

Great Beginnings Academy of Orlando



GREAT BEGINNINGS
ACADEMY
of Orlando

Parent/Student Hand Book

Dear Parents,

Welcome! We would like to thank you for choosing Great Beginnings Academy. We ensure you that we have a commitment to all parents and students enrolled at Great Beginnings Academy. Envision a school that allows students the opportunity to boost their imaginations in a manner that is consistent with their present desires, while providing guidance to shape and mold those desires into meaningful lifelong skills and an occupation that enhances and develops learned skills. Students at Great Beginnings Academy will focus on instruction that motivates students in an atmosphere of imagination, enthusiasm, and real-world skills.

Our commitment is that all students will receive a quality education. We will also build up your child's self-confidence and self-esteem with praise and positive redirections.

It is our goal to provide a variety of exciting, stimulating, learning activities each day so that students can develop socially, emotionally, physically, and mentally to the very best of his/her ability. In this handbook, you will find many of our policies and operating procedures explained. Whenever you have questions, please feel free to call or stop by the office. Again, we welcome you to Great Beginnings Academy.

K. Bradwell, M.B.A., Ed.S., Ph.D.
Academic Director

Aprile Cox, Ph.D.
Operations Director

PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES

Great Beginnings Academy strives to prepare its students to excel as future leaders of tomorrow by combining an unparalleled top-notch curriculum tailored specifically for students of all grade levels. Great Beginnings Academy provides a clean, safe, healthy environment where every student can develop emotionally, physically, intellectually, and socially. We are committed to providing safety and security for all students.

We believe that children should be allowed to grow at their own pace and to learn in ways that help them become confident in themselves as learners. We believe in the value of both structured and non-structured activities. Structured activities will include the use of the Abeka Curriculum, STEM (Science Technology, Engineering, and Math) instruction, regular reading times, and music. It is our goal to create an environment and program where each child's natural desire to learn is stimulated through meaningful and appropriate learning experiences; those that meet the needs of each child as an individual.

We provide our students the opportunity to grow spiritually, physically, cognitively, emotionally and socially through structured learning activities. We recognize each child as an individual created by God, saved by Jesus Christ and having different learning abilities and styles. We promote Christian fundamentals for our students and staff members. Each week, students are engaged in Chapel (a one hour session with the entire school focusing on praise and worship of Jesus Christ and biblical lessons). We hone in on the biblical principals of God and the teachings of Jesus Christ. Each day, students receive instruction from their teacher that is biblical.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Great Beginnings Academy offers something for everyone. We offer: full day VPK, and Kindergarten – 12 grade. We also offer summer camp (June - August) for students when they are on break from school.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Your child's safety is a top priority at Dream Big Preschool. The doors to our facility remain locked throughout the day. Younger children (VPK and under) must be signed in upon arrival and departure. Children may be released only to those persons authorized in writing by the parent/guardian. Identification will be required when someone other than the parent or guardian will be picking up a child. The persons listed on the enrollment form will be allowed to pick up students with a Florida's driver's license and/or Florida Identification cards.

ENROLLMENT/REGISTRATION INFORMATION

There is a \$250 **non-refundable** registration fee to enroll your child each school year (discount for siblings). Enrollment will be granted without discrimination as it relates to sex, race, color, religion, or beliefs. The proper paperwork must be completed and submitted for enrollment to occur. The parent and child are responsible for attending a 30 minute interview and a 90 orientation session upon acceptance. No student will be enrolled unless the interview, orientation session, and registration fees have been paid. All parents/guardians will be notified via phone or U.S. mail regarding denial or

acceptance into the program. In addition, **physicals, shot records, and emergency contact information must be current at all times. You must inform the school regarding all allergies and medical issues.**

CUSTODY

All issues that pertain to custody of a student a Great Beginnings Academy will be addressed by the director.

Note: Great Beginnings Academy will follow the most recent court order regarding the custody situation.

PAYMENTS

Payments are due on Thursdays prior to services being rendered. **If your payment is not made on Thursday, your child will not be allowed to attend school and/or receive transportation until payment is made. NO EXCEPTIONS!!** Transportation will resume on Tuesday if a payment is made (Friday – Monday). Any transportation payment made on Monday, must be made by 12:00 noon in order for the student to be picked up on Tuesday. Any payment for tuition may be made the morning of the same day in order for a student to attend class. The school has no communication with staff members on the weekend. If a student is no longer in need of transportation, the parent must notify the school via a phone call and in writing that the student will no longer need transportation services. Failure to notify school personnel two weeks in advance will cause the parent to be charged for transportation. We accept cash, debit or credit cards for payment. Checks are not accepted. Tuition is due in advance of service. Fees are charged in weekly increments. Fees are due regardless of attendance and will NOT be prorated due to late or missed payments. Timely payments must be made in order to secure your child's spot within the school. Any student with unpaid fees may be unenrolled from the school.

ATTENDANCE

Your child is expected to attend school on a daily basis. All students with the exception of after care should be in attendance by 8:00 A.M. There will be a grace period until 8:15 A.M. **The grace period should only be used for emergencies.** This is to ensure daily progress and to minimize classroom disruptions. Failure to adhere to the policy can result in dismissal from the program. Children that do not attend during the regular school "day" program may not attend the after-care program on the day that the student is absent from school's "day" program. Parents should notify the school in advance if a child will not be attending or will be late on a particular day. Please notify the school if you need to pick up your child early. Parents should send a doctor's/hospital note if your child is out ill.

All children must be picked up on time.

VPK is from 8:00 am-12:00 noon. It is very important that students are on time for this program. All other classes (K-12) start their curriculum at 8:00 am. Breakfast begins at 7:15 A.M. **STUDENTS MAY NOT ARRIVE BEFORE 7:15 A.M.**

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

Great Beginnings Academy will make every effort to open on time and remain open during inclement weather. However, in the case of extreme road conditions, it may be necessary to delay opening or cancel classes in order to ensure the safety of our families and staff. School closings will be announced on our voice mail message, webpage, and Facebook site if it is necessary to close. Great Beginnings Academy will follow the direction of Orange County Public Schools and the local weather/news channel. If it becomes necessary to close the school during the day, you will be notified by phone. There are no refunds for emergency closings.

AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE

Children will be released only to those persons listed on the enrollment form under the Authorization and Consent section. Identification will be required of any person picking up the child. The parent must notify the school in writing if someone other than the parent is to pick up a student. In the event of a discrepancy, the student will be held until a director can contact the parent by telephone. Temporary changes for the child's release cannot be authorized over the telephone. In the event a parent is unable to pick up a child and there is a temporary change, the parent must fax, text, or email the person's full name and phone number giving permission for the school to release the child to the person. Students will not be released without proper verification from the adult picking up.

HEALTH POLICY

Student Health Policy: Children who are ill cannot be appropriately cared for while in school. Parents need to have alternate care when this occurs. Examples of health symptoms that require exclusion from school include (but are not limited to):

- Fever; Oral temperature above 101 degrees
- Persistent diarrhea
- Conjunctivitis, which is an eye infection commonly referred to as "pink eye"
- Vomiting
- Jaundice (yellow) skin or eyes
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Symptoms of strep throat or chicken pox
- Head Lice
- Any condition in which the child acts ill and is unable to participate in classroom activities and which compromises the health and safety of others

If your child becomes ill while in school, the parent or emergency contact person will be notified that the child is ill and that someone must pick the child up within one hour.

If you know your child is sick, please do not bring them to school. We want to provide a healthy environment for all students and staff at the school at all times.

Administering Medication

Whenever possible, we ask that all medication be given to children at home. We understand that this is not always possible. If medicine must be administered during the school day, the following policy applies:

- Prescription and orally administered over-the-counter medication may be administered only upon written permission of the parent and written instructions from a health care provider stating that the provider may administer such medication or prescription and specifying the circumstances. The parent must also sign paperwork at the school regarding administering the medication.
- Medication must be in the original container labeled with the child's complete name, the medication name, recommended dosage, and time intervals for administration, method of administration, expiration date and, for prescription medication, the prescriber's name and license number.
- Medication must be stored according to the instructions on the label in a place that is inaccessible to children. Medication must be returned to the parent when no longer needed.
- If a child develops symptoms which indicate a need for over-the-counter medication, including topical ointments, while in care, such medication may be given under the verbal consent from the parent for that day only. The provider must document that verbal instructions and approval were given by the parent.

MEALS AND SNACKS

Great Beginnings Academy provides breakfast and lunch. Breakfast is served from 7:15 am – 7:45 am. No Breakfast will be served after 7:40 am

COMMUNICATION

Communication between home and school is extremely important in order to ensure the success of students. Please feel free to discuss any concerns you have with your child's teacher. It may not be possible for you to have a long conversation with your child's teacher at drop-off or pick-up times; the teachers are responsible for supervising all students during these times. If you have a concern, a meeting or phone conference may be arranged. Great Beginnings Academy provides many opportunities for parents to receive information on all students.

Parent Conferences: Parents are welcome to schedule a conference at any time.

- **Information Board and Website:** Information about upcoming activities and events will be posted on the information board in the lobby and the website (www.gbaorlando.com). Please check the board regularly to keep informed about our upcoming events.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- If an emergency arises, a qualified staff member will administer first aid care, call the parent, and if necessary notify emergency medical personnel. A Great Beginnings staff member will accompany the student to the nearest hospital where emergency treatment is administered. The staff member will remain with the student until the parent arrives. In the event neither

parent can be reached, the child's physician will be contacted. It is essential for parents to provide accurate information on how they can be reached, physician name and phone number, signed emergency waivers, and updated emergency contacts and waivers.

An accident-Incident report log is kept at the front desk with detailed information involving any student or staff member incidents. In addition, a copy of the incident report is kept in the child's file; a copy must be given to the parent or employee within 24 hours of any injury.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT PROCEDURE

All Great Beginnings Academy staff are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect. All staff are required by law to report suspected abuse and neglect.

WITHDRAWAL

A two weeks written notice is required for withdrawing students for any reason. Failure to provide a two-week notice may result in additional fees being imposed.

TERMINATION

Great Beginnings Academy reserves the right to discontinue service to a family if financial commitments are not met or if it becomes apparent that the program is not equipped to meet the psychological or developmental needs of the child. Written notification will be given to the parents to allow for ample time to find another school. The director will make every effort to resolve any problems prior to unenrolling a student. Documentation of the withdrawal/unenrollment will be provided upon request prior to suspension or termination.



Great Beginnings Academy is closed for the following holidays: *Some changes may be made

New Year's Day

Dr. Martin L. King Day

Memorial Day

Independence Day

Labor Day

*Thanksgiving

*Christmas Day

Juneteenth

*President's Day v

FAMILY PARTICIPATION/ROLE OF THE PARENT

Parents should always consider getting involved with their **child's school**. Not only does it help children get through their early and middle academic years, but it can also prove to be beneficial later in life. In elementary school, children often want to look up to someone, as they find it hard to make decision themselves and want to emulate elders. Hence, parents have a huge impact on their children's lives at this stage, but also on their decisions and how they will tackle them later on in life.

When parents get involved, children often feel more supported and loved, which helps increase their confidence and improve overall development. Parents and family members are welcomed and encouraged to partake in the activities (i.e. homework, schoolwide events, meetings and evening events) at Great Beginnings Academy.

REQUESTS/COMPLAINTS/REFUNDS

All requests, and complaints should be directed to a director, including refunds. The director will give the parent a "Request Form" to complete. If the complaint is regarding a classroom issue, parents are encouraged to contact their child's teacher via telephone or email. In the event (rare circumstances), the issue is still unresolved after 3 business days, the parent should contact the main office and request to speak with Dr. K. Bradwell. Parents should follow this protocol and not address or request to see the director upon initial notification of the request/complaint/issue.

*Refunds are normally credited on the same business day, unless payment was made via credit card; the refund will take approximately three business days.

- Discipline Policy – Handout



Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form

I have read and understand the policies in the Great Beginnings Academy Parent – Student Hand Book and agree to follow the policies.

Child's Name: _____

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____