannot pull them out and choke on them.

Lost and Found

Belongings that are not labeled will be placed in the lost and found bucket in the lobby. Items not claimed within 30 days will be donated.

Toys from Home

We understand that children are eager to show their friends their belongings from home, however, in a school setting this can create some issues. A-2-Z will not be responsible for toys from home getting lost or broken during the school day.

Nutrition

Meals (1.3.3)

A-2-Z provides all meals at the center. Nutritious meals and snacks are provided with respect to religious and dietary restrictions. Please inform us as to any restriction ahead of time. All parents are provided a copy of the menu every month.

Child and Adult Food Program Requirements for children eating food are listed on our menus for Breakfast, Lunch and Snack. Link: CVACFP: Child Meal Pattern(azureedge.net)

Food Allergies (1.3.3)

Families are expected to notify us regarding their child's food and environmental allergies. Any child with diagnosed allergies are required to provide us a letter detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments and care from their pediatrician. A list of the child's allergies are posted in each classroom as well as the kitchen. We are trained to familiarize ourselves and consult the list to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

Toddler Feedings

(Please note that we are a peanut-free facility)

- Children are encouraged to self-feed to the extent that they have the skills
- Children are encouraged, but not forced to eat a variety of foods
- Round, firm foods that pose a choking hazard for children less than 4 years of age are not permitted. These foods include: hot dogs, whole grapes, peanuts, popcorn, and hard candy

Scheduled Eating Times

(These times are an estimate, we will accommodate accordingly)

Toddler - Pre-K classes

- Breakfast at 8:30 am
- Lunch at 11:30 am
- Additional snack at 2:30 pm
- Children at the center after 5 pm will receive another snack before going home

Breastfeeding / Infant Feedings 1.3.2

Our center is a breastfeeding friendly site. We understand the important role that breastfeeding can play in an infant's health and nutrition. Our staff is trained in the appropriate handling of breast milk and they understand the benefits breastfeeding can offer. If you are sending in breast milk, please be sure to label it in red with your child's name and date milk was expressed. Breast milk will be stored in a refrigerator in the Infant Room. Formula bottles must be pre-made. You may bring a container of formula for back-up purposes only. Formula or Breast milk not consumed by day's end will be returned to parent or discarded with their consent. Formula and Breast milk are never warmed in the microwave. Moms are encouraged to come in at any time to breastfeed. A semi-private space within our infant room with a rocking chair and an electrical outlet nearby is provided for our nursing mothers. Information on the benefits of breastfeeding and healthy eating is shared with all parents.

- Infants are held during feeding
- Children under 6 months will not be fed solid food without written instruction from either the parent or the child's health care provider
- Children under 12 months are never fed cow's milk
- Feeding times will vary with each infant's personal schedule. Parents should share their baby's feeding schedule with the staff in their classroom
- Most feedings occur every 3-4 hours.

Additional information on the benefits and the supports for breastfeeding families can be found at the CDC website <http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/pdf/BF-Guide-508.PDF>

Health

Medical Home Policy (1.2.3)

A-2-Z believes that children's health and medical needs are best cared for in an environment that promotes the sharing of information about a child's growth and development with their parents/caregivers. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends all children have a Medical Home which they define as being "the delivery of advanced primary care with the goal of addressing and integrating high quality health promotion, acute care, and chronic condition management in a planned, coordinated, and family-centered manner". In order to establish a proper Medical Home, it is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics that all babies and children have a primary pediatrician who knows the family and the child well and understands the individual's medical history to play a central role in the coordination of the child's medical care. An Emergency Room, an urgent care center, clinic, or specialist cannot be considered a Medical Home since they cannot take on the central role of primary care. A-2-Z encourages all parents/caregivers to establish a primary pediatrician for your child to serve as their Medical Home.

Universal Health Form

Prior to enrollment each child must have a completed Universal Health Form. These forms are included in your registration packet. Your pediatrician must complete this form, and sign it once a yearly physical has been completed. Please also insure the pediatrician completes the vision, hearing, and dental screening portion of the form. Any concerns noted by the pediatrician will be followed up by the center.

Immunizations

All children are required to have an up-to-date immunization record prior to acceptance to the center.

Physicals

Routine Physicals are required according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. A copy of your child's physical should be received before but must be received no later than 6 weeks after your child begins the program. Families are responsible for assuring that their child's physicals are kept up-to-date and that a copy of the results of the child's health assessment is given to the program.

Illness

We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children you may not bring a sick child to the center. The center has the right to refuse a child who appears ill. You will be called and asked to retrieve your child if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms:

- Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities
- Fever of 100.4
- Any COVID19 symptoms
- Diarrhea (twice in an hour)
- Vomiting
- Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours
- Impetigo
- Strep throat

This is not an all-inclusive list. We will try to keep your child comfortable but he/she will be excluded from all activities until you arrive

Children who have been ill, may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for 48 hours
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual activities
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething)

Or unless:

- The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious, and the involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through bandage
- If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual activities
- Head lice (Children with head lice will not be allowed to return to the center until they have been treated and no further head lice or nits are detected during a health check)

Medications

We at A-2-Z will refrain from dispensing medication as much as possible. In the event that medication must be dispensed then the following will be applicable:

All medications should be handed to the director with specific instructions for administration.

Medications should never be left in the child's bag or classroom.

- Prescription medications require a note signed by a parent or guardian and pediatrician. The medication must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and the name and phone number of the physician.

All medications must be in the original container (you may request pharmacies to fill your prescription in two labeled bottles)

- Please specify the dosage and time(s) to be administered for each medication
- Medication will not be given on an 'as needed' basis
- Non-prescription medications require a note signed by the parent or guardian and pediatrician. Nonprescription medication should not be administered for more than a 3-day period unless. Advised by the child's doctor. All medications must be left in their original packaging
- A written order by the physician is received
- If you would like your child to wear either sunscreen or insect repellent, you must provide a spray form of each. The center is not responsible for supplying them. Please make sure to label them with your child's name.

Communicable Diseases

When an enrolled child or an employee of the center has a (suspected) re-portable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health. We will take care to notify families about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments. Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:

Bacterial Meningitis	Hemophiliacs Influenza (invasive)	Poliomyelitis (including suspect)
Botulism	H1N1 Virus	Rabies (human only)
Chicken Pox	Measles (including suspect)	Rubella Congenital and Non-congenital (including suspect)
Diphtheria	Meningococcal Infection (invasive)	Tetanus (including suspect)
	Any cluster/outbreak of illness	

SAFETY

Clothing

Please label EVERYTHING

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including: painting, outdoor play, sand, weather, and other sensory activities. Our playground is used as an extension of the center, and daily programs are conducted outside whenever weather permits. Backless, open toe shoes and flip-flops are not appropriate for center play and make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities and remain safe. We are not responsible for lost or damaged items.

Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play

Outdoor play will not occur if the outside temperature is greater than 90°F or less than 35°F degrees depending on humidity and wind chill. Immediately upon the threat of the severe weather all children will be taken inside. If there are severe winds, children will be taken to the interior classrooms away from windows. Staff will be required to take roll and make sure all children are accounted for.

Indoor Safety Checks

Each classroom is inspected on a daily basis for safety hazards and is signed off by NJ licensing on a semi-annual basis. Our outdoor playground is inspected daily and annually throughout the year with an approved checklist.

Outdoor Area Safety Checks (1.3.1 & 1.4.4 Outdoor Safety)

Playground is checked daily, monthly, and annually according to State of NJ's Public Playground Safety Handbook. Each classroom is inspected on a daily basis for safety hazards and is signed off by NJ licensing on a semi-annual basis. Our outdoor playground is inspected daily and annually throughout the year with an approved checklist.

Injuries

All of our staff is CPR and First Aid Certified

Safety is a major concern in child care and so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. First aid will be administered by a trained caregiver in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives. Any time a child is admitted to the hospital due to an incident at the center the NJ Office of Licensing is notified immediately.

Biting

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once. When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the biter to learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting. Notes will be written to the family of the child who was bitten and the biter's family. We will work together with the families of each to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change.

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self control and kindness. When a child becomes physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all of them. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent and understandable to the child. Please note that there is an expulsion policy that all parents receive in their child's registration package. Please review and ask questions if needed.

Respectful Behavior

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all of our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your child from our care.

Smoking

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants and young children's developing bodies, therefore the indoor and outdoor center environment and vehicles used by the center are non smoking areas at all times. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the center's premises.

Prohibited Substances

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on the center's premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited.

Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind altering or polluting substances is required to leave the premises immediately.

Dangerous Weapons

A dangerous weapon is gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children, staff or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases that clearly involve a gun, or any weapon on our premises, the police will be called and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

Parental Custody

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to the enrolled child. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody without court documentation.

Suspected Child Abuse

We are mandated by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

EMERGENCIES

Lost or Missing Child

In the unlikely event that a child becomes lost or separated from a group, all available staff will search for the child. If the child is not located within 10 minutes, the family and the police will be notified.

Fire Safety & Lock Down Procedures

Our center is fully equipped with a fire suppression system. We also have with a fire alarm system which is directly connected to the police and fire department. Fire extinguishers are provided in all applicable areas. Fire Drills are conducted on a monthly basis. Lock Downs are conducted twice a year.

Emergency Transportation

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

Hurricane/Tornado Watch/Warning

In case of a hurricane watch we will stay in touch with the national hurricane center, by way of the weather channel on TV and radio, for current information. Should there be a hurricane warning posted, parents are expected to pick up their child immediately as the center will need to close. If for any reason we are caught here at the facility and unable to leave, all children will be taken to the interior classrooms away from all windows. After the move is completed, staff will take roll to make sure all children are accounted for. Staff will be instructed to stay calm and assure children they will be safe until parents can get to them

Loss of Power, Structural Damage

Emergency lighting will be used for short term power loss. Please keep in mind that the center's phones DO NOT work if we lose power to our building. If the local power company determines the power loss will be for an extended amount of time, parents will be called from our cell phones and asked to pick up their child.

Media Relations

In any emergency the Director will be the designated spokesperson communicating to any media outlets. Staff will direct all questions and information to the Director. No child information will be shared without prior consent of the parents.

Center Policies

Our center policies in this handbook and others that are not included in this handbook are reviewed annually and are updated as needed. All policies are subject to change.

General Resources for Parents and Families

Child Development and Special Needs

Zero to Three <http://www.zerotothree.org>
NJ Parent Link (provides links to various types of services) <http://www.nj.gov/njparentlink/>
Moms2Moms <http://ubhc.rutgers.edu/mom2mom/links.htm>
Early Intervention System (birth to 3 years) <http://nj.gov/health/fhs/eis/index.shtml>
Family Link (birth to three years) <http://www.familylinknj.org/>
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN) www.spanadvocacy.org
Autism Speaks <http://www.autismspeaks.org/>

Parent workshops and informational articles may be found at:

Upcoming Parent/Family Events/Workshops in the Morris/Sussex County Region
<http://www.morrisussexresourcenet.org/news-events/events/>
United Way Success by 6 http://www.unitedwaynnj.org/ourwork/ed_successby6resources.php
National Association for the Education of Young Children <http://families.naeyc.org/>

Oral Health

Healthy Children <http://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/oralhealth/Pages/Teething-and-Dental-Hygiene.aspx> and www.healthychildren.org
American Academy of Pediatrics <http://www2.aap.org/compeds/doch/oralhealth/index.html>

Nutrition and Physical Activity

Let's Move <https://letsmove.obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/>
Eating Healthy www.nutrition.gov/life-stages/children
My Plate <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/>

Communicable Diseases/Preventive Health Care

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/>

Medication Administration Safety

Healthy Children <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/medication-safety/Pages/default.aspx>

Mental Health Services

Primary Screening Center for Morris County:
St. Clare's Hospital
25 Pocono Road
Denville, NJ 07834
24/7 Hotline: (973) 625-0280
Behavioral Health Services Central Intake: 1-888- 626-2111
Emergency Services Affiliated with Screening Center:

Morristown Medical Center

100 Madison Avenue
Morristown, NJ 07960
24/7 Hotline: 973-540- 0100
Mental Health Association of Morris County- (973) 334-3496 <http://www.mhamorris.org/>
Directory of Morris County Mental Health Services
<http://oem.morriscountynj.gov/directory-mental-health/>
Perform Care (behavioral health for children)
1-877- 652-7624 <http://www.performcarenj.org/index.aspx>

General Child Safety

Healthy Children <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/default.aspx>
Safe Kids <https://www.safekids.org/safetytips>

Housing Assistance

<http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dfd/programs/emergency/>
<http://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/dhcr/offices/ha.html>

Additional Resources

Child and Family Resources <http://www.childandfamily-nj.org/>
Devereux Center http://www.devereux.org/site/PageServer?pagename=nj_index
Children's Safety Network <http://www.childrenssafetynetwork.org/>
Family Partners of Morris and Sussex Counties <http://www.familypartnersms.org/>
Caring Partners of Morris and Sussex Counties <http://www.caringpartnerscmo.org/>
Deirdre's House:

Morris County center for child victims of abuse and/or neglect
<http://www.deirdreshouse.org/>
Jersey Battered Women's Services, Inc. (JBWS): Emergency Shelter
24 Hr. Hotline: (973) 267-4763 TTY: (973) 285-9095 Office: (973) 267-7520

Health Care

NJ Family Care <http://www.njfamilycare.org/default.aspx>

New Jersey State Pharmaceutical Assistance Programs and Medicare Part D
<http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/doas/home/pbp.html>

NJ Drug Card - <http://www.newjerseydrugcard.com/index.php>

Substance Abuse

Prevention is Key www.mcpiik.org

Health and Human Service Resources

First Call for Help: Dial 211 or 1-800- 435-7555
NJ 2-1- 1 is a statewide information and referral service
that is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Go to www.nj211.org to search their resource database on your own.
Morris County Department of Human Services <http://morrishumanservices.org/services.asp>

New Jersey Regional Crisis Hotlines

2nd Floor Helpline: 1-(888) 222-2228
Geared for children and young adults ages 10-24 years of age.
Free and confidential helpline for youth ages 10-24 to call 24/7. Visit www.2ndfloor.org
Contact We Care: 24/7 Helpline 908-232- 2880
Information and referrals, crisis suicidal helpline and listening service and
covers Bergen, Essex, Middlesex, Morris, Passaic, Somerset and Union Counties.
Family Crisis Intervention (Adolescent): 24 hour: 1-908- 298-7800
Addictions Hotline of NJ: 24 hr.: 1-800- 238-2333
Gambling: 1-800- GAMBLER
Parents Anonymous Helpline-Referral: 1-800- THE-KIDS
National Child Abuse Hotline: 1800-422- 4453
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800- 273-TALK
National Runaway Switchboard: 1-800- RUNAWAY
NJ AIDS/STD Hotline: 24hr: 1-800- 624-2377

List of Organizations for Parent Participation

Adventure Guides Boys / Girls

Program for fathers (sometimes mothers) and their children entering grades K-8. Groups, formed in Sept., participate in monthly meetings, special events and camping trips.

• [Somerset County YMCA](#) 140 Mt. Airy Rd., Basking Ridge, 908-766-7898 ext. 544

Boy Scouts of America

Youth program designed for boys first grade and up to learn responsibilities of citizenship and enhance physical, mental and emotional growth.

[Patriots' Path Council](#) 973-765-9322. Serving Union, Morris, Sussex, Somerset and northern Middlesex Counties.

Scout shops at 1 Saddle Rd., Cedar Knolls, 973-765-9322.

4-H Club

No membership fee. Informal educational programming for grades 1-college by Rutgers Cooperative Extension.

Individual clubs are guided by one or more adult leaders and concentrate on a particular area such as gardening, woodworking, small animals, horses, seeing eye puppies, food, karate, photography, etc. Adult volunteers always needed.

[Morris County 4-H](#) County Bldg. 550, West Hanover Ave., Morristown, 973-285-8300

[Somerset County 4-H](#) 310 Milltown Rd., Bridgewater, 908-526-6644

Girl Scouts

For girls in grades K-12. Troops meet regularly in schools, homes, community centers, and houses of worship. There is always a need for adult volunteers to work with the girls and in a variety of roles as they help build girls of courage, confidence, and character. Girl Scouts Heart of New Jersey 908-518-4400

With unique opportunities, Girl Scouts explore, learn, succeed, and take action to make a difference in their community. With support from our dedicated volunteers, we are able to give nearly 20,000 girls an exceptional Girl Scout experience throughout Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Somerset, Union, southern Warren, and parts of Middlesex Counties.

Montclair Service Center: 120 Valley Rd., Montclair, NJ

Westfield Service Center: 201 Grove St. E., Westfield, NJ

North Branch Service Center: 1171 Rt. 28, North Branch, NJ

• [Girl Scouts of Northern New Jersey](#) 95 Newark Pompton Tnpk., Riverdale, 973-248-8200.

Bergen, Morris, Passaic, Sussex Counties and the northern half of Warren County.

Paramus Service Center: 201-967-8100

Randolph Service Center: 1579 Sussex Turnpike, Randolph, 973-927-7722

Hunterdon County Canoe & Kayak Club

Monthly meetings at Echo Hill Environmental Center in Clinton Twp. Canoe trips are scheduled most weekends.

Affiliated with the Hunterdon County Park system. 908-782-1158

Seeing Eye Puppy Club

Somerset County 4-H, 908-526-6644; Morris County 4-H 973-285-8300.

4-H Club for grades 4-13 who have an interest in raising and loving a puppy for about 18 mos. before its formal training at the Seeing Eye (973-539-4425).

PTA (Parent Teacher Organizations) Past or Current Experience

Not Limited to any specific level of the local Long Valley and Hackettstown School

SPORTS & Other Activities

Baseball(T-Ball), Basketball, Football, Golf, Lacrosse, Wrestling, Soccer Tennis, Track & Field,

Phone:(General Inquiry): 732-563-2520 **Phone:**(Register for a camp or class): 866-345-2255

Mail & Head Office: 4 Somerset St, Whitehouse Station, NJ 08889

Band & Other Instruments, Bicycle Riding, Dance, Drama, Equestrian, Fishing, Hiking, Karate, Swimming, Coaches, Referees, Officials, and other involvement of any child/family focused organization

*****Please Sign and Return to A-2-Z Academy of Early Learning before Your Child Start Date*****

Parent Handbook Acknowledgment

Please sign this acknowledgment, detach it from the handbook, and return it to the center prior to enrollment. The handbook may be updated from time-to-time, and notice will be provided as updates are completed. Thank you for your cooperation, and we look forward to getting to know you and your family.

I have received the A-2-Z Academy of Early Learning Parent Handbook, and I have reviewed the Parent Handbook with a member of the A-2-Z staff. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself with the Parent Handbook and to ask the center's management any questions I may have regarding any policy, procedure or information contained in the A-2-Z Academy of Early Learning Parent Handbook.

Child's Name: _____

Child's Name: _____

Child's Name: _____

Recipient Signature: _____ Date: _____

Center Staff Signature: _____ Date: _____

*****Please Sign and Return to A-2-Z Academy of Early Learning before Your Child Start Date*****