



"Where little Sprouts can dream BIG!"

Parent Handbook

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USING THIS HANDBOOK

Dear Sprout Family,

Welcome to the Sprout Academy of Learning's preschool program. Our teachers and staff are equally committed in ensuring that all children will receive quality education in a safe and nurturing environment.

This handbook is established to ensure that your family has a rewarding experience with our program. In this handbook, we have tried to anticipate many of your questions about our program. The purpose of this handbook is to outline the program's policies and procedures. We strive to work closely with parents in a partnership that will facilitate the transitions between home and school. Daily communications and a sense of trust between parents and teachers are vital.

Our goal is to provide the highest quality care and education for children and to ensure that parents are valued and respected. To accomplish this, we depend on parents to be responsible and active childcare consumers. We expect parents to read this handbook, follow the policies and procedures outlined, provide us with all the necessary information, and be open and honest with us regarding your feedback about the program. We welcome your comments, questions, concerns and suggestions about your child's experience and the program. We understand that nothing is more important than your child's early education and care experiences.

Given the nature of an ever-changing quality early education and care program, this handbook is a "living" document. You will be notified of formal policy changes throughout the year via a written policy notice through email, should the need occur. In addition, the handbook will be updated as needed.

Our door is always open, should you have any suggestions, questions or concerns. We look forward to working with you and your family!

Tina Rambo and Ramona Moeller
Owners/Directors

Our Program

GENERAL CENTER INFORMATION

Administration

OWNER/TOP CHEF

Ramona Moeller

Cell 941-258-1809

Email: ramona@mysproutacadmey.com

OWNER/DIRECTOR

Tina Rambo

Cell 941-815-1067

Email: tina@mysproutacademy.com

Office 941-624-6400

Person in charge if director not present

Amanda Schaar

Sprout Academy is located in the Deep Creek Community of Port Charlotte, Florida. This location has been in operation for over 20 years and became Sprout Academy on June 9th 2019. We are a state registered academy that serves children ages 6 weeks -5 years and school agers 6-11 years old. Sprout was purchased by Tina Rambo and Ramona Moeller, who have combined experience of over 35 years.

OUR MISSION:

Sprout Academy of Learning's **mission** is to provide exceptional care to children while nurturing their needs intellectually, socially, physically and morally. We provide safe, developmentally appropriate care in an inclusive environment. Through a play-based program, we attend the whole child and help each of them build a positive self-image. We lend this foundation to their success in future years of education.

OUR PHILOSOPHY:

It is our philosophy to create a learning environment that is safe, stimulating and encouraging which fosters a child's natural desire to explore, discover, create, and become a lifelong learner. We strive to help our children to be confident and develop the best positive image of themselves.

SPROUT ACADEMY CORE VALUES:

We Are Family We treat each other with respect and work as a TEAM.

We Put Our Sprouts First We do what's best for our children and let that guide our decisions.

We Are Dynamic We never stop learning and growing as a school and as individuals to meet the ever-changing needs of our clients.

We Are Happy We are positive, supportive role models for each other and for our children.

We Are Determined to Be the Best We are never satisfied with ordinary; we are extraordinary.

We Work Hard & Play Harder We will create an environment that allows us to "PLAY" with a purpose.

We Are Professionals We present ourselves professionally in our actions and our attire.

CENTER OPERATIONS RATIOS

At Sprout Academy, we maintain the following staff-to-child ratios at all times in our classrooms:

Age of Children Minimum Ratio of Staff to Children

Infants - 12 months 1 staff for every 3-4 children

1 year 1 staff for every 5-6 children

2 years 1 staff for every 7-9 children

3 years 1 staff for every 9-11 children

4 years 1 staff for every 11-15 children

5 years and over 1 staff for every 11-15 children

Children of different age groups may be combined if the following guidelines are followed:

- Infants are never combined with children over the age of 18 months, except in certain circumstances (e.g., at open or close of the center, if children are siblings).
- Children 12 to 24 months may be combined in a classroom with children two years of age, as long as the ratio of 1 to 5 (1 to 6 in situations when staffing is short) is maintained.
- Classrooms of children 2 years and older may be combined, with the ratio determined by the age of the majority of the children in the group.

During naptime, at least **one** staff member shall be present in every room where children are sleeping and/or resting. Staff-to-child ratios can be reduced to one staff member per room (except infant- 1 year old classrooms) where children are resting for a period not to exceed one hour. Staff should remain in the center so, if needed, they can assist in a classroom.

Volunteers such as high school students (at least 16 years of age), college students, parents, or retired individuals may not be used to meet staff-to-child ratios.

Ratios must be maintained at all times, including when emergency procedures are in effect.

MEET THE STAFF:



Tina Rambo
Owner/Director
Associate in Early Childhood Development,
Education, and Management
Director Credential and VPK Credentials



Ramona Moeller
Owner/Sprout Lead Chef
BA in International Business
Directors Credential, VPK Credentials
and Safe Serve Training



Kristina Rambo
Bumblebee Classroom
CDA/FCCPC Childhood



Jessica Babcock
Bumblebee Classroom
BA Early Childhood



Amanda Schaar
Grasshopper Classroom
CDA Certificate, Directors
Credentials



Stephanie Onody
Firefly Classroom
Future CDA Recipient



Neury Vallejo
Ladybug Classroom
CDA Certificate



Melissa Johnston
Caterpillar Classroom
Future CDA Recipient



Jerri Thompson
Caterpillar Classroom
CDA Certificate



Alyssa Marino
Dragonfly Classroom
Future CDA Recipient

TEACHERS AND STAFF

We are proud of our warm and nurturing staff who take a sincere interest in child development and apply their knowledge in the classroom. Our teachers and staff value working as a team with parents and colleagues.

All teachers are CPR & First Aid certified. In addition, in compliance with the State of Florida guidelines, all of our teachers and staff receive professional training annually.

HOURS OF OPERATION/HOLIDAY CLOSINGS:

Sprout is open Monday - Friday 7:00am- 5:45pm. The Center is closed for the following holidays. If a holiday falls on a Saturday, we will be closed the preceding Friday. If a holiday falls on a Sunday, we will be closed on the following Monday. Holidays are paid days so there will be no adjustments in tuition fees.

Labor Day		New Year's Day
Thanksgiving Day		Martin Luther King Day (teacher workday)
Day After Thanksgiving		Good Friday
Christmas Eve	➡ (2022 Closed Dec 26-Dec 30th)	Memorial Day
Christmas Day		Independence Day
New Year's Eve		1 additional day in August (teacher workday)

Times and Dates are subject to change.

We post these dates and other important information near the check in station for your convenience.

OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

GENERAL ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS:

Children must be of age for the class they are entering by September 1st which is in alignment with established requirements for public schools

Children may be retained at the parent's request

Children should be fully potty-trained to enter the three or four-year-old program. If they are still "in process" we will work with them to continue what you have begun.

Registration for the new school year begins in May before the fall start-up.

Preschool classes are filled as openings become available. Current students and siblings are given the first opportunity to register prior to wait listed students.

All children not placed will be put on a waiting list to fill vacancies as they occur.

Children registering after April will be placed according to the above procedures as openings become available.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Each student must be signed in using the fingerprint kiosk system located on the 2nd entrance door. This is a requirement by the State of Florida, and necessary for the safety of our Sprouts. In addition, each student must be brought directly into the classroom, the attention of the teacher must be sought at pick up and drop off, so that the student's attendance can be documented in the classroom.

Sprout must be provided with the names of emergency contacts and any person(s) granted permission to pick up a child. Only people over the age of 18 may pick-up a child. To qualify a person for picking up a child, their name, address, telephone number, and clear copy of their license or other government issued ID must be provided. The designated person must provide picture identification at the time of pick-up that matches the picture identification already on file.

Children are expected to be in class latest by 9 am.

Sprout has an open-door policy and welcomes families to participate in the daily activity at Sprout. Parents and family are asked to sign in with the front office and will be directed to the classroom from there.

RELEASE POLICY

Each child may be released only to the child's parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) to take the child from the center and to assume responsibility for the child in an emergency if the parent(s) cannot be reached.

If a non-custodial parent has been denied access, or granted limited access, to a child by a court order, the center shall be provided documentation to that effect, maintain a copy on file, and comply with the terms of the court order.

If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) fail to pick up a child at the time of the center's daily closing, the center shall ensure that:

1. The child is supervised at all times;
2. Staff members attempt to contact the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s); and
3. An hour or more after closing time, and provided that other arrangements for releasing the child to his/her parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s), have failed and the staff member(s) cannot continue to supervise the child at the center, the staff member shall call the Department of Children and Families 24 hour Child Abuse Hot line 1-800-962-2873. to seek assistance in caring for the child until the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the child's parent(s) is able to pick-up the child.

If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) appears to be physically and or emotionally impaired to the extent that, in the judgment of the director and or staff member, the child would be placed at risk of harm if released to such an individual, the center shall ensure that:

1. The child may not be released to such an impaired individual
2. Staff members attempt to contact the child's other parent or an alternative person(s) authorized by the parent(s)
3. If the center is unable to make alternative arrangements, a staff member shall call the Department of Children and Families 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-792-8610) to seek assistance in caring for the child.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Discipline is a process of reinforcing positive behavior while teaching children how to behave acceptably. Our policy is to provide an environment of love and encouragement which will enable children to resolve their differences and grow in maturity and self-control. Positive Discipline is different from punishment. Punishment tells children what they should not do; positive discipline tells children what they should do. Punishment teaches fear; positive discipline teaches self-esteem.

We use positive discipline by planning:

- Anticipating and eliminating potential problems
- Having a few consistent, clear rules that are developed with the children's input
- Having a well-planned daily schedule
- Providing structure and support for children to resolve conflicts
- Shared ownership of the classroom (our room, our toys)

We use positive discipline by intervening when necessary:

- Re-directing to a new activity
- Providing individual attention to help child deal with a situation
- Diverting child from area of conflict
- Providing alternate activities
- Offer a choice of two acceptable options
- Provide acceptable way to release feelings
- Discuss the behavior not the child

We use positive discipline by showing love and encouragement:

- Reinforcing positive behaviors through acknowledgement and praise for appropriate behaviors
- Using encouragement rather than competition, comparison or criticism
- Demonstrating respect and caring for each child
- Appreciating the child's point of view

Positive discipline is NOT:

- Disciplining a child for failing to eat, sleep or soiling themselves
- Hitting, shaking or any form of corporal punishment
- Using abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment or any other form of emotional punishment
- Withholding food, emotional responses or opportunities for rest, nourishment or physical activity
- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for an inappropriately long period of time.

Positive discipline takes patience, repetition and the willingness to work through problems.

CHILDHOOD BITING POLICY

As with any behavior, how biting is dealt with depends upon the ages of the children involved, the reason for the biting, (if it can be determined), frequency of the biting, and many other specific circumstances. General guidelines for biting include:

- Helping the bitten child feel better or providing appropriate first aid, if warranted.
- Completing an incident/accident report for the parents of the biter and the bitee.
- Discussing the situation with the biter's parent(s).

Depending on the ages of the children and the circumstances involved, additional actions might include:

- Discussing a better solution for all children involved.
- Separation of involved children.
- Showing/giving the biter something appropriate to bite on.
- Ensuring that the environment provides enough challenging activities.
- Carefully observing the involved child to identify precipitating events and prevent recurrences.
- Maintaining a log to track when the behavior occurs.
- Conferences with parents to discuss the child's actions at home, parental discipline techniques, search for outside resources, etc...

Just as any other behavior issue regarding a child is confidential, the name of the child that has bitten another child is also confidential, in order to ensure the privacy of the child and family and prevent bias from others enrolled in the center. We will keep you informed as to what steps are being taken and if bites are from the same or a different child. Informative handouts are given to parents regarding biting.

****Children under 3:** Children that bite more than 1 time in a day or are making continuous attempts, will be sent home for the day. Children exceeding 5 bites in any 30 days period will be subjected to enrollment termination.

****Children 3 & older:** Children that bite 1 time in a day or are making continuous attempts, will be sent home for the day. Children exceeding 3 bites in a school year will be subjected to enrollment termination.

TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT

In certain circumstances, it may be necessary for the Administrator to decide to discontinue a child's attendance. Such a decision would be based on whether it is in the best interest of that child. Every effort will be made to correct a problematic situation before a final decision is made.

Termination of enrollment may be the result of the following:

- Abuse of other children, staff or property
- Disruptive or dangerous behavior
- The center's inability to meet the child's needs

Sprout reserves the right to terminate a child's enrollment at any time for any reason without notice.

WITHDRAWAL INFORMATION

Parents are required to give the Center Director a minimum of two-week notice in writing prior to withdrawing their child from the program.

TOY POLICY

Our educational lessons do not leave room for items such as toys, materials and supplies to be brought from home each day. Occasionally there will be "free days" "show and tell days" and "game days" where the teachers plan their lessons around the materials that are brought from home. These days are the only days that items are allowed. Notice of these days are sent out via KidReports.

TECHNOLOGY USAGE

Television and technology use and viewing by children is not part of our daily routine at Sprout. Staff may use technology to present relevant material related to our curriculum or learning goals from time to time as they see fit. If used in the classroom setting, technology time is limited to a 20 min time frame per occurrence. On special occasions, we may use our equipment to have a movie day experience. This is always done with parent notification. During movie day experience there will be other activities set up and available for those who choose not to participate in the movie.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The following policy is for Sprout Academy of Learning employees, parents and community members who participate in social media. Social media includes personal blogs and other websites, including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube Snapchat, Google Plus, and others. This applies whether individuals are posting to their own sites or commenting on other sites. This policy aims to provide good ethical practice. It is provided in our Parent Handbook, and Employee Handbook.

The purpose of the policy is to:

1. Protect the safety and privacy of our students and staff.
2. Protect the school from legal risks.
3. Ensure that the reputation of the school, its staff, and clients are protected.
4. Safeguard all children's privacy.
5. Ensure that any users are able to clearly distinguish where information provided by social media is legitimately representative of the school.

****Only school administration has the authority to make an original post on social media site on behalf of the school. No other employee may use the Sprout Academy name or logo, photos of children at the school, or engaged in any promotions or conversations representing the school or its families.**

We also require that:

- No photographs taken within Sprout or at Sprout special events and outings with the children, are to be posted for public viewing, except those of your own child. Parents and Staff are advised that they do not have a right to photograph anyone else's child or to upload photos of anyone else's children.
- No public discussions are to be held or comments made on social media sites regarding Sprout Academy children, staff or business that could be construed to have any impact on Sprout Academy's reputation or that would offend any member of staff or parent using Sprout.

Sprout Academy has a Facebook page available. This is a communication tool for the school. We will use it to:

- Promote events such as social events
- Update parents on staff training & development
- Give hints and tips for activities the children have enjoyed and home learning ideas
- Deliver news
- Display photos of activities, trips or special events, and projects

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Sprout does not discriminate against anyone (adult or child, staff or parent) on the basis of sex, age, religion, national origin, race, marital status, physical or mental disability, or veteran status.

Sprout includes children with special needs and makes accommodations as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

WEATHER RELATED CLOSINGS

Sprout will remain open during most severe weather. The Director will monitor the weather and local news stations to determine when it is appropriate to close the center early or cancel care for the following day. In most cases we will close when Charlotte County Schools close due to inclement weather.

In the event that Sprout closes early or cancels care for the following day, parents will be contacted and informed of the situation. Children should be picked up in a reasonable amount of time to ensure all parents, children, and staff can travel safely home. Please remember that tuition is due regardless of holiday, absence, center closing, or weather cancellation.

TARDINESS

Sprout class sessions begin promptly at 9:00am. It is important that your student not be tardy as it is disruptive to the class. We have also found that students who arrive during the "free choice" and "breakfast" portion of the morning tend to adjust better to their routine. We are unable to accept any children after 1030am. Please call the office if your child will be late for any reason so that we will know to include them in the lunch count.

PARKING

The Sprout Parking lot is tiny, and sometimes difficult to navigate. Please be sure to use extra caution. We have parking spaces that are for your convenience. Also, the side lots can be used as temporary parking. Please do not park directly in front of the building. Please ensure that children are properly buckled in an age appropriate car seat prior to departure. Do not leave any valuables in your car. Sprout is not responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged property.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

AGE GROUPS

Sprout Academy accepts infants and children ages 6 weeks to 5 years and school age students from 6 to 11. A typical day includes learning and instruction in core subjects

There are 6 childcare programs offered at Sprout Academy of Learning They are:

- **Caterpillars** 6 weeks to 18 months; 3-7 children
- **Ladybugs** 12 months to 2 years; 6 children
- **Fireflies** 2 years to 3 years; 6-7 children
- **Grasshoppers** 3 years to 4 years; 9 children
- **Bumblebees** 4 years to 5 years; 12-17 children
- **Butterflies** 5 years to 12 years; 12-17 children

SAMPLE CLASSROOM DAILY SCHEDULE

Subject to change without notice

Grasshoppers' Daily Schedule

7:00-8:30 am Morning Drop-Off, Breakfast, Free Play
8:30-9:00 am Clean-Up
9:00-9:30 am Circle Time
9:30-10:00 am Wash Hands + Morning Snack + Wash Hands
10:00-11:00 am Fine Motor Skills (Art or Centers)
11:00-11:45 am Large Motor Skills (Playground)
11:45-12:30 pm Wash Hands + Lunch + Wash Hands
12:30-2:30 pm Nap Time
2:30-3:00 pm Wash Hands + Afternoon Snack + Wash Hands
3:00-3:30 pm Story Time & Music-n-Movement
3:30-3:45 pm Bathroom + Wash Hands
4:00-4:30 pm Large Motor Skills (Playground)
4:30-4:45 pm Bathroom + Wash Hands
4:45-5:45 pm Free Play & Pick-up

*Bathroom breaks will be offered at a minimum of two hours and as needed by children.

SAMPLE SCHOOL DAILY SCHEDULE

7:00 am Sprout opens
7:00-8:30 am Morning Free Choice in classrooms
8:30-9:00 am School wide Breakfast
9:00-11:30 am Morning activities
11:30-12:30 pm School wide Lunch
12:30-2:30 pm Rest time/ Quiet activity choices
2:30-3:30 School wide Afternoon Snack
3:30-4:30 Afternoon activities
4:30-5:45 Typical dismissal time

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Infants/ Young Toddlers:

Sprout accepts infants who are at least 6 weeks. Our Infant and Young Toddler Rooms hosts the learning process where each child is given the opportunity to explore, to satisfy his/her natural curiosity, and to develop their social graces. Children are

No students will be accepted after 10:30am. Please make every effort to have students in their classrooms by 9:00am. Breakfast is served at 8:30, please plan accordingly.

given daily exposure to stimuli such as language activities, fine motor, gross motor, cognitive activities, dramatic play and learning through play.

Toddlers/Twos:

What an exciting age to be! The classroom is arranged into activity centers to challenge the children, spark their enthusiasm, and continue their learning process. Areas covered are social-emotional, intellectual, physical development, as well as language, music art, crafts and cognitive activities.

Three, Four and Five-Year Olds:

The preschool child will receive instructions in math, science, language art development, every-day life skills and fine-motor manipulatives. Learning centers develop skills such as social-emotional, intellectual and physical growth.

CURRICULUM:

Children are constantly learning through everyday experiences and they are constructing their own knowledge and understanding of the world. It is important to be conscious of the whole learning environment such as time, utilizing classroom space (learning centers), resources, and ideas. Preschool is an important time to learn and develop life skills. At this age children are learning to be an individual as well as attaining social skills in order to be a successful part of a group setting. It is important to display a diverse curriculum to encourage non-stereotypical experiences so that children gain an appreciation of our society. The foundation of our curriculum is to teach children everyday morals such as, respect for themselves and others, resolving conflict, decision making and maintaining healthy relationships. To attain this goal, we have several major components to our curriculum, which are listed below.

GOALS OF THE CURRICULUM

To Develop the child as a whole. • To provide a positive sense of identity and emotional well-being • To develop age-appropriate social, physical, language and literacy skills • To encourage thinking, reasoning, questioning and experimentation • To provide exposure to the arts and encourage creative expression • To demonstrate proper health, safety and nutritional practices • To respect gender, age and cultural diversity.

CORE BELIEFS • Children learn best by a "hands-on" approach that is diverse in activity and purpose. • Children need exposure to the beauty of the natural world in order to understand their place in the world. • Children need exposure to gardening, the arts, and music in order for creativity to flourish. • Each family is unique, and we celebrate differences. • Learning can take place in many different forms and in many different settings. • Children learn what they live, therefore, we always aim to be a good role model for children • Children need sensory rich environments that include plants, sand and water.

AREAS OF DEVELOPMENT AND INSTRUCTION

Physical Development: Preschool children are constantly on the go developing their large and small motor skills.

Emotional Development: Preschool children are becoming aware of their feelings towards others and other people's feelings towards themselves. They are developing a sense of belonging to family, friends and their community.

Cognitive Development: Preschool children are becoming active learners who learn best through play and firsthand experiences. They become curious of the world around them and their language and problem-solving skills begin to flourish immensely.

Social Development: Preschool children are beginning to understand the concept that their peers have feelings and often show compassion towards each other. They are learning how to share and take turns developing friendships.

LANGUAGE

During early childhood children begin to speak and understand language. They start participating in conversations and forming sentences. Questions become more apparent in their quest of learning language. Children will be able to follow instructions, convey thoughts, tell stories, sing songs and begin to understand the concept of the alphabet and writing. In order to grasp language, it is important to develop listening skills, introduce vocabulary, letter recognition, rhymes, songs, letter sounds (phonics), whole language (labeled classrooms), and most importantly social interaction.

Encouraging a love for reading:

Reading is the window that opens up the doors to all areas of development. In order for a child to develop an interest and love for reading it is important to lead by example and show them your love for reading. Reading to children is one of the most important ways to encourage children to read. It is also an opportunity to teach them many different things about our world. By keeping a variety of books in the school and in the classroom, children have many options of books to choose from, maintaining their interest. It is important to let them choose books that they are interested in and to let them read their favorites again and again. Reading is one of the most important parts of our program and the children are read to several times a day.

WRITING

Writing is a skill that is learned primarily through small motor activities. Materials that are used in the classroom to facilitate early writing are; crayons, markers, pencils, paint brushes, play-dough, tearing, scissors, puzzles, tweezers ...etc., This materials are used to ensure children can improve their fine motor abilities, to become successful writers.

MATHEMATICS

Math is taught through play and is seen daily in learning centers. Activities consist of: classifying, sorting comparing, graphing, differences, measuring, building, shapes, tracing, large-small, number recognition and meaning, same and opposite, patterns, constructing, counting, and time concept.

SCIENCE

Although children wonder, explore, and question our environment, they do not yet have the ability to think abstractly; therefore, children need hands on experience for them to grasp the concept of science. When children are taught science through the five senses, they begin to ask questions, observe, develop critical thinking skills, making predictions and experiment.

GARDENING

Gardening with children is a fun way to have the children try foods that they normally wouldn't be interested in and also to teach about nutrition. Gardening can also help develop essential skills such as math, language, measuring, counting, following directions, vocabulary, sequence, problem solving and science.

ARTS & CRAFTS

Art encourages children to explore and to use their imagination. It is important to realize that the whole process that goes on while creating art is more important than the end product. Art develops children in all major areas. Children learn from creative experiences: to be an individual, sensory, fine motor, eye-hand coordination, color, size, formation, sharing, problem solving and decision making.

MUSIC

Music develops a child's physical, cognitive and emotional well-being. Through song young children develop vocally. Music also develops children's listening skills and they are able to differentiate between different genders, tones, rhythms, instruments, and so on. Music also encourages a child to move creating body awareness and expressive motion.

DRAMATICS

A child's family, school, and home life are a very important part of their life, making it natural for a child to imitate what they know. Children act out the world around them and explore people by acting out their work, feelings and their words. By playing dramatically children are able to encounter situations that they may not understand and are able to develop their problem solving skills and gain new knowledge.

LARGE & FINE MOTOR

Motor skills are the physical abilities children develop that help them control the movements of their bodies. Both skills are encouraged inside the classroom and outdoors at the school. There are many opportunities for the children to develop their large muscles such as reaching, crawling, walking, climbing, throwing, running, skipping, galloping, etc... There are many opportunities for the children to develop their fine motor as well, such as, eye hand coordination, self-feeding, buttoning, zipping, manipulative toys, etc...

Learning Centers

Learning centers are set up for children to use as free choice time or for teacher directed activities. The centers consist of blocks, dramatics, quiet area, science, and math. The centers are changed periodically to bring in new elements to the classroom. By giving the children free choice time they are developing cognitive and motor skills they are also practicing planning, time management, decision making and problem solving.

The Importance of Play

Play enhances language development, social behavior, creativity, imagination and thinking skills. During play, children have the chance to practice what they already know and the time to develop new skills. Five Types of Play: • Onlooker behavior: Playing passively by watching or conversing with other children engaged in play activities. • Solitary independent: Playing by oneself. • Parallel: Playing, even in the middle of a group, while remaining engrossed in one's own activity. Children playing parallel to each other sometimes use each other's toys, but always maintain their independence. • Associative: When children share materials and talk to each other, but do not coordinate play objectives or interest. • Cooperative: When children organize themselves into roles with specific goals in mind (roles of doctor, nurse...etc.).

TRANSITIONS TO A NEW ROOM

For a child to be moved to the next room, several factors are taken into consideration. Some of these factors include the child's age, developmental progression, and availability in the next room. In some cases, input from the teachers and parents are discussed prior to the room change. When it becomes time for a child to move to a new room, parents will receive notice through a Transition Letter. This

letter will give parents important information about their child's new daily schedule, items requested to be brought, and who the child's new teacher will be.

In the weeks prior to the actual room change, we will have the child meet the new teachers, visit the room, and even participate in activities in the new room in small time increments.

SCREENING, ASSESSMENTS AND REFERRALS

Individual assessments from Sprout Academy will be done on your child during their first month of attendance with us. This will help us in knowing what areas your child is strong, and what areas may need some additional attention. Results for this assessment will be sent home to parents. The assessments are ongoing throughout the year. This allows us to know how your child is progressing and at what pace. It is in our experience that children learn at a variety of paces. However, if during the year we see learning gains not being achieved, we will reach out to you and plan the best course of action. Conferences will be scheduled as need/as requested. Future goals and objectives will also be discussed at this time.

Additionally, children may be screened using the Ages & Stages ASQ Developmental Screening Tool. If a screening is returned on a child showing a delay, the child is then referred for additional services. The progress of this child is reviewed weekly to assure that any differences in cognitive, physical, emotional, social, and/or developmental milestones are being supported.

If you decide to terminate enrollment for any reason, you must provide written notice two weeks prior to the last day of enrollment.

If written notification is not given two weeks prior to termination, two weeks of full tuition will be billed and due on the final day of enrollment.

SEPERATION FROM PARENT

The process of separation from the parent as the child enters and attends preschool is one of the most important accomplishments of a preschool child. At each age level, a child will react differently. As children mature, they begin to identify themselves as independent personalities.

In separating from you, the parent, your child is learning:

- To develop an interest in the activities of the preschool
- To feel comfortable with others at preschool
- To understand that his/her parent will come back and pick him/her up

PARENTAL COMMUNICATION

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

We strongly advocate open communication between parents and staff. Our staff is trained to keep you informed of the details of your child's day at Sprout Academy. Information about your child's life at home helps the teacher understand the student's language, state of mind and moods.

We use several methods of communication to keep you informed. Sprout's open-door policy is used to welcome and encourage parents to visit our school. The communication methods include daily and weekly emails, text alerts, phone calls, website, Facebook, Kid Reports, and memos. As school progresses and

the children adjust to their new classes, we will try to provide you with continuing information regarding our program at Sprout Academy. We will keep you informed of field trips, holidays, curriculum and other important information through our Kid Reports application. Please be sure to peek at the Parent Board near the front entrance, and in each classroom. These boards describe the time and activities planned for each day to assist parents in their child's daily activities.

We frequently communicate via email. Please be sure that we have a valid/current email address that you check often.

Often, parents have questions regarding their child's day. During arrival and dismissal times, staff members must devote their full attention to all of the children so please keep conversations brief. If you need to communicate specific information, then please do so via a written note, email or Kid Reports.

PARENT ROLE AND INFLUENCE

Parents are a vital component to the Sprout philosophy. Parents are viewed as partners, collaborators and advocates for their children. Our staff respect parents as each child's first teacher and involve parents in every aspect of the curriculum. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to volunteer in the classroom and participate in our outer curricula activities.

Parents volunteering within the school must complete an Abuse and Neglect Form as well as a Volunteer Form outlining the volunteer requirements.

CLOTHING

Children learn through play. They use their senses to learn. Your child should come to Sprout dressed for play in clothing that is okay to get messy. Every attempt is made to protect children's clothing from permanent damage or stains; however, accidents do occur. Your child will be most comfortable in their own clothes. An extra set of play clothes should be kept in your child's cubby in case of accidents or messes. To prevent injured toes while playing at Sprout, students are required to wear closed toed shoes.

CELEBRATIONS

Sprout feels that holidays provide the perfect opportunity to celebrate diversity and have a great time! We respect all cultures and traditions and love learning new fun ways of celebrating all holidays. If you would like to celebrate your culture with your child's class by providing food, an activity or information, please speak with your child's teachers. Throughout the year holidays fall on all different days of the week. (Don't worry if your child misses one, they'll be sure to be in attendance for the next one.)

BIRTHDAYS

Children love to celebrate their birthdays! If you wish to supply a snack or activities, please feel free to speak with your child's teacher in advance. You are welcome to come celebrate with us. Parties usually take place during afternoon snack time. For safety reasons, we cannot allow homemade food or beverages to enter the classroom. We are only able to serve children store-bought nut free food that is sealed in its original packaging, Goodie bags are permitted if they do not contain chocolate, candy or gum.

Teachers will supply a first name only of your child's classmates upon request. We realize you cannot always invite the whole class therefore if you wish to handout invitations for birthday parties please give them to your child's teacher to discreetly send them home with the appropriate recipients.

PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent conferences can always be held upon request. Additionally, scheduled parent conferences are offered at least 2 times per year for our VPK children and as needed with all other children enrolled. These conferences are designed to keep communication lines between parents and teachers open. During the conferences, teachers and parents will discuss developmental assessments of the child, possible transitions to a new room, day to day concerns, and any other issues the parent would like to discuss with the child's teachers.

WELLNESS & SAFETY

CHILDREN'S HEALTH RECORDS AND OTHER RECORDS

All children are required to have a completed physician's examination form, a physical exam and all immunizations up to date at the time of enrollment. Immunizations are to be kept up to date following the DCF guidelines schedule. Record of a physical is required every two years.

Immunizations are an important public health policy effecting children. As a matter of state law, children in the program must:

- Be fully immunized, or
- Be in the process of becoming fully immunized according to the approved schedule, or
- Have a physician's statement that immunizations are not needed for medical reasons.

Your child's file is kept in a file cabinet in the Sprout office. Your child's file is considered confidential and only a limited number of individuals have access to view it. Parents may request to view their child's file at any time. Please contact the office/Director/teacher to make arrangements to view the file.

The Director will have access to review the file so that medical and family information is correct and up to date. Lead teachers have access to review files to see what individual/special needs your child has. This information will help with planning and goal setting for your child. The Sprout Director will view records to check that immunizations are up to date and notify you of upcoming expirations.

When the program is being reviewed for relicensing, the licensing representative has access to the files that are required by the state. These forms would include but are not limited to: child enrollment, medical forms, and special instruction plans for allergies, if one is appropriate.

All educational files are kept confidential and have limited access.

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

Sprout Academy does not administer medication with the exception of an EPI pen for potentially lethal allergies. Please see the director for more information about EPI pen procedures.

ALLERGIES

Please notify the Sprout Academy office of any food allergies or dietary restrictions in writing. For any child with an allergy, the State of Florida "Child Care Food Program" requires a form to be filled out by a health care provide and returned to Sprout to keep on file. This form can be found in the office.

All allergies and food restriction are posted in the same location in every classroom.

SICKNESS POLICY

If your child becomes ill while at Sprout, he/she will be isolated from the other children. If these symptoms of possibly contagious conditions are observed in your child during the day, you will be called to retrieve your child immediately.

General Guidelines

- ☐ A temperature of 100.5 degrees or higher
- ☐ Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stool in a school day).
- ☐ Vomiting
- ☐ Rashes not diagnosed by a physician
- ☐ Impetigo, a skin infection consisting of blisters surrounded by a reddened area, when the blister breaks the surface becomes raw, weeps and oozes. The lesion eventually becomes crusted and yellowish.
- ☐ Conjunctivitis, an eye infection commonly referred to as "pink eye".
- ☐ Severe coughing causing the child to make a whooping sound
- ☐ Pediculosis (head lice)
- ☐ Difficulty or rapid breathing

We are required to notify local county health units within 48 hours of any outbreak of communicable disease as per appropriate Florida Code. A suspected outbreak occurs when three or more children and or employees have the onset of similar signs or symptoms (such as diarrhea, rash, etc.) within a 72-hour period or when one or more cases of a serious communicable disease is diagnosed or suspected.

Head Lice

This is a very common occurrence in young children. This has nothing to do with cleanliness. They are very easily transmitted by leaning back in an upholstered chair where someone had previously sat who had head lice, sharing caps or helmets, hair accessories, brushes, combs, even sitting close and touching heads. Random lice checks are conducted by office personnel. If head lice are found on a child, the following steps are taken:

- Parents are notified, and child must be picked up from school.
- That child's head must be treated with a product formulated to remove head lice.
- Nits must be removed with a special nit comb included in product.
- The child will be excluded from school the following day.
- Upon returning to school state health laws require examination of hair and scalp by office personal before returning to school
- A handout of additional information regarding lice is given to parents at the time of pick-up.

To avoid infestation, it is important to inspect all family members for two weeks and treat if infected. Nits on the scalp may be seen more easily on the hair at the back of the neck and above the ears. Please be assured that we will do everything possible to prevent infestation in our center. With your support, we will stop the lice from spreading.

Some Other Common Contagious Diseases:

Disease: Period of Exclusion from School:

- ☐ Fever Temperature normal for 24 hours
- ☐ Chicken pox Until all scales are dry
- ☐ Impetigo Until all lesions have healed
- ☐ Measles Until cleared by physician
- ☐ Pink eye Until 3 doses of medication has been administered
- ☐ Streptococcus Antibiotics administered for at least 24 hours
- ☐ Pediculosis Until head treated and nits are not present

When your child has a fever, please keep him/her at home an additional 24 hours after the temperature returns to normal. This will help to ensure that the illness has actually passed and that your child will be well enough to resume school activities.

ACCIDENT POLICY

In case of minor injury or accident, the staff will administer basic first aid. If a child gets hurt, we will assess the injury and apply any first aid required. Most injuries will likely only require a band aid, an ice pack and some TLC. All injuries, regardless of how minor, are recorded in our accident report format on the Kid Reports app. No matter how small the accident, we will notify parents via text or phone when the accident occurs. An accident report will be signed at the time of pick up by the child's parent, teacher and director. A copy will be kept on file at the school.

In case of medical injury or illness requiring immediate professional care (emergency), the staff will call 911, stating our location and the nature of emergency. As appropriate, the staff will administer CPR or first aid measures. Parents will be notified immediately. If parents are unavailable, those individuals designated as emergency phone contacts will be notified. All children must have an emergency medical release form on file in case of such an emergency.

ACCIDENT/INJURY FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT

Sprout Academy is not responsible for medical bills related to or in conjunction with any accident, injury or illness that occurs while attending childcare at Sprout. Parent or guardian is responsible for all bills related to medical treatment of their child/children. Sprout will make every effort to prevent any accident or injury from occurring while in care.

SCHOOL SAFETY

1. Parents need to personally escort their child while entering and exiting the building.
2. Children are NOT allowed to run or play in the parking lot.
3. Please ensure that entry doors are completely closed upon entering and exiting.

VIDEO SURVEILLANCE

Sprout is equipped with state-of-the-art video surveillance technology. Each of our classrooms and playground areas are equipped with live streaming cameras. Managerial staff is able to view cameras at all times. In order to maintain each child's privacy, parents are not permitted to view videos at any time. Staff and management can review videos as deemed necessary and will provide video footage as available to any necessary/approved governing agency. Video is only maintained for a maximum of 3 calendar days.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

Our standard procedures include safety drills, teaching children to listen and to follow their teachers. At all times, emergency supplies are maintained. These include food, water, battery, radio, cell phones, flashlights and first aid supplies.

In the event that an emergency occurs during school hours, be assured that we will do our utmost to protect the safety and wellbeing of all of the children entrusted in our care.

Person In Charge: Tina Rambo

If the above staff member is not present, the following is next in charge: Ramona Moeller or Amanda Schaar

Fire Evacuation

Take Tablet (containing emergency contact information) and follow the emergency route map located in the classroom. If we can't go back towards the building, children will be kept in the parking lot area furthest from the building. Parents will be contacted by administration to pick up the children.

Tornado / Hurricane Alert

Gather all children as close to the interior wall as possible. Have children lay face-down as flat as they can. Cover children with rugs & napping mats when the need arises. Try to grab soft toys (dolls, stuffed animals, etc...) to soothe the children.

Lockdown: Terrorism / Intruder

Entry into the school is controlled by a locked door. If the school is notified about a suspicious person in the area, teachers will be notified to keep the doors locked & children in the classroom.

In the event we need to evacuate the building, the children will be transported to Joyful Noise, Rampart Pilgrim Church.

Medical Emergency Plan

Follow the 3 C's prescribed by the American Heart Association:

- 1) Check (Assess vital signs)
- 2) Call (Director, Asst. Dir. OR qualified staff member, call 911)
- 3) Care (Qualified person administer CPR or First Aid as necessary)

NAPPING

Sprout offers a scheduled rest period during our daily routine. This rest time during the day takes place 12:15-2:30pm for all children. Each child is supplied 1 cot to use for the school year. These cots are disinfected daily. Families are responsible for providing 1 sheet/1 blanket daily (one for the child to lie on and one for the child to cover up with), and picking up those linens every Friday for laundering. Sprout provides all infant linens.

POTTY TRAINING

At Sprout, we do not believe in pushing children to accomplish tasks they are not age appropriate. We begin our potty-training process in the 2-3 year old classroom. We will do our best to follow our student's cues, and your wishes. However, if a student is showing no interest or success in the training, we reserve the right to stop the training until the child is more ready. If an accident occurs while at Sprout, your child will be changed immediately, please be sure to have plenty of extra clothes and a pair of extra shoes during this period. Any soiled clothes will be put into a bag and sealed to be washed at home.

LICENSING REGULATIONS

We are required to abide by the State of Florida DCF Licensing Regulations. Each classroom is equipped with a copy of the DCF regulations. The regulations are also located in the director's office on the bookshelf. If you have any questions about any regulations, please feel free to look at them as time permits or speak with your director for clarification.

FOOD & NUTRITION

NUTRITION/ MEAL POLICIES

The children will be served breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack. Please be aware of the children's eating times as we will not be able to serve the early childhood aged children meals at times other than the scheduled mealtimes. Infants and Toddlers are on more individualized schedules. If you are planning on bringing your child after the scheduled mealtime, please plan on feeding your child before you come to the center. We ask that you do not send fast food, soda, sports drinks, candy donuts, etc... to the center with your children unless it is a special occasion and you have discussed this with the Director.

Good eating habits and positive attitudes toward food should be established at an early age. At Sprout Academy, we provide a well-balanced hot lunch which includes items from the 4 basic food groups with an emphasis on fruits and vegetables. We also provide nutritionally balanced morning and afternoon snacks. You may choose to send food from home as long as it adheres to the USDA guidelines for nutrition for children.

Menus are available to parents at the beginning of each month and are posted in the front lobby.

Meals are prepared on-site.

FOOD BROUGHT FROM HOME

When children bring food from home, we ask that parents adhere to the recommended USDA guidelines for children's nutrition. This information will be provided to parents if they are sending food from home that is not healthy, nutritious, and well-balanced.

We ask that parents do not send candy, soda, chocolates, donuts, sports drinks, or other unhealthy food choices in their child's lunchboxes. We will not permit children to eat these items and will supplement these foods with healthier choices for the child for that day.

CANDY & NUT FREE SCHOOL

Sprout is a peanut free facility. No food containing, or processed in a facility with peanuts, are allowed in the center.

FORMULA AND BREAST MILK FOR CHILDREN

Sprout has very specific guidelines they must follow for administering formula and/or breast milk to infants.

Protocol for receiving, storing, and administering all bottles is listed below:

- Parents/caregivers please leave bottles, with the accurate amount of ounces of water, (to be made with formula) with kitchen staff-in a pre-disclosed location. (no glass bottles are permitted)

- Parent/caregivers leave prefilled breastmilk bottles with the classroom teacher, to be placed in the classroom refrigerator.
- The bottles must all have the child's first and last name, and the date to be accepted by the staff.
- Only commercial bottle warmers specifically designed to warm bottles to the appropriate temperature can be used in Sprout classrooms.
- Breast milk should be gently mixed in a closed bottle. Rigorously shaking breast milk will reduce its nutritional benefits.
- After warming, breast milk and formula can only be kept for one hour and then must be discarded if not consumed.
- Formula and breast milk must be discarded after the child has finished drinking.
- Once a child completes the bottle, the teacher will place the empty bottle in the child's bag. The bottle will then be washed and sanitized at home.

PAYMENT POLICIES

LATE PAYMENT POLICY

Please remember that tuition is the sole source of income for our facility. We adhere strictly to our late payment policy for this reason. Sprout Academy tuition is paid every **MONDAY**, prior to the week of attendance.

Enrollment will be terminated at the discretion of Sprout for non-payment of tuition. There are no discounts, or refunds given for any reason.

If tuition is not received by 5:45 on the Friday, a late fee of \$25.00 will be assessed.

If a check is returned for any reason, a \$25 bank charge will be assessed. Any person with 2 checks returned will be asked to make payment in the form of cash only.

If payment is not received for services/products rendered, attorney fees, and/or court costs are incurred to secure payment, you will be obligated to pay all cost associated with collections of fees owed.

If your child participates in another optional program made available through Sprout, payment is between you and the appropriate provider.

REGISTRATION

A registration fee of \$180.00 is due upon enrollment and renewable annually. The sibling registration fee is \$105.00. School Age registration fee is \$40.00 child.

The registration fee is applied towards supplies, insurance and non-consumable goods.

LATE PICK UP POLICY

All children are to be picked up **BEFORE** the 5:45 p.m. closing time. If a child remains in attendance after 5:45 p.m., a late fee of \$1.00 for each minute that the child remains at the program after 5:45 pm will be charged to the parent or guardian's account. (That is, if a parent arrives at 5:50 p.m. 5 minutes late = \$5.00 late fee will be applied (per child enrolled), 5:59 p.m. 14 minutes late = \$14 (per child enrolled)).

A child will not be readmitted to the program if the late fee is not paid within one week. The program may refuse to provide services to any child who is picked up after 5:45 pm three times within one school

year. Please bear in mind that it can be distressing for children to be left in the Center after hours. In addition, many staff members have evening commitments. Parents who arrive late often interfere with these plans.

TUTION POLICY

Tuition is due every week, regardless of attendance

DISCOUNTS FOR SIBLINGS

A five percent (5%) discount on the tuition fee is given to the 2nd child enrolled. Sibling discounts are only applied for FULL TIME ENROLLMENT.



By signing this form and initialing each item below you acknowledge that you have read the parent handbook. The handbook is always available online at www.mysproutacademy.org. I understand that the handbook is the guideline to the operations and policies set forth by Sprout Academy.

Please print, sign and return this page to the front office:

_____ Date: _____
Print

Sign

Parent Initials		
	Home/School Communication	I understand that I am responsible for reading notes, emails, the eblast, etc. so I am aware of school events, expectations, and school closures.
	Technology and Social Media	I have read and understand that I am not permitted to take and use photos of students other than my own, while they are at Sprout or a Sprout related function.
	Attendance and Tardy Policies	I understand the importance of daily, on-time attendance. I have read and understood the attendance and tardy policy.
	Student Behavior: Biting Policy	I understand that Sprout is a safe zone for its students and staff. Please be sure you have read the guidelines for Discipline and Biting.
	Drop-off and Pick-up	I understand and agree to follow the safety expectations regarding morning drop-off and after school pick-up
	Tuition/Late Payment Policy	I understand that tuition is due every Friday, regardless of attendance. I understand that late fees will be assessed if tuition is late, and time clock entry will be denied until tuition is current.