

# A SMALL WORLD ACADEMY PARENTS GUIDE



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# A Small World Preschool Parents' Guide

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to A Small World Academy. We are delighted to have you and your child join our program. This is your Parent Handbook. Please take the time to read it as it contains much valuable information. As you sign your contract, please note that you are also acknowledging that you have received this handbook and letter. Both contain information required by the Department of Children and Families our licensing agent. We want to call your attention to various information regarding licensing, discipline policy, and reporting of child abuse.

At A Small World, we believe parents should be deeply involved in their child's life at the Center, so we urge you to participate in the events offered here. You are welcome to visit your child's class at anytime and share your special skills and interests with the children.

Please feel free to discuss your concerns with us at any time. We are here to help you. All of us at A Small World are here to address any problems or clarifications.

This guide is an important reference. Additions or changes in policy, important announcements, and other items of interest will be noted in our memos posted at the Center.

Thank You,

A Small World Academy

"Staff"

## PHILOSOPHY OF A SMALL WORLD ACADEMY

Every young child needs appropriate child-care and we at A Small World Academy are here to provide those needs to each child with age appropriate and child centered care. Each child is in a class with a low child to teacher ratio to make sure that every child is taught and cared for in the appropriate manner.

It is also necessary and important to have curriculum that corresponds to the different age groups that our facility holds. Each classroom consists of centers that offer activities and equipment that cover a range of areas including everyday life skills such as the preparation of food, learning about the outside world and other cultures, developing the senses, language and math.

The centers also help enhance each child's fine motor and gross motor skills as well as their creative thinking capabilities. Learning is most productive when activities are self-chosen and founded upon individual interest. Therefore, children are given time to explore each center at their own pace.

Within each classroom, certified teachers and assistants are on hand to facilitate and assist in the everyday activities and rituals that the children go through. These teachers are well aware of how unique each child is and are able to help them, as well as support them, in their day-to-day events and motions.

The school tries to accommodate all different income ranges. Our tuition is kept at an affordable rate to accommodate all families. Parents have the opportunity to enroll their child in the different programs that are offered and that benefit their child's growth. The lines of communication between parent and teacher are always open for the benefit of the child's success and happiness. A happy child is a healthy child and we at A Small World are here to make that happen.

## GOALS

A Small World Academy is a learning environment. Our goal for the school year is to have a curriculum implemented that is developmentally appropriate and designed to meet cognitive levels: Our objective is to expose all students to:

- ❖ Self-reliance skills
- ❖ Practical skills
- ❖ Social and emotional skills
- ❖ Work habits
- ❖ Listening skills
- ❖ Speaking skills
- ❖ Fine motor skills
- ❖ Gross motor skills
- ❖ Reading readiness
- ❖ Writing
- ❖ Math readiness
- ❖ Music, art and science
- ❖ Circle time
- ❖ Outdoor play

Assessment, the establishment of goals and objectives, and the development of an educational plan are dependent upon one another and on going in all early education and early childhood programs. Teacher /Student ratios and small size groups are established according to what early childhood experts believe is best for young children.

## LICENSING

The center is licensed by the Bureau of Licensing of the New Jersey (DCF) - Department of Children and Families. A copy of the current license is posted in the reception area.

To be licensed, a center must comply with the Manual of standards and can make it available to parents for review. Parents may also secure a copy of the Manual of Standards for the child care centers for a nominal fee by writing to DCF.

The Bureau of Licensing inspects the center on a regular basis and issues an inspections/violation report after each visit. Parents are entitled to review the center's copy of inspection reports on request. Upon registration, parents are given a copy of the DCF letter explaining a parent's rights when using licensed care in the State of New Jersey.

## HOURS

A Small World Academy's regular hours are 7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. The center is open year round for the Academic year (September-June) and for Summer camp (July-August). Curriculum runs from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. For those students who need extended hours, they may come as early as 7:00 a.m. and stay as late as 6:00 p.m. The school is closed according to the holidays on the school calendar. In addition, the school may be closed due to inclement weather or in-service days. A message will be left on the school's answering machine for a school closing or delayed opening. In addition, the school is closed according to the holidays on the school calendar such as:

New Year's Day

Spring Recess

Memorial Day

4<sup>th</sup> of July

In Service Days (TBA)

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Break

Winter Recess

President's Day

## STAFF MEMBERS

Management of the center is guided by administrative staff: Director or Owner. The center's emphasis in hiring staff is focused on selecting competent, caring, and qualified teachers.

Most staff members are college graduates and are certified in early childhood education and/or elementary education. All staff is CPR/First Aid certified as well. In the event that your child's teacher is absent, a substitute will be provided in the classroom.

Adult/child ratios are maintained for all age groups, which is required by DYFS. As part of the center's commitment to quality care, professional development opportunities are available on a regular basis.

Each class is led by a head teacher. Teachers are responsible for sending home a parent newsletter or calendar to inform parents of weekly activities and important dates. Parents also receive a developmental report twice a year on their child and may schedule a parent/teacher conference in January and June.

We also have "Back to School Night" in September for any parents/guardians who may have questions, concerns or comments. Back to School Night is also a chance for parents/guardians to come and see what the children do on a daily basis, to meet all the staff members as well as other parents. At A Small World Academy, we always encourage parent involvement. Each year we need class parents, field trip chaperones, and volunteers for fundraisers. Parents are also welcome to come in and do a craft or read a story to the children.

## ENROLLMENT

A Small World Academy admits children ages: 6 weeks to 6 years of age. Our students who are enrolled are from different areas in New Jersey. The center offers full time schedules, depending on a parent/child's needs. We have a five day program: Monday - Friday, Three day program: Monday, Wednesday, Friday and a Two day program: Tuesday and Thursday.

Once a parent signs up for a specific program they cannot change their designated days unless there is an opening. The center operates on specific enrollment and ratio numbers determined by DYFS. If the center is full on a certain day, parents request for a change of schedule may be denied. A Small World admits children regardless of race, color, or creed. Every attempt is made to include special needs children who could benefit from the program. Admission is dependent on the availability of space, identified needs of the child, staffing patterns, and contractual commitments.

## TUITION PAYMENTS

Tuition is payable by check at the center. Payment is due on the first of every month. Please pay in advance if you are going to be away. If tuition is overdue more than two weeks, arrangements for the late payment must be made with the director/owner before the child will be admitted to the program.

There is a \$30.00 charge for returned checks. Please call us if you discover that your check will not clear. We automatically re-deposit returned checks one time. If another check is returned, we will no longer accept checks made by you. We will only accept money orders.

## ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance at the school will benefit your child's adjustment to school. If your child isn't going to attend school that day due to illness or if you are planning a vacation, please let the director know.

## LATE PICK UP

**LATE PICK UP FEES:** In accordance with a licensed program, A Small World Academy is required to have all parents who arrive after our closing time of 6:00 p.m. sign in the late book. Please pick up your child promptly at 6:00 p.m. to avoid a late fee. The late fee is based on the arrival of the parent/guardian. If a late pick-up fee occurs, there will be a fee of five dollars for every five minutes that child stays after 6:00 p.m. Payment goes to the staff member that has stayed with the child. Failure to pay late fees may jeopardize the child's enrollment.

If the designated pick-up person has not arrived by 6:00 p.m. and the staff has not been able to contact the parent, we begin calling the numbers on your emergency pick-up form. If we cannot reach either your emergency back-up and have exhausted all other alternatives we are mandated to call the **DCF CHILD ABUSE HOT-LINE**. (1-800-792-8610)

## STUDENT FIRST DAYS

When a child has their first day of school experiences, it may be difficult for both parent and child. It may be less stressful for both if the child starts out with staying only a short time in the beginning and then gradually building on the time as the child adjusts to his or her surroundings and teachers.

Parents should always exchange good-byes with their child instead of sneaking out of the room. This is an important part of the child's adjustment to his or her surroundings and teachers.

## **NUTRITION**

We provide snack at our center in the morning and in the afternoon, which have nutritional value to our students. Parents are encouraged to provide a healthy lunch for their child. Water and apple juice are available to the students all day. We maintain a list of all children who have food allergies. Please keep us informed if any changes occur in your child's sensitivity to food. We work with parents to observe any dietary restrictions placed on a child because of medical or religious reasons.

All children need to bring their lunch in a labeled lunch bag. We have a refrigerator and a microwave available. Please note that heat up days are only Mondays and Thursdays. All other days, you must send in a cold lunch.

## **NAPPING**

As part of a licensed program, every child under the age of 5 is offered a time to rest each day. At A Small World, a child is never forced to sleep or remain on a mat during the entire rest period. If a child is awake after ½ an hour, a quiet activity may be offered. A mat, sheet, and blanket are provided for each child. Parents are responsible for washing their child's sheet and blanket each Friday and return to school each Monday. Please refrain from bringing toys to school unless it is absolutely needed for your child to rest.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

These are special days for your child to share with their classmates. Parents can work with the teacher to decide what will be appropriate for the class. We suggest treats that are low in salt and sugar. Please make sure of classmates allergies before sending in treats for the children.

## PERSONAL ITEMS

Please make sure your child has the following items with them each day when they attend the center. Also, remember to label everything with your child's first and last name on it.

Backpack

Diapers/Pull-ups/Underwear

Wipes

Tissues

Change of clothes for each season (socks, underwear, pants, shirt)

Appropriate coats, hats, gloves (according to weather and season)

A folder for notes, dittos, work, etc. to be sent home/school each day

Sunscreen (Spring/Summer months)

Please refrain from bringing in toys from home (except for show and tell days or otherwise notified)

## PARKING

Our parking lot is a busy place, especially at drop-off time and pick-up times.

Please be careful when pulling into the parking lot. Use parking spots which are provided. Please teach your child the safety rules for walking to your car and hold your child's hand through parking areas.

## POTTY TRAINING

When children are ready, we encourage using the potty on a consistent basis at home and at school. We will work with the parents during the training time. The following items are rule of thumb as to tell when your child is ready for potty training:

- ★ Child can dress and undress themselves
- ★ Child can tell teacher when they have had a bowel movement or urinated
- ★ Child has words for urination and bowel movements
- ★ Child can follow directions given by teacher
- ★ Child can express interest in going on the potty

Unless your child shows all of these signs, we suggest waiting to begin the potty training process. If your child has more than one accident a day, we will ask you to put your child back into pullups or diapers until he or she is ready. Accidents in the school are very unsanitary.

Parents, we encourage that you talk to your child about going to the bathroom at school.

## GENERAL HEALTH AND IMMUNIZATIONS

There are three forms that must be filled out by your doctor before your child can attend the school. Medical History Part 1, Medical History Part 2, and a yellow card that all immunizations must be recorded on. Your child must receive a yearly physical and their immunizations must be updated accordingly required by the state of New Jersey.

## WHEN YOUR CHILD IS ILL

When a child is not feeling well and needs one-on-one attention, or has an illness that might be contagious, you **MUST** keep your child home. If the child becomes ill during the day, the parent will be notified. If the child needs to leave the center, they will be isolated and the parent will be asked to pick up the child immediately. Please report illnesses to the school.

Children may not return to school until :

- 1. Fever has been gone for 24 hours**
- 2. Child's pediatrician notifies the school**
- 3. Written note from the doctor has been presented that the child poses no health risk to other children**

\* This is done for the benefit of the child and the protection of other children at the center.

**Parents will be called if any of these symptoms appear:**

- \*\* Elevated temperature of 101.5 degrees or higher (child must remain out of the center until he/she is fever free for 24 hours)**

- Skin rash or infected, untreated skin patches (must be diagnosed by an M.D. With a note allowing child to return to the center)
- Eye infection, evidenced by red eyes with discharge
- Runny nose and cough (may return if no fever)
- Infected diaper rash (must be seen by M.D. and medicated cream must be supplied)
- Chicken Pox
- Diarrhea (children with two runny stools and looser consistency are sent home and may not return until stools are firm)
- Two or more episodes of acute vomiting in 24 hours
- Severe Pain or discomfort
- Sore throat or severe coughing
- Yellow eyes or jaundiced skin
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Swollen joints
- Visibly enlarged lymph nodes
- Stiff neck

## CURRICULUM

A Small World Academy promotes learning through creative experiences in the classroom. Our center's teachers create individual class curriculums that are socially, emotionally, and developmentally age appropriate. The classroom environment is stimulating and inviting for the children in each group. A typical day includes the following:

**Circle Time:** Circle Time occurs early in the morning. We welcome one another, say the "Pledge of Allegiance", check the weather, calendar, sing songs, learn finger plays, share our stories, and learn things that are appropriate to that particular age group.

**Language:** Children are encouraged to communicate all their needs through "using their words". Teachers read to the children, play audio tapes, and encourage children to make up their own stories. Communicating to the class through reading encourages their need to read.

**Creative Arts:** Self expression is encouraged through art, music, dance, and gymnastics. Children also use dramatic play to represent things they have seen or imagined using materials available in the classroom. The focus is on process, not result.

**Art:** Art is a time for creative expression. Children are given the opportunity to experiment with a variety of art media. We want children to use the art materials independently and without fear in order to foster their creative development. The process is more important than the product. A child's art work should reflect the abilities and perceptions. Please provide your child with a smock or old shirt for art time.

**Math, Science, and Abstract Ideas:** Children will have the opportunity to weigh and sort different objects, compare and contrast, cause and effect, and learn simple math through the use of objects first, shapes and then numerals.

**Social Relationships:** Making new friendships and learning respect for others can be taught through group activities and cooperation. This can also happen when children participate in dramatic play.

**Field Trips:** Our center takes class trips to educational and cultural places to give our students well-rounded experiences. Parents will be informed of time, date, and destination with permission slips.

**Multi-Cultural Diversity:** We provide educational opportunities for children to experience songs, stories, and foods that make up our American cultural diversity. The manner the teachers use in discussing the holidays provides multi-cultural experiences for the children. Parental participation is welcomed to make this part of our program more inclusive and enriching for the children.

**Special Needs:** A Small World includes all children no matter what special needs they have. IEP's are in the student's files accordingly. Teachers also work with professionals to provide developmentally appropriate learning experiences for children with special needs.

**Outdoor Play:** Children need to play outside everyday for exercise, sunshine, and fresh air. If weather is too severe for outside play, gross motor skill activities can be conducted inside the classroom.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information about children and families enrolled in the center is confidential and the property of the center and families involved. Requests by outside agencies for information regarding individual children must be made in writing accompanied with the parents written permission for release of the information.

## DISCIPLINE POLICY

Children are beginning to socialize with peers and teachers. Conflicts may arise where children need to learn appropriate behaviors to resolve the situation. Children are never yelled at, ridiculed, or humiliated. At A Small World, we believe in teaching children how to behave properly. This process is called Positive Discipline. Positive Discipline is different from punishment. Punishment tells the children what they should not do, it teaches fear. Positive discipline teaches children what they should do, it teaches self esteem. We provide positive discipline in the following ways:

- We give children clear and consistent rules
- We tell the children to stop unwanted behavior in a friendly but firm tone
- We include children in group decision making

When a negative situation arises it may become necessary for our staff to intervene. In these situations, the following actions may be taken:

- Child may be re-directed to a new activity in order to change the focus of his/her behavior.
- Child will be given individualized attention to help him/her deal with a particular situation.
- Child will be provided with alternate activities of acceptable ways to release feelings.

- Child may be given a time out. He/she will be removed from a situation so that he/she may gain self-control. Our rule of thumb is one minute for each year of the child's age.

Our goal is to catch the child being good. We do this by responding to and reinforcing positive behavior. This is achieved through praise, rewards, encouragement, love, and an appreciation of a child's point of view.

If any child strikes another child or staff member, the parent will be notified by the teacher/director. If the child repeats the behavior he/she will be sent home. Re-occurring aggressive behavior will be addressed in a "parent/teacher" conference to discuss behavior modification. The parent, on the third occurrence, will be asked to please remove the child from A Small World. Behavior includes striking with hands, feet, or objects, and biting. All situations will be documented and put in the child's file.

### TIME OUT

Time out is used as a last resort when a child is losing control (acting aggressively, throwing a tantrum, complete defiance, etc.) and refuses redirection. Time out is not a punishment. It's a neutral break for a child to regain his or her self-control.

### SUMMER CAMP

During the summer months at A Small World, the children have the opportunity to enjoy summer fun, while learning continues. Nature studies, arts and crafts, water play, special visitors, and field trips, are just a few of the exciting activities that take place during the 8-10 weeks of summer sessions. Additional camp information will be provided during the spring months.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

A Small World Academy is a loving and nurturing environment in which children grow and learn. The center informs parents of day to day aspects of the child's experiences and activities. Teachers provide information about the child's adjustments to the daily routine activities. This format allows teachers and parents to exchange information about the children.

Parents also have two or more formal conferences with the teacher each year. Teachers will announce time for formal conferences, generally in the winter and spring, but parents may request a conference at any time. Conferences provide a format for parents to participate in the process of goal setting and programming for their child.

**Parent Meetings:** Parents are welcome at any time to meet with the Director or Assistant Director. Any issues that need to be discussed, activities planned, and suggestions can be made.

**Classroom Participation:** Parents are invited to actively participate in the program by volunteering their time or skills. It is vital for parents to become involved in their child's experience at the center so many opportunities are designed during the year. This kind of participation is supportive of the children as well as the teaching program. Parents are encouraged to be involved directly in their child's classroom.

## OPEN DOOR POLICY

Parents can visit the center at any time. You are always welcome.

## EXCLUDABLE DISEASES

The diseases listed below are considered "excludable" by the NJ Requirements for Child Care Centers. Children with these diseases may not return to the center without a doctor's note. In the event that any excludable disease occurs at the center, parents of any child exposed to the disease will be notified in writing. Those starred items are diseases the center is required to report to the Department of Health, as specified in NJAC.

**RESPIRATORY:** Chicken Pox, Strep Throat, German Measles,  
Heophilus influenza, Whooping cough

**GASTRO-INTESTINAL:** Giardia Lamblia\*, Hepatitis A, Salmonella\*,  
Shigella\*

**CONTACT:** Impetigo, Scabies

## MEDICATION

According to the State Code NJAC 10:122-7.7, all prescription and nonprescription medication that needs to be administered to a child at school can ONLY be done with the written consent from the parent. The medicine form from a teacher/director must be filled out for the medicine to be administered to your child. The medicine must be in its original container and LABELED with your child's name on it.

## **CHILD TRANSITIONS**

The teacher and the Director will evaluate all students before deciding where to place your child in the center. This process will occur each year as the child grows older. The child will have the opportunity to visit their new group on a gradually lengthening schedule until the adjustment has been made.

## **FIRE DRILLS**

Fire drills are conducted every month in accordance with New Jersey state law. The center's goal is to provide the greatest possible safety and protection for the children. Fire exit routes are posted in each classroom. The center also has emergency procedures in place in the event of weather or building emergency. A copy of these procedures are in the Director's file and copies are available upon request.

## **UNEXPECTED CLOSINGS**

In the event of inclement weather, each teacher will be notified by 6:00 a.m. if the center will be closed. The teacher has a list of their students and their phone numbers to call and notify parents.

## INFANT CARE

Our infant room consists of a bright and happy environment staffed by a loving, caring teacher. We have a small ration of four infants to one teacher ranging in ages from 6 weeks to 18 months. Each child has his/her own crib and accessories. We work on fine and gross motor skills. We sing songs, read stories, have tummy time, etc. with them. Our babies learn social skills at a very early age. Daily reports are sent home every day that tell the parent about their day. We ask that you please send in all personal items that are necessary for your child throughout the day. Personal items consist of, but are not limited to:

- Diapers
- Wipes
- Change of clothes
- Bottles
- Bibs
- Formula
- Anything else your child may need

Please see the rest of the handbook for rules, policies, and information for a Small World Preschool and Kindergarten.

Dear Parents,

For your information:

The Department of Law and Public Safety, Division of Consumer Affairs has a list of unsafe children's products.

You may see this extensive list on the internet:  
[www.state.nj.us/lps/ca/recall/recalls.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/lps/ca/recall/recalls.htm)

Thank you,  
A Small World Preschool