Employee Handbook



(Revised November 2026)

400 Elderberry Street | Tiffin, IA 52340
Phone: (319) 545-5437 (KIDS) | Fax: (319) 545-2167
www.sproutkidsacademy.com info@sproutkidsacademy.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page Number
Equal Employment Opportunity Statement		4
General Information		4
Welcome to Sprout Kids Academy		5
General Guidelines		7
Parent Relations		16
Personnel Policies		17
Benefits for Full-Time Staff		24
Termination		29
Day-to-Day Routine		31
Discipline and Guidance Policy		36
Safety & Health Policies		40
Transportation Policy		48
Emergency Policies		50
Emergency Procedures		51
Inclement Weather Policies		55
Qualities of a Sprout Kids Academy Employee		56

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

Sprout Kids Academy will provide equal employment opportunities to all staff members and applicants for employment. Employment decisions will be made without discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and gender identity), national origin, age, disability, or any other status protected by applicable law.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Business Name: Sprout Kids Academy

Address: 400 Elderberry Street, Tiffin, IA 52340

Phone: (319) 545-5437 (answering machine is available)

Fax: (319) 545-2167

E-Mail: info@sproutkidsacademy.com

Website: www.sproutkidsacademy.com

Tax Identification Number: 81-0965140 Licensed Capacity 194

Hours of Operation: Monday–Friday, 6:15 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Director: **Rachel Volk** (319) 855-2034

Rachelvolk@sproutkidsacademy.com

Assistant Director: **Katie Rammelsberg** (319) 331-1484

katie@sproutkidsacademy.com

Owners:

Rebecca Shive	rebecca@sproutkidsacademy.com	(319) 573-6511
Robert Conrad	rc3hundred3@hotmail.com	(319) 240-4848

Required Postings:

1. Certificate of License and other related postings
2. Exposure to communicable disease notice (if applicable)
3. Notice of Mandatory Reporters
4. State of Iowa Child Care Licensing Code (available upon request)
5. Program Activities
6. Daily Schedule
7. Name, address, and telephone number of the State Child Care Licensing Consultant

Licensing Regulation

Sprout Kids Academy conforms to the requirements of the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services. There are minimum standards for working with children that relate to age, health, qualifications (both work experience and education) and the required training for the prospective employee. Staff must be 18 years of age to work alone in a room with children. Additional regulations normally deal with the quality of services provided including equipment requirements, staffing and policies regarding children's health and safety. A copy of these rules and regulations is on file at the Center.

Probationary Period

New staff members will serve a probationary period of 60 days. During that 60-day period employees will have a “check-in” with either the Director or Assistant Director and the employee will be evaluated. During this evaluation the employee and management will review an employee’s observed strengths and weaknesses. The employee will also be encouraged to share any concerns they have or areas in which they feel they need more training. Continuation of employment will be determined at that time. At any time during the probationary period an employee may be released from employment without verbal or written warnings, with or without cause.

WELCOME TO SPROUT KIDS ACADEMY!

Welcome to the staff of Sprout Kids Academy! Sprout Kids Academy was created to fill the growing need in our community for quality early childhood programming in a loving, enriching, and nurturing environment. As part of the staff, you will be impacting the lives of many children and their families each day.

This Employee Handbook contains important information about our policies, programming, and day-to-day operations. Our policies have been developed to ensure the safety and health of the children and staff. Our academic programming has been developed to enhance children’s learning throughout their early childhood years. Please take the time to read through this Employee Handbook carefully.

This handbook is designed to make you familiar with Sprout Kids Academy policies and procedures. Although it does not address every possible situation, it provides guidance to help you focus on delivering excellent care. These policies are in accordance with Iowa State Code. It is necessary for parents, volunteers, teachers, staff and the Director to comply and adhere to them.

Our Oath

We are committed to our families and their children. We will work hard to create a loving and enriching environment that is essential for the growth and development of each child and staff member in our program.

Philosophy

We believe children learn best through play as well as having the opportunity to make choices. A child's growth and development are best achieved through individual attention, nurturing, and exposure to diverse activities, resources and experiences. A child care center like Sprout Kids Academy helps teach compassion through example and experience. It provides time for quality education and training in a warm and friendly atmosphere where young children can learn to play creatively with one another. It provides an opportunity for nurturing principles to be applied to daily activities. Teachers exhibiting compassion provide an environment where children develop meaningful relationships. Each child develops skills and self-reliance at his/her own rate of progress.

Sprout Kids Academy Purpose and Objectives

- To provide a variety of experiences and materials that enable each child to learn and mature at his/her own rate of development.
- To maintain a caring atmosphere where each child is loved and accepted as a unique individual.
- Provide a safe environment for learning and experiences that will increase self-esteem.
- Our focus at Sprout Kids Academy is the individual child.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to nurture every aspect of a child's life through social, emotional, physical, spiritual and cognitive experiences in a developmentally appropriate child-directed environment.

Employee Expectations

- To lovingly nurture and carefully teach developmentally appropriate practices to the children involved in the program.
- To keep all children in their care safe and free from harm.
- To exemplify the philosophy and mission of Sprout Kids Academy.
- To be positive and encouraging and to show this positive spirit to children, parents and co-workers.
- To provide quality early childhood education to children of this community.
- To read and follow the policies and procedures in this Employee Handbook.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Staff Orientation Plan

Upon hiring, an employee will be given instructions on how to access an electronic copy of the Sprout Kids Academy Employee Handbook on the website. (Paper copies are available upon request.) The employee will also be advised of the availability of the Parent Handbook on the Sprout Kids Academy website. (Paper copies of the Parent Handbook are available upon request.) Staff will be asked to sign a statement indicating they have read each handbook and are familiar with the contents of both. This signed statement will be made part of the employee's file. Staff are required to review the policies set out in the Employee and Parent Handbooks annually.

This handbook will serve as the guide for staff orientation to Sprout Kids Academy. Staff must participate in an orientation where the Director or Assistant Director will review the policies and emergency procedures contained in the Employee Handbook with each employee before working with children. Emergency Plans for fire, tornado, and intruder response will be reviewed and drills conducted ~~a~~ according to the Center's emergency plan and applicable requirements.

Staff will receive additional orientation training as he or she "shadows" an experienced staff member during the first week of employment. During a staff member's first week, the Director or Assistant Director will schedule a time to meet one on one with the new staff member to show them the facilities, locate materials and supplies, and review emergency procedures and other policies contained in the Employee Handbook. The Director or Assistant Director will also go over the New Staff Orientation and Required Employment Forms Checklist with the new staff member.

Informing the Director

Staff shall inform the Director or Assistant Director of all incidents or events involving parents. Good communication is vital for the success of our program. When a parent comes to a staff member with a complaint or concern, the staff member shall address the complaint or concern in a **polite and non-defensive manner.** If the parent is not satisfied with the resolution, he or she should be referred to the Director or Assistant Director.

The Director is most qualified to communicate Sprout Kids Academy policies and procedures to parents. Staff members should refer parents with such questions to the Director. Parents should be advised to set an appointment with the Director to discuss personal situations that affect the child.

Procedures for Hiring Staff

- When a staff position becomes available, we will promote from within when possible as well as advertise online. Qualifications for the position will be according to the State of Iowa licensing regulations for staff and the criteria outlined in the job description for the open position.

- Personal recommendations from current staff members are always welcome.
- When applications are received, the Director or Assistant Director will review the applications and determine which of the candidates will be asked for an interview.

Employee Records

Employees of Sprout Kids Academy shall have a confidential personnel file maintained and each file shall contain the following information:

- Employment application and/or resume that includes:
    - Work History
    - References
    - Requests for references
- W-4 Federal
- W-4 State of Iowa
- I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification Form
- Copy of Valid Driver's License
- Copy of either Social Security Card or Birth Certificate
- State of Iowa HHS Criminal History Record Check
- A statement signed by the employee that there has been no conviction of any law of any state involving lascivious acts with a child, child neglect or child abuse or any felony.
- Employee Confidentiality Agreement
- Staff Handbook Acknowledgement
- Current physical and TB test - completed within 3 years and should be updated every 3 years thereafter
- Copies of all training certificates verifying classes employee has taken
- Record of employment and termination dates
- Performance evaluation reports
- Records of salary adjustments
- Record of PTO (paid time off) and vacation earned and used
- Records of written or verbal warnings and/or records of misconduct
- Record of termination (whether voluntary or for cause)
- Any other information or statements which the employee would like to have contained in the file

Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse

Upon employment, each staff member will sign a statement regarding child abuse. It is required to take a mandatory reporting of child abuse course, educating childcare providers to recognize/report abuse/neglect/endangerment. Child abuse is defined in Iowa Code, section 232.68, as one or more of the following six categories:

- Physical Abuse
- Denial of Critical Care
- Sexual Abuse
- Mental Injury
- Child Prostitution
- Presence of Illegal Drugs

Abuse, either physical or sexual, is defined under Iowa law as:

> *"…any injury that is either non-accidental or inconsistent with the explanation given for the injury with results either from actions or omissions of the person responsible for the care of the child."*

Denial of Critical Care or Neglect is considered:

> *"...failure on the part of the caregiver to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing or other care necessary for a child's health and welfare."*

The law requires childcare providers to report signs of child abuse, neglect or endangerment to Child Protective Services. Our staff is required to take Iowa's Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse Training Program which educates childcare providers to recognize and report abuse, neglect and endangerment.

If abuse or neglect is suspected, an employee of Sprout Kids Academy should report their suspicion to the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (Iowa HHS). Employees who suspect child abuse must report promptly (within 24 hours) in accordance with Iowa mandatory-reporter requirements; notifying a supervisor does not replace an individual reporting duty. The Director may assist with the process, and employees must not delay a report while awaiting internal approval. It is not the Center's responsibility to determine if the suspected abuse/neglect has occurred. Trained Iowa HHS investigators will decide whether abuse/neglect has occurred and take necessary steps to correct it if it is found to be true. The staff of Sprout Kids Academy is committed to supporting the child and family in correcting and alleviating any issues.

To report suspected abuse to Iowa HHS call 1-800-362-2178.

A "mandatory reporter" participating in good faith when making a report shall have immunity from any liability, civil or criminal, which might otherwise be imposed. However, if a report is founded, staff that had direct contact may be required to appear as witnesses.

If an employee is reported to have abused a child at Sprout, the Director will promptly document concerns, ensure required reports are made, call the child abuse hotline, cooperate with authorities, notify our Iowa HHS Licensing Agent and take appropriate protective measures. If the allegation is found to be false, the employee may continue to work, however, may be reassigned to another position.

If at any time during employment an employee is the subject of a child or dependent abuse investigation, he/she must notify the Director immediately and continue to update the Director with new information as the case progresses.

If at any time during employment an employee receives notification that an abuse investigation has resulted in a founded case against them, he/she must notify the Director immediately and understands that his/her employment will be immediately terminated as an Involuntary Termination due to the employee's inability to continue to work in a child care setting.

Employee Children Enrolled at Center

Employees may enroll their children at Sprout Kids Academy. This will solely depend upon availability of space in the required classroom. Also, it is a Sprout Kids Academy policy that employees will not work in their child's classroom.

Staff Tuition Discount

Full-time employees with children enrolled at Sprout Kids Academy are eligible for the following tuition discounts:

- **50% discount** on tuition for children enrolled in infant through preschool programs.
- **30% discount** on tuition for children enrolled in the Before and After School Program or Summer Program.

Tuition discounts are available only to full-time employees and do not apply to enrollment fees. If a full-time employee averages fewer than 32 hours per week in a given month, the employee may not be eligible for a tuition discount for that month. Part-time and seasonal (summer-only) employees are not eligible for tuition discounts.

Child Care Assistance (CCA): Employee tuition discounts do not apply to any charges associated with children receiving assistance through the Child Care Assistance Program. This includes, but is not limited to, parent co-payments, charges for absences exceeding CCA allowances, and any other amounts owed by the employee.

Uniform/Dress Code/Personal Appearance

Sprout Kids Academy will provide each employee with five (5) uniform shirts. Employees are required to wear an approved Sprout Kids Academy uniform shirt during each scheduled shift, with the Sprout logo visible at all times. If additional warmth is needed, employees may wear a long-sleeved shirt underneath their uniform shirt. Sprout Kids Academy sweatshirts may also be available for purchase and are considered acceptable uniform attire.

Pants and Shorts: Employees may wear nylon or mesh athletic pants, yoga pants, leggings, spandex, or other appropriate pants or shorts. All clothing must fit properly, be in good taste, provide adequate coverage, and allow employees to move comfortably and safely while interacting with children. Clothing that is excessively tight, revealing, or otherwise inappropriate for a child care environment is not permitted.

Footwear: Employees must wear closed-toe shoes with socks. Flip-flops, sandals, and other open-toed footwear are not permitted for safety reasons.

Jewelry: Long, hoop, or dangling earrings are not permitted due to potential safety hazards when working with children.

Personal Hygiene and Appearance: Employees are expected to maintain good personal hygiene and a clean, professional appearance. All clothing must be clean and free of noticeable odors, including cigarette smoke, other smoke, and body odors. Employees are expected to report to work well-groomed and dressed appropriately for a child care environment.

While wearing a company uniform, on or off duty, employees must not depict, exhibit, or participate in any behavior that violates company policy or allow others to wear their uniform doing the same. If any behavior not in compliance with company policy is seen in-person, in a photograph, on a video, or on a social media site, the employee may be subject to written warning or immediate termination.

At the end of an employee's employment with Sprout Kids Academy, the employee must return all uniforms and other Sprout property assigned to them within 3 business days. If a uniform shirt is not returned within 3 business days the employee will be assessed a fee of $20.00 per shirt. This amount will be deducted from the employee's last payroll check

Staff Conduct

The safety and well-being of the children in our care is the highest priority for all Sprout Kids Academy staff. To uphold this responsibility, employees are expected to maintain the highest standards of professional conduct at all times. Failure to adhere to these standards may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination, depending on the nature and severity of the violation.

Employees must comply with the following standards of conduct, including but not limited to:

- Corporal punishment, verbal abuse or punishment that is humiliating or frightening is not permitted.
- Threats and derogatory remarks about children, their families, or other staff are not permitted.
- Foul or abusive language is not permitted.
- Each staff member must serve as a role model for children enrolled in the Center.
- Smoking, vaping, or the use of any tobacco or nicotine products is strictly prohibited anywhere within the Center or on Center grounds, including the parking lot. This includes, but is not limited to, cigarettes, chewing tobacco, nicotine pouches (e.g., Zyn), vape pens, and any other nicotine-delivery devices. Such items must not be visible to children at any time. Employees

who smoke or use nicotine products off premises must return to the Center in clean, smoke-free uniform clothing. Any employee who smells of smoke upon return may be required to purchase a new uniform or may be sent home.

- Alcohol and/or drug usage is not permitted while on Center grounds. If a staff member is substance-impaired while at the Center, the employee may face disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination.
- Each staff member must dress in CLEAN clothing appropriate for working with children. Staff uniform consists of either a Sprout Kids Academy t-shirt or sweatshirt worn on the outside of any other clothing.
- Staff shall not wear long earrings or other dangling jewelry. These items pose a potential risk to themselves and children.
- Good personal hygiene is a must.
- Staff members are not allowed to access parent contact information and use that information to contact or communicate with parents outside of his/her working hours without a parent specifically granting a staff member access.
- Confidentiality shall be maintained at all times. Staff members must keep any information that parents might share regarding themselves or their children confidential. Any information learned from talking to other staff, reading children's enrollment forms or other files is also confidential. Staff members may never discuss the Center's situations (even without names) in public. The release of such information, voluntarily or involuntarily, without the written consent of the child's legally authorized representative can subject the employee to disciplinary action and potential termination.
- Personal business shall NOT be conducted during program hours. Personal business is defined as any activity that is not directly related to the supervision & interaction of children.
- **CELL PHONES are not to be in your possession while caring for children.** (This includes your pocket.) Cell phones shall remain in your personal purse or bag or in an employee locker at all times. An exception to this rule may be granted by the Director or Assistant Director during off-property experiences such as walks or fieldtrips or as otherwise approved by the Director or Assistant Director. Without prior approval, you may use your cell phone only while on your lunch or other break and while not visible to children. If there is an emergency, please direct friends, relatives, etc. to call the office of Sprout Kids Academy at (319) 545-5437 and we will immediately take you to the office to take the call. If you are seen with your cell phone in your possession, whether using it or not, you will be given a

written or verbal warning. In addition, you may be asked to turn your phone in to the Director at the beginning of your shift for a period of 3 months. Your phone will be returned to you each day at the end of your shift. If you are seen a second time with a cell phone in your possession during that same 3-month period, your employment may be terminated.

- Staff shall never access or attempt to access any file cabinets located in the Director or Assistant Director's office.
- Only music suitable for children shall be played in or outside classrooms.
- No information or record is to be removed from the Center.

Keys & Key Card

Employees will be provided with one key card that will allow them access to the building through an electronic keypad during business hours. If at any point in time an employee loses his/her key card a replacement fee will be charged for a new card. At the end of an employee's employment with Sprout Kids Academy the employee must return this key card within 3 business days. If a key card is not returned within 3 business days the employee will be assessed a replacement fee that will be deducted from the employee's last payroll check.

An employee may be provided with a key to the building. If at any point in time an employee loses his/her key a replacement fee of $500.00 will be charged. At the end of an employee's employment with Sprout Kids Academy the employee must return all keys within 3 business days. If a key is not returned within 3 business days the employee will be assessed a fee of $500 that will be deducted from the employee's last payroll check.

Professional Growth/Staff Development and Training

Through training employees not only gain knowledge but help create a safe environment for children, other staff members and themselves. Several classes are mandatory certifications that every employee at Sprout must complete. To fulfill additional training hour requirements, employees are encouraged to research classes or training opportunities in areas that are of interest to them and present them to the Director for approval. (No class should be taken without prior approval from the Director). At various times throughout the year, the Director may present group training opportunities that staff can attend to fulfill hour requirements. Employees who sign up/register for a class or training session and fail to attend the class will have the cost of the missed class deducted from their next paycheck

Within the first 30 days of employment (preferably prior to start date) employees must have completed the following training. The Director or Assistant Director will instruct employees how to access and register for these training modules.

- Child Abuse Mandatory Reporter Training (2 hours)
- Certification in Universal Precautions (1 hour)
- Certification in **"**Essentials Child Care Preservice**"** Training (12 hours)

Within the first three months of employment an employee must complete the following training:

- Certification by Iowa HHS approved organization in infant, child, and adult CPR
- Certification by Iowa HHS approved organization in infant, child, and adult first aid.

After completing the five items listed above, employees must adhere to and stay current with the following training requirements:

- All staff must complete six hours of training in appropriate topical areas.
- Iowa SING/HHS Criminal Record check - renewed every two years
- National FBI Fingerprint Check – renewed every four years
- Infant/Child/Adult CPR – renewed every two years
- Infant/Child/Adult First Aid – renewed every two years
- Universal Precautions – renewed every year
- Mandatory Reporter - renewed every three years

Additional items of significance surrounding training/staff development include:

- All professional growth courses must be approved by the Director.
- If your employment ceases for any reason (voluntarily or involuntarily) you are responsible for reimbursing Sprout Kids Academy for the cost of all classes taken and/or training received in the 6 months prior to resignation. The appropriate amount (from documentation) will be deducted from your final payroll check
- Any staff member who does not attend a class they were signed up for will be responsible for the cost of that class. This cost will be deducted from their next payroll check
- An on-site bi-monthly staff meeting will be held to discuss and plan upcoming activities, areas for improvement, ideas for growth and learn about new advancements in Early Childhood Education. Attendance at these staff meetings is MANDATORY. These meetings typically occur on the first Monday of every other month, immediately after the Center closes.
- Self-evaluations and goals will be made each year by every staff member. In addition, the Director or Assistant Director will provide a written evaluation of the employee.

It is the goal of Sprout Kids Academy to develop professional Early Childhood Educators within our staff. The above professional growth/training/staff development guidelines were designed to allow employees the ability to create opportunities within the Early Childhood profession, such as obtaining their CDA, their BA in Early Childhood or becoming a center Director.

Greeting Visitors

Throughout the day various people may visit the Center, including prospective parents, licensing representatives, Sprout Kids Academy current parents, salesmen, etc. All visitors are to be greeted with a smile and asked if they can be assisted. If a visitor requires assistance gaining entrance into the building a staff member **MUST ask the visitor to show their photo ID through the glass or video monitor and then verify that the visitor is authorized to have access BEFORE letting the visitor in the building.**

Visitors in the Vestibule (Entry) Area

The vestibule at Sprout Kids Academy is equipped with a video/audio monitor. This monitor allows parents/visitors to press a call button and be connected to an employee in the Cypress classroom. If there is a person in the vestibule you do not know, enter the Cypress classroom and speak to the visitor using the video/audio monitor. The visitor can then show appropriate identification through the monitor. At no time is an employee to allow a visitor to enter the building before verifying they are on an approved pick-up list from a currently enrolled child or have another verified, legitimate reason for access, such as an authorized service appointment.

Center Telephone

Telephones at Sprout Kids Academy are for business use only. Friends or relatives of staff are requested not to call during working hours unless there is an emergency. Answering the telephone is the responsibility of the Director or Assistant Director, when possible. When they are not available and other members are required to answer the phone, they must be courteous and polite. The appropriate way to answer the phone is, “Sprout Kids Academy, this is (your name).”

Transportation of Students at Sprout Kids Academy

As an employee you may be asked to drive one of the Sprout Kids Academy vans. BEFORE driving a van, you MUST be listed as an insured driver under the Sprout Kids Academy auto insurance policy. To be added as an insured driver, an employee must provide his/her driver’s license to the Director who will then forward the information on to the insurance company. Do not drive any vehicle owned by Sprout Kids Academy before confirming with the Director or Assistant Director that you are listed as an insured driver. If your driver’s license becomes suspended or restricted, notify the Director immediately and do not drive a Center vehicle.

Transportation to and from Work

Each employee is required to provide their own transportation to and from work. Each employee is asked to anticipate adverse weather conditions and plan travel time accordingly. You are part of the Sprout family, and we want you to arrive to work safely and on time.

When parking in the Sprout Kids Academy parking lot, employees should enter through the entrance on the North side of the lot and exit through the West side of the lot.

If entering or exiting the East side of the building, please make sure that the gate is firmly closed behind you.

Trade Professionals On-Site

Areas and equipment of Sprout Kids Academy, inside and out, shall be maintained in a clean, safe and operable condition. In order to maintain such an environment, employees of trades may need to be on-site to repair equipment, structures, or fixtures, both inside and out. These individuals will check-in with the Director or designated person upon arrival. The Director or designated person shall then escort these individuals to the areas of concern/repair. These individuals will be advised to seek the Director or designated person if further access within the building is needed. The Director or designated person will periodically check on the progress of the area under repair. Staff will be informed of such persons before or upon their arrival to the Center. At NO TIME will these individuals be given unsupervised access to children. If an area occupied by children must be entered, the children should be taken to another location within the facility.

PARENT RELATIONS

Communication

It is important to learn the names and faces of each child and their parents. Staff members are expected to greet parents warmly and with a smile both at the beginning and end of each day and answer questions the parents may have concerning their child and their child's routine. Remember, they are leaving the most valuable thing in their life in your care.

Parent Involvement

Parents are encouraged to become involved in their child's program. They can expand on their child’s learning by asking their child questions or doing Center related activities at home. Most parents appreciate the opportunity to help with special events and projects and should be treated warmly and with respect when they are helping.

Parental Access

Parents shall have unlimited access to their children throughout the day while they are attending Sprout Kids Academy. However, in situations where parental contact is prohibited by court order, a copy of the applicable portion of the court order must be provided by the parent or custodian and made part of the child's file.

Photos and Information Recorded in Tadpoles

In order to help parents discuss the day's activities with children, staff will prepare a daily note and record it on Tadpoles. This note should include the lesson plan for the day, activities the children participated in and any other fun tidbits. In addition, throughout the day staff members will be required to use the iPad assigned to that classroom and take photos or videos of EVERY child in attendance. A **MINIMUM** of one photo (but ideally four or more photos) or videos per child, per day, is required. The photos should show the child working on an activity, napping, eating lunch, playing, or interacting in a positive way with another student. After “tagging” a child in a photo these photos will appear in the Tadpoles account of each child included in the photo and sent to parents in a daily report at the end of the day. The photos should contain a brief caption that describes what the child was doing in the photo. If there is a child at the Center whose parent or guardian has not authorized photos of their child to be taken you will be notified. Instructions on using the Tadpoles system will be provided to you during staff training/orientation.

Staff are also required to record in Tadpoles the quantity consumed of the food and drink served at Sprout, times and quantity of any medication administered. This information will also be included in the daily report automatically sent to parents at the end of the day. Staff members who work with children under two years of age are also responsible for recording bottle feedings (including quantity consumed), diaper changes, and nap times.

PERSONNEL POLICIES

Classroom iPads

Each classroom at Sprout Kids Academy is equipped with a minimum of one iPad and one charger for the iPad. At the end of the day, the last employee in the room is responsible for plugging in the classroom iPad(s) in the designated location. On Fridays, the last employee in the classroom should plug the iPad in and then power it off. These iPads are to be used for business use only. Employees are not allowed to use iPads to send personal text messages, send or read personal emails, access any social media, shopping, news or other sites, or conduct personal business. IPads are to be used only for communicating with parents by uploading notes about their child’s care, uploading photos of children to individual Tadpoles accounts or for use in creating lesson plans. IPads or any accessories for the iPads are not allowed to be taken home with an employee for any reason. IPad use will be monitored and regularly checked for violations of this policy.

IPads should NOT be used as entertainment devices for children. Videos or other programs should not be played for the children before clearing it with the Director or Assistant Director.

Social Media Policy

This policy applies to use of social media technology. “Social media" is the term used to describe a broad range of online communication tools including but not limited to:

- Blogs (web-based journals) and microblogs
- Social networking sites (i.e. Facebook.com, social gaming sites, chat rooms, LinkedIn)
- Message boards and electronic mailing lists
- Wikis
- Video sharing (i.e. YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat) picture sharing and music sharing
- Comments on news sites
- Podcasts

Sprout Kids Academy respects its employees’ decisions to use social media technology in their personal time. However, if social media is improperly used, it can result in a variety of adverse consequences such as disclosure of sensitive or confidential information belonging to Sprout Kids Academy and/or its families, students, or other employees. Therefore, as a condition of employment, we require that all employees avoid:

- Using Sprout Kids Academy in any screen names or logins
- Posting pictures or videos to social media of themselves (or others) in a Sprout Kids Academy uniform while engaging in behavior against company policy
- Photographing any staff or children enrolled at Sprout Kids Academy with a personal camera or phone while on duty
- Employees must not disclose confidential child/family information or make threats, engage in unlawful harassment, or falsely represent themselves as speaking for Sprout.

Workers’ Compensation

Sprout Kids Academy employees are covered under a workers’ compensation insurance policy. In the event an injury occurs while on duty the injury must be reported IMMEDIATELY to the Director or Assistant Director. The employee will be required to complete a form(s) that includes a detailed account of the injury and provide the names of any/all staff members who may have witnessed the injury **within 24 hours of the injury**. The Director will then document the incident and collect and document witness accounts. The proper claim forms should be completed by the Director and signed by the employee. If applicable, the forms include the attending physician’s signature.

Work Hours

The Director or Assistant Director will notify staff of the hours to be worked/scheduled. It is the staff member's responsibility to check their schedule and to work those scheduled hours. It is not allowable for staff to change their schedule without permission from the Director or Assistant Director. When staff members become aware there is a possibility that they may exceed 40 hours during the week, the Director must be notified immediately. **Because of variations in enrollments and attendance, it may be necessary to make changes to the work schedule on short notice.**

It is imperative that every staff member reports to work as scheduled, and on time. Children and staff are depending on each staff member. If tardiness and absenteeism occur, you may receive a written or verbal warning. Chronic tardiness and chronic absenteeism are grounds for dismissal.

Unable to Work Scheduled Shift

If you become ill, all **full-time employees must call AND SPEAK directly to the Director by 6:00 a.m. on the day of the shift you are calling in sick for. Part-time employees must call a minimum of 3 hours before their scheduled shift. Text messages, Facebook messages, emails or other forms of communication are NOT acceptable.** If you are scheduled to open the Center and you are unable to come in, you must call (and speak directly to) the Director by 5:00 a.m. so alternative arrangements can be made. If running late for your scheduled shift, call before leaving home in case we need to make temporary staffing adjustments. The Director's cell phone number is provided in the front of this handbook. Any scheduled day missed for illness directly before or following a holiday will result in loss of pay for the holiday and the scheduled day unless the absence falls under protected leave.

For any illness resulting in absence for two or more consecutive workdays, an employee must provide written documentation from a healthcare provider verifying the need for the absence. Sprout may also require such documentation for a single-day absence when circumstances warrant, including repeated or patterned absences. Any request for documentation will be made in accordance with applicable federal and state law.

Clock In/Clock Out Procedures

All staff members will clock in at the beginning of their shift and clock out at the end of their shift using one of the two available kiosk stations in the lobby area. When an employee clocks in he/she should be ready to start work. This means coat and purse put away in the staff break room. In addition, employees must also clock in/out for lunch and other breaks. While on an unpaid break, an employee should be fully relieved of his/her duties.

Each staff member will have their own unique user ID for use at these kiosks. Employees are NOT allowed to share their user IDs with anyone. Falsification of

time worked or using another employee's user ID to clock in or out for him/her will result in immediate termination of all employees involved.

Employees are not allowed to clock-in more than 5 minutes prior to their scheduled shift. In the event an employee is clocked in prior to five minutes before their scheduled shift, he/she will be subject to corrective action. Employees must accurately record all hours actually worked. Working outside scheduled hours requires prior management approval. Time worked will be paid in accordance with applicable law. Unauthorized work may result in corrective action.

If an employee forgets to clock in or out for the day he/she must notify the Director immediately. The employee will then need to complete the "Time Clock Correction Form" no more than two days after the day the employee forgot to clock in or clock out and have it signed by the Director or Assistant Director. Repeated failure of an employee to clock in or out may result in disciplinary action including termination. If an employee's time entries for a pay period are not complete, it is the employee's responsibility to correct it.

Pay Periods

Employees will be paid one time per month. A pay period will run from the 7th of one month through the 6th of the following month. Net paychecks will be deposited via ACH into an employee's bank account seven days after the end of the pay period (on the 13th of the month). If the 13th falls on a weekend or holiday ACH deposits will be made on the **next business day.** (Paystubs will be emailed to employees.) It is the employee's responsibility to provide Sprout with updated bank account information when necessary. If paper paychecks must be issued (at the discretion of the owner) the paper checks will be available after 4:00pm, seven days after the end of the pay period (on the 13th of the month).

> *Example: Pay period runs March 7th through April 6th. Paychecks will be deposited to an employee's bank account and paystubs emailed to the employee on April 13th. If April 13th is a weekend or holiday, paychecks will be deposited and paystubs emailed the next BUSINESS day.*

All taxes, including Medicare, Social Security, and income tax, will be deducted from employee payroll checks. These taxes will be calculated using information provided by an employee on his/her W-4, at rates prescribed by applicable laws. It is the employee's responsibility to accurately report the number of exemptions claimed and filing status for income tax purposes.

Other items that may be deducted from an employee's paycheck include health insurance premiums, dental insurance premiums, AFLAC premiums, child care tuition, training reimbursement or the fee for not returning company-owned items upon termination (as described in an earlier section). A complete deduction breakdown is available on the employee's paystub.

Annual Review/Salary Increase

All employees will be given an annual performance review. Reviews will be done as close to the employee's annual start date as possible. The annual review includes: goal setting, a review of progress towards previous goals set, attendance, professional development, classroom observations, and Center survey results. At this time a merit raise may be given based on the recommendations of the Director or Assistant Director, performance results, and other information gathered.

Financial/Expense Reimbursement

An employee using their own finances to purchase equipment, classroom items, or consumables may receive financial reimbursement ONLY if the Director gave prior approval of the purchase. To receive reimbursement, and employee must submit the original receipt (or a copy of the receipt) with their name and classroom the items were purchased for clearly written on the top of the receipt. The date and dollar amount of the reimbursement requested must be highlighted or circled. Any personal items purchased on the receipt must be excluded from the reimbursement requested. Any items for which an employee receives financial reimbursement become the property of Sprout Kids Academy.

Staff Breaks

Staff members who work over 8 hours will be offered one 60-minute break. Staff members who work less than 8 hours will be offered one 30-minute break. The Director/On-Site Supervisor will arrange coverage during breaks. **Timing of breaks will depend entirely on staffing ratios and time constraints.**

The Staff Break Room next to the office on the north side of the building is designated for employee use during break periods. Employees not going outside during their break are asked to use this area. **Classrooms and the office are NOT designated break areas and should not be used as such**. Employees are asked to be considerate of others that are not on break so that they may continue their responsibilities. If you are in the building but not in the designated Staff Break Room, please be aware that parents or other employees may see you while on break and be unaware it is your break time. We ask that you be cognizant of your conduct and appearance when visible to others outside the breakroom to avoid any misunderstandings.

Employee Appreciation

We at Sprout Kids Academy value our employees. We understand that having good employees is the key to making our business a success. Incentives will be given periodically to reward employees for behavior or actions that go "above and beyond". Incentives are purely discretionary and will be determined based on actions observed, peer and/or Director reviews, and comments/accolades from parents, students or other staff members.

Grievance Procedure

Sprout Kids Academy values and desires the continued employment of each staff member. Every effort is made to deal with any concerns in a fair, reasonable, and timely manner. Staff should first contact the Director to discuss concerns, questions or complaints. If after speaking with the Director you feel you have not come to a resolution you may contact one of the owners. Owner contact information is located at the front of this handbook.

In order to maintain a positive work environment, staff members are encouraged to avoid sharing complaints with other staff members. This policy does not limit employees' rights to discuss wages, hours, or working conditions or to report concerns to appropriate government agencies.

Food Service Policy

Sprout Kids Academy is an EGG and PEANUT/NUT FREE FACILITY

Sprout Kids Academy follows the guidelines provided by the Department of Education's Child Care Food Program. All food is prepared, served, and stored in accordance with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines. Standards are followed for meals and snacks to help meet a child's daily nutritional requirements and our licensing guidelines. Clean, sanitary drinking water is made available to children throughout the day. Staff should discard all food with expired dates. Foods that are hotter than 110 degrees Fahrenheit are kept out of children's reach. Foods requiring refrigeration will be kept cold until served.

Exceptions to these standards are allowed for allergies, medical conditions and cultural preferences, if verified in writing by a physician.

Sprout will provide children with lunch daily as well as two nutritious snacks during the day. Lunch and snacks will be provided only if children are in attendance at the time the item is served. The menus will be posted on the Bulletin Board at the main entrance of the building and on our website. All meals will be served family style. Every effort shall be made to serve children promptly. Staff should incorporate table manners into their lesson plans and provide children with examples and guidance during this time. Staff members are encouraged to eat WITH children at the same table and model appropriate table manners. (No outside food may be brought in.) Staff should also help children learn healthy eating habits while ensuring the safety of the children sitting with them. Child-size (small) portions are served with additional portions available rather than large servings. Meals and snacks are not withheld as a form of discipline. We will encourage children to taste all foods, placing food to the lips is considered a taste, but no child will be forced to eat something they do not like. At no time are teachers to leave children unattended (proper ratio compliance) while eating.

Staff members are not to consume food in the classroom unless sitting with children at the children's scheduled mealtime and may only eat the same food the children are eating.

We ask parents not to bring food from home into Sprout except for infant feeding, baby food and children with special diets due to religious or medical dietary needs.

Special dietary needs must be directed by a physician and on file in writing at the center. If a child has food allergies, religious or special dietary needs, a parent must discuss this with the Director prior to the child's first day. If a child requires a modification for a food item on our menu, a parent must provide the Director with a Diet Modification Form **signed by a physician.**

For families with children that eat baby food, formula or breast milk:

All families with young children that do not eat the meals provided on our posted menu must provide baby food, formula or breast milk to Sprout Kids Academy. Sprout Kids Academy does NOT provide formula or baby food to families. Infant parents will provide a day's supply of bottles containing breast milk or infant formula. Only cleaned and sanitized bottles (or their equivalent) and nipples shall be used. Each bottle must be provided by parents and needs to be clearly identified with a label containing the first and last name of the child and the date and time the bottle was prepared. The label and writing must not come off in water or while handling. The labeled containers of breast milk shall be kept frozen or refrigerated. Only breast milk to be used that day should be thawed. Breast milk and formula shall be refrigerated until immediately before feeding. Any contents remaining after feeding will be discarded in accordance with applicable food-safety requirements; parental requests cannot override safe handling rules.

Please carefully check all items brought to the Center for proper labeling. If a parent brings a bottle, breast milk or formula that is NOT appropriately labeled, you should ask the parent to label the item in your presence.

Any employee who serves a child a bottle or other consumable item belonging to a different child will receive a written warning and may be subject to termination.

Prepared bottles of formula from powder or concentrate or ready-to-feed formula shall be kept refrigerated and shall be discarded after 24 hours if not used. Expressed human milk must be stored and used according to current Iowa HHS requirements and approved handling procedures; staff should verify storage times before discarding. Unused frozen human milk which has been thawed in the refrigerator shall be used within 24 hours. A bottle that has been fed over a period that exceeds an hour from the beginning of the feeding or has been unrefrigerated an hour or more shall not be served to an infant. Bottles will be rinsed out and ready for you to take home each evening for cleaning. If desired, an area will be available for nursing mothers or parents who wish to bottle-feed or nurse their baby throughout the day.

Children with Allergies or Food Intolerances

Sprout Kids Academy has multiple processes in place to ensure employees are aware of children with allergies in their care. To prevent a child from coming into contact with a food he/she is allergic to it is critical that employees read and understand the processes/procedures detailed below that have been established to protect these children. If a staff member serves a child food he/she is allergic to, the staff member is subject to immediate termination.

- If a classroom has a child with a food allergy or intolerance, a notice will be posted outside the room indicating there is an allergy in that room.

- When food is brought into a classroom, the food cart will have a photo and the specific allergy of any child in that classroom with an allergy taped in a prominent location on the food cart.
- Children with food allergies will eat from a red plate and drink from a red cup. Children with food intolerance will eat from a blue plate and drink from a blue cup.
- A “Food Allergies and Food Intolerances” sheet is posted on the wall near the meal prep area in every classroom. This sheet lists all children enrolled at Sprout, separated by classroom, that have an allergy and what each child’s specific allergy is.
- An “Allergy Alert” notice is posted on the wall near the meal prep area for each child in that specific classroom with a food allergy. This notice contains a picture of the child, the foods he/she is allergic to, and a treatment plan in the event the child comes into contact with a food he/she is allergic to.

THERE IS TO BE NO FOOD OR DRINK IN THE CLASSROOMS OUTSIDE OF MEAL OR SNACK TIME OTHER THAN WATER UNLESS APPROVED BY THE DIRECTOR. AT NO TIME SHALL STAFF FOOD BE SHARED WITH CHILDREN.

Center Closure

If the center should close for inclement weather or an emergency, employees will not be paid for that day. If the center has been opened and must close, employees will be paid for the time they were at work prior to closing. If an employee has scheduled vacation during the closure, the employee will have the option to either be paid for the day by using available PTO or take the day as unpaid.

If an employee is requested by management to remain off schedule for the day due to low center enrollment, the employee may use PTO for that day or take the day unpaid. If an employee is requested by management to leave the center early during their scheduled shift due to low center enrollment the employee will be paid only for time worked (not time scheduled).

If the center is open during inclement weather, all scheduled employees must fulfill their scheduled shift, however, if an employee feels unsafe attempting to travel, and follows the guidelines for notification, they may use PTO.

BENEFITS FOR FULL-TIME STAFF

An employee will be considered “Full-Time” if he or she consistently works 32 or more hours per week. For benefit purposes, seasonal employees (i.e.: summer only) are not considered full-time employees. If a full-time employee does not work an average of 32 hours per week in any given month the employee will not accrue PTO that month, will not receive the $50 company contribution towards health insurance premiums or the $10 contribution towards dental premiums, and will not be eligible for holiday pay (if applicable) that month.

The policies listed below apply ONLY to full-time employees.

Holidays

The following holidays will be observed as paid holidays and the center will be closed:

- New Year's Day (observed/paid on Friday if falls on Saturday, Monday if falls on Sunday)
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day (observed/paid on Friday if falls on Saturday, Monday if falls on Sunday)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve (observed/paid **ONLY** if falls on a weekday)
- Christmas Day (observed/paid on Monday if falls Sunday)

Holiday Pay

Employees will begin to receive holiday pay after they have completed 90 days of employment. A full-time employee will receive holiday pay as long as the employee works their last scheduled shift both before and following a holiday. Any scheduled shift missed directly before or following a holiday will result in loss of pay for the holiday.

Paid Time Off (PTO)

Sprout Kids Academy utilizes a Paid Time Off (PTO) policy. This policy allows employees to accrue hours for sick days, vacation days, bereavement days and personal days that can be used as the need or desire arises. Holidays are not included in the PTO accruals or usage. PTO benefits accrue based on length of employment with Sprout Kids Academy following the chart below.

When You Reach…	**Annual PTO**	**Monthly Accrual**
Hire Date through **3rd Anniversary**	12 days (96 hours)	8.00 hours
On 4th Anniversary through **5th Anniversary**	17 days (136 hours)	11.33 hours
Beginning on your 6th anniversary	22 days (176 hours)	14.67 hours

How to Determine Your PTO Accrual Rate

Your PTO accrual rate changes based on your **work anniversary**, not the calendar year.

1. Locate your original hire date.
2. Count the number of completed employment anniversaries as of today's date.
3. Use the table above to determine your accrual rate.

Example:

Hire Date: July 15, 2023

- July 15, 2024 = 1st Anniversary
- July 15, 2025 = 2nd Anniversary
- July 15, 2026 = 3rd Anniversary
- July 15, 2027 = 4th Anniversary = new PTO accrual rate 11.33 hours.
- July 15, 2028 – 5th Anniversary
- July 15, 2029 = 6th Anniversary = new PTO accrual rate 14.67 hours.

As a new employee, you will begin to accrue PTO after completing one full month of employment. PTO will accrue at the rates shown above. Accrued PTO will be displayed on your pay stubs. If an employee misses work, any accrued PTO hours may be used to cover the time missed. If the employee does not have enough time to cover their absence, the time missed will be unpaid. Employees may not carry negative PTO balances.

You will be able to utilize your PTO for any discretionary time off that you request and for which you obtain prior approval from the Director. A request for time off will not necessarily be granted but every effort will be made to accommodate your request considering staffing needs and other requests for time off made by other employees. PTO will be granted on a first-come, first-served basis.

Upon termination of employment at Sprout Kids Academy, any unused PTO accruals will be paid provided that the employee has given at least two weeks advance notice and has completed (with the help of the Director or Assistant Director) all items in the Termination Checklist.

Funeral Leave

Sprout Kids Academy provides one day of paid leave to attend the funeral of a member of an employee's immediate family. For the purpose of this policy, the definition of "immediate family" includes an employee's spouse, mother, father, son, daughter, step-son, step-daughter, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, sister, brother, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, mother-in-law, father-in-law, grandmother, grandfather, granddaughter or grandson. If additional unpaid time off is needed, please speak with the Director.

Health Insurance, Vision Insurance, Dental Insurance, Simple IRA and AFLAC Supplemental Insurance (optional)

Currently Sprout Kids Academy offers its full-time, eligible employees the option to purchase health insurance, vision insurance, dental insurance and/or AFLAC supplemental insurance. If elected, the premiums associated with these items will be payroll-deducted directly from an employee's monthly paycheck. Admittance into all the insurance programs offered through Sprout is limited by an "open enrollment period" or "qualifying event".

Wellmark Health Insurance: If an eligible employee elects any of the Wellmark Health Insurance coverage options offered, Sprout Kids Academy will pay $50 per month towards the cost of the insurance premium if that employee maintains his/her full-time employment status. This amount will be paid directly to Wellmark. Employee premiums above $50 will be payroll-deducted directly from the employee's paycheck on a pre-tax basis. If an employee's premium is less than $50 per month only the amount of the premium will be paid. If an employee does not elect to participate in the health insurance offered by Sprout Kids Academy the $50 will NOT be paid or otherwise reimbursed to the employee.

Vision Insurance: Vision insurance premiums are paid entirely by the employee. Vision premiums are added to Wellmark insurance premiums and will be payroll-deducted directly from the employee's monthly paycheck on a pre-tax basis.

Dental Insurance: Sprout will contribute $10 per month towards an employee's dental insurance premiums. The remainder is paid entirely by the employee. Premiums will be payroll-deducted directly from the employee's monthly paycheck on a pre-tax basis. Employees not electing dental insurance will NOT be paid or otherwise reimbursed the $10 monthly contribution.

AFLAC Supplemental Insurance: AFLAC Supplemental Insurance premiums are paid entirely by the employee. Premiums will be payroll-deducted directly from the employee's monthly paycheck. Depending on the type of insurance elected, premiums can be either pre or post-tax.

Simple IRA Plan: Both Full and Part-Time employees are eligible to participate in the Simple IRA plan. Employees who wish to participate can defer a portion of their monthly earnings on a pre-tax basis. Sprout will **match** the employee's monthly contribution dollar for dollar up to 3% of the employee's compensation.

Questions concerning an employee's eligibility status, cost of premiums, open enrollment periods, qualifying events, etc. should be forwarded to the Director who may then ask you to contact Sprout's insurance representative. (Insurance offerings are not guaranteed and their offering may be discontinued at any time at the discretion of the Owner.)

TERMINATION

Termination

Sprout Kids Academy values staff and will do everything possible to help them thrive. With that being said, to ensure Sprout Kids Academy is staffed with qualified and competent people it may become necessary to discharge a staff member. The Director will discharge any staff member who does not fulfill his/her duties and obligations. Upon termination, employees are required to return all uniform shirts, keys, key cards or other items that were assigned to them. The cost of items not returned (as described in a previous section) will be deducted from the employee's final paycheck. Additionally, employees separating from employment will have the cost of all training incurred in the six months prior to their resignation/termination date deducted from their final paycheck. Final wages will include all legally required compensation. Any lawful deductions or reimbursements will be addressed separately in accordance with applicable wage payment rules.

TYPES OF TERMINATION:

Voluntary termination: When an employee resigns on the basis of personal decision, the separation is considered a voluntary termination. A written resignation is requested for staff members who wish to terminate their employment. A minimum two-week advance notice is requested. Unused PTO will not be paid unless a two-week advance notice is given (and worked) and the employee has completed all items (with the help of the Director or Assistant Director) on the Termination Checklist.

Resignation by a mutual agreement: When Sprout Kids Academy and the employee agree that separation will be in the best interest of both parties the separation is considered a resignation by mutual agreement. Such separation usually results when an evaluation indicates that the employee has failed to perform up to expectations. Upon separation, the employee will be paid for all unused PTO only if the employee continues to work the remainder of scheduled shifts as determined by the Director and the employee has completed all items (with the help of the Director or Assistant Director) on the Termination Checklist.

Involuntary termination: An employee will be dismissed through involuntary termination when his/her job performance remains below an acceptable level or when an employee fails to follow company policies, guidelines or practices. An involuntary termination may or may not follow written or verbal warnings issued to an employee. Any employee who is involuntarily terminated will be paid for all time worked prior to termination but will not be entitled to payment of any accrued or unused PTO.

Additional reasons for involuntary termination may include but are not limited to any of the following:

- Abuse (physical, sexual, or emotional) of a child
- Physical or verbal aggression towards a child or the parent of a child enrolled at Sprout
- Neglect of a child (for example, leaving a child unattended in a vehicle, playground, etc. or permitting a child to wander from the Center/playground)
- Inappropriately disciplining a child
- Permitting a child to leave the Center with an unauthorized person
- Unsatisfactory work performance
- Being under the influence of or in possession of illegal drugs or alcohol during work hours
- Failing to work a scheduled shift
- Refusal to perform duties described in job description
- Allowing a child to consume food that he/she is allergic to
- Failure to follow Sprout Kids Academy policies as described in the Employee Handbook
- Repeated unexcused absences or tardiness
- Receipt of a third written warning
- Incompetence, including sleeping in a classroom
- Engaging in activities that may damage the reputation of Sprout Kids Academy and/or Sprout Kids Academy staff
- Possession of drugs, firearms, knives, or other weapons on center property
- Inappropriate/unauthorized use of center telephone or center iPads
- Misappropriation, mismanagement, or theft of money/property from the center, its employees, or customers
- Unauthorized use of center property
- Failure to follow Sprout Kids Academy cell phone policy
- Falsification of Sprout Kids Academy documents. For example, actual time worked vs. recorded time or information included on daily reports
- Clocking-in or clocking-out for another employee
- Any other conduct that, in the opinion of the Director, fails to promote the best interest of Sprout Kids Academy or the children and parents it serves
- Conviction of a felony

Corrective Action/Termination Process

Corrective action may include coaching, verbal or written warnings, suspension, or termination, depending on the circumstances. Sprout may bypass steps for serious safety or policy violations, consistent with applicable law.

Discretionary Progressive Discipline:

1. First Warning = verbal and/or written warning
2. Second Warning = written warning
3. Third Warning = dismissal

These disciplinary incidents may or may not be connected/related. Upon termination, an employee must schedule a meeting with the Director. At this meeting the employee and Director/Assistant Director will together complete the Termination Checklist and do the following:

- Sign termination papers
- Classify the termination as either voluntary, termination by mutual agreement, or involuntary
- Return all Center-owned property
- Gather the employee's personal property with the Director or Assistant Director present
- Settle any financial debts within the Center
- Pay all insurance premiums due
- Review training costs incurred in the six months prior to termination date

Employees are asked to participate in an exit process and return company property promptly. Failure to participate will not retroactively change the reason for separation.

Any property removed from Sprout Kids Academy without the Director or Assistant Director present may be considered theft, causing appropriate charges to be filed with law officials.

DAY-TO-DAY ROUTINE

Opening the Center

Staff responsible for opening the Center must make sure the center doors are unlocked on time. Staff responsible for opening will set the mood for the day so it is important to greet parents, children, and other staff by NAME and with a SMILE in a warm and cheerful manner. Staff should also assist with the child's belongings, listen carefully (making eye contact) to any specific instructions the parent may have and see to it that the child is at ease and engaged in an activity.

Opening staff will also have the following responsibilities:

- Verify the iPad is logged in to Tadpoles
- Turn lights on
- Open blinds
- Check the heat/air (Director must make any modifications)
- Other special tasks assigned by the Director or Assistant Director
- Confirm that exits are free from obstructions
- Greet and help children separate from parents

Closing the Center

Closing staff is responsible for greeting parents as they enter the building and helping children get ready to go home. Closing staff must be keenly aware of their responsibilities regarding identifying people who do not normally come to pick up a child and what to do when a child has not been picked up by the 6:00 PM closing time.

Closing staff will also have the following responsibilities:

- Complete all items on cleaning board
- Close blinds
- Make sure iPad is plugged in in the designated outlet in the classroom
- Turn off lights
- Check bathrooms – flush toilets
- Remove all remaining garbage and take to the dumpster
- Remove all dirty diapers from diaper pails and take to the dumpster
- Close doors
- Stock room with paper products, linens, etc.
- Check with the head closer to have your room signed off

In general, be sure Sprout Kids Academy is ready to open the next morning looking clean and orderly.

Bags of trash should NEVER be left outside of a room or door. Bags of trash should immediately be placed inside of the exterior dumpster.

Transition Times

“Transition times” refers to the times when we move a group of children in an orderly manner from one activity to another. These brief periods lend themselves well to simple games, conversation, chanting, singing, and other learning experiences. Transition times can become disruptive to all classrooms if staff is not prepared to handle them. Please have a few transition methods in mind before transitioning children from one space to another.

It is important to remember that transitions may require more than one name-to-face check during the transition. For further explanation please see the “Name-to-Face Checks” section of this handbook.

Maintenance and Care of Building

In addition to closing duties, all employees will help with general maintenance and upkeep of Sprout Kids Academy. **Each classroom contains a chart for cleaning and maintenance items specific to that classroom that MUST be followed**. The Director, Assistant Director or lead/head closer will assign additional duties based on the Center's needs. These duties may include but are not limited to:

- **Kitchen:** Wash dishes, mop floor, clean counters, clean top and inside of refrigerator, oven, and microwave oven
- **Bathrooms:** Clean sinks, clean toilets, mop floors, empty trash, replace paper products and soap, clean walls
- **Vinyl Floors:** Sweep and mop
- **Carpeted Areas:** Vacuum, remove stains and spots
- **Tote trays and cubbies:** Clean, label, and organize
- **Table, chairs and walls:** Clean with soap and water (to remove dust, food, glue, crayon, marker, pencil, and fingerprints), disinfect regularly.
- **Trash:** Remove and replace trash liners, clean and disinfect trash receptacles
- **Diaper pail:** Remove and replace liners (dispose of in dumpster), clean and disinfect diaper receptacle
- Refill the approved current cleaning and disinfecting products in accordance with manufacturer instructions and center procedures
- Disinfect changing tables with Sprout’s currently approved product, following label directions, including required contact time
- Clean/Scrub carpets or vinyl
- **Paint:** Touch up paint walls (note bathrooms use a different sheen of paint, same color)
- **Repairs:** Add ALL repairs to the clipboard in breakroom
- **Playground:** Clean and inspect playground equipment for damage
- **Landscaping:** Water plants, flowers, or grass and remove garbage, weeds or “mushrooms” from grass and landscaping.
- **Parking Lot:** Remove trash from parking lot
- **Vans:** Remove garbage daily, occasionally clean and vacuum vans

Vinyl areas (not carpet) should ALWAYS be used for "messy" projects, e.g., clay, play-doh, paint, cooking, water play, science experiences, etc. Staff members must clean up after their group has finished in an area. Materials are returned to

their proper places. Chairs are pushed under tables when not in use. For safety reasons, children should never sit or climb on stacked chairs, tables or counters. Cleaning/disinfecting procedures and diapering and hand-washing procedures are posted in each room.

Nap Time

Iowa HHS regulations state, children 2-5 years of age need a minimum 20 minutes of rest, and children 0-2 years may sleep as needed. Conditions conducive for sleep and rest for young children include a consistent caregiver, a routine quiet place, and a regular time for rest. Most preschool children in all-day programs benefit from scheduled periods of rest. This rest may take the form of actual napping, a quiet time, or change of pace between activities. Rest periods will have music playing, lights dimmed as well as shades drawn to a close. Children not falling asleep during this time will be asked to remain quiet by reading, working with puzzles, or playing in an area with other awake children in order to maintain a calm environment for the other children that have fallen asleep.

Infant Safe Sleep

Children from six weeks to two years of age will nap as needed. Infants will always be placed on their backs to sleep on a firm, flat, approved sleep surface, consistent with applicable Iowa safe-sleep requirements. Any medically necessary exception requires an appropriate individualized written order and licensing review. Soft surfaces and gas-trapping objects such as pillows, quilts, sheepskins, or soft bumpers will NOT be placed under or with an infant for sleeping. When infants can easily turn from the supine position to the prone (front) position, they will be put down for sleep on their back but allowed to adopt whatever position they prefer for sleep. Once infants develop the skills to move from their back to their side or their stomach it is safe to put them to sleep on their backs and allow them to adapt to whatever position makes them comfortable. Repositioning sleeping infants to their backs is not recommended once the child has learned to turn over easily from the supine to prone positions.

If an infant has an illness or a disability that predisposes the child to airway obstruction in the supine position, parents are required to provide a signed physician’s note specifying the need for prone sleeping position and any other special arrangements required for the infant.

Swaddling is not used for sleep at the center unless an individualized exception is specifically permitted under applicable Iowa child-care requirements and approved in writing by appropriate professionals and management. If a parent wishes their child to be swaddled for naps, please pick up a “Permission to Swaddle” form from the office. This form must be signed by both a parent/guardian and the child’s physician and returned to the office before your child can be swaddled.

No child under 12 months of age shall sleep with a blanket or other items in crib.

Program Activities

Sprout Kids Academy will provide a developmentally appropriate curriculum for the children enrolled in our program. We use an evidence-based curriculum called ***Creative Curriculum*** as well as ***Appelbaum*** training***.*** This curriculum includes activities geared toward promoting self-esteem, positive self-image, social interaction, self-expression, communication skills, creative expression, and problem-solving skills. We will provide a balance of active and quiet activities, individual and group activities, indoor and outdoor activities, and staff-initiated and child-initiated activities. This curriculum also promotes gross and fine motor development. Staff will take into consideration the cultural, ethnic and special needs of the children enrolled in our program when creating lesson plans.

Teachers directly supervise infants, toddlers, preschool and school aged children by sight and hearing at all times, even when the children are in sleeping areas. Teachers will regularly count children on a scheduled basis, at every transition, and whenever leaving one area and arriving at another, to confirm the safe whereabouts of every child at all times. Supervision is basic to the prevention of harm.

Developing secure relationships helps children learn to trust their world. Infant and toddler room staff will hold and cuddle these children. They will respond to the child's sounds and will offer encouragement and praise as the child explores and discovers new things. The child's day will be structured to his or her needs. Teachers are expected to work closely with parents to ensure the children's routines are similar to those at home.

As children grow older and develop, they become more independent and inquisitive. Teachers will provide an enriching and safe environment in which children can explore and discover their world and gain self-confidence. The child's day will be filled with stimulating hands-on learning experiences and play activities. At this age (preschool), children will develop and test social and problem-solving skills in an accepting and secure environment. Staff will be responsible for submitting lesson plans to the Director on a weekly basis. These lesson plans are also added to the Tadpoles system.

Child Assessment (Preschool)

It is the belief of Sprout Kids Academy that assessment of young children should be purposeful, developmentally appropriate, and take place in the natural setting by familiar adults. A variety of assessment methods will be used throughout the year including assessments linked to Creative Curriculum and Appelbaum. They provide information about children's needs, interests, and abilities to plan developmentally appropriate experiences for children and guide instruction. Assessment will never be used to label children or to include or exclude them from a program.

Ongoing communication will enable family and staff to continually assess students' progress. Families will have ongoing opportunities to share the results of observations from home to contribute to the assessment process.

Assessment results will be used to:

- Provide information to parents about their children's developmental milestones
- Arrange for developmental screening and referral for diagnostic assessment when indicated
- Identify children's interests and needs
- Describe the developmental progress and learning of children
- Improve curriculum and adapt teaching practices and the environment
- Communicate with families confidentially in English or other languages spoken by families

The preschool teacher will assist in arranging for developmental screening and referral for diagnostic assessment when indicated. If a child is determined to need special accommodation, those accommodations are included in the materials, environment, and lesson plans for that child. Examples include sign language and visuals for children with hearing impairments or language delays and behavior plans for children whose behavior does not respond to the typical strategies used by teaching staff in the classroom.

DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE POLICY

The goal of discipline and guidance is not only to eliminate inappropriate behavior, but to encourage appropriate behavior by using positive guidance, redirection, and setting clear-cut limits. Guidance practices should be a logical consequence to the action of the child. These practices should be consistent and appropriate to the age and circumstances of the child. Teachers will encourage empathy so that children realize the consequences of their actions, practice problem solving techniques, emphasize cooperation versus competition, develop classroom rules that are brief, clear and consistently enforced, and arrange the environment to minimize the use of the word "no". At Sprout Kids Academy, our teachers will create a loving and stimulating environment with developmentally appropriate activities to prevent many unacceptable behaviors from occurring. Teaching staff will encourage children to show respect to other people, to be fair, respect property and learn to be responsible for their actions. Teaching staff will use discipline that is consistent, clear, and understandable to the child. They will help children learn to persist when frustrated, play cooperatively with other children, use language to communicate needs, and learn turn taking.

Challenging Behavior

One way to reduce the need for guidance is to establish healthy routines so children do not become too hungry, tired, or uncomfortable. When children have challenging behaviors, teachers should promote pro-social behavior by:

• Interacting in a respectful manner with all children.

- Modeling turn-taking and sharing as well as caring behaviors
- Helping children negotiate their interactions with one another and with shared materials.
- Engaging children in the care of their classroom and ensuring that each child has an opportunity to contribute to the group.
- Encouraging children to listen to one another and helping them to provide comfort when others are sad or distressed

Teaching staff will guide children to develop self-control and orderly conduct. Children will be taught social, communication, and emotional regulation skills. If a child displays persistent, serious, and challenging behavior, the teaching staff, parents, and AEA support staff will work as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success.

Aggressive physical behavior toward staff or children is unacceptable. Teaching staff will intervene immediately when a child becomes physically aggressive to protect all the children and encourage more acceptable behavior. If aggressive behavior is repeated, the Director or Assistant Director may send a child home.

Permissible Methods of Discipline

For acts of aggression and fighting (biting, scratching, hitting) staff will set appropriate expectations for children and guide them in solving problems. This positive guidance will be the usual technique for managing children with challenging behaviors rather than punishing them for having problems they have not yet learned to solve. In addition, staff may:

- Separate the children involved
- Immediately comfort the individual who was injured
- Care for any injury suffered by the victim involved in the incident
- Notify parents or legal guardians of children involved in the incident
- Review the adequacy of the teaching-staff supervision, appropriateness of program activities, and administrative corrective action if there is a recurrence.

Prohibited Practices

The program does not, and will not, employ any of the following disciplinary procedures:

- Harsh or abusive tone of voice with the children nor make threats or derogatory remarks.
- Physical punishment, including spanking, hitting, shaking, or grabbing.
- Any punishment that would humiliate, frighten or subject a child to neglect.
- Neither withholds nor threatens to withhold food as a form of discipline.

A serious disciplinary issue is defined as a child is disrupting the day-to-day classroom structure by:

- Requiring constant one-on-one attention that prevents the staff from caring for other children.
- Inflicting physical or emotional harm on themselves or others.
- Damaging Center property.
- Being disrespectful to the staff.
- Failing repeatedly to conform to the rules of the program.

If any of the above becomes an issue with the child, the child's parents/guardians will be notified and a meeting will be scheduled to talk to the Director and the child's teacher to develop an appropriate support plan.

Good communication between Sprout Kids Academy and the child's family is vital. If problems do arise, every effort will be made to resolve them. However, we cannot serve children who display chronically disruptive behavior or behavior that inflicts physical or emotional harm on themselves, other children or staff. Sprout Kids Academy reserves the right to ask parents to find alternative care for their child.

Biting Policy

Biting is a natural developmental characteristic of some young children. Biting other children or their caregivers is a response exhibited by young children who are unable to effectively communicate, whether that is verbally or physically, with those other children or caregivers. Young children in the teething process may bite to soothe the pain; it is natural reaction for a young child to feel the urge to grind their gums together for comfort. It is important to think positively of children who bite. Biting is a form of communication, as biting is almost always a response to the child's needs not being met or coping with a challenge or stressor. In most biting instances caregivers can identify which child has exhibited this behavior and redirect that child when frustration begins. Biting in older children is not as natural and understandably will not be tolerated.

- Appropriate supervision, redirection and a trusted relationship between caregivers and child can help alleviate biting, however, biting is a form of physical aggression that poses a physical hazard, as well as a health hazard, which must be dealt with accordingly. Caregivers should not express frustration or anger to the child.

The following steps will be taken by the caregiver when a biting incident occurs:

- Ensure all children are safe.
- Comfort and provide appropriate first aid to the bitten child.
- Calmly redirect the child that bit.
- Document both children's incidents separately and communicate with each family without disclosing another child's identity.
- Caregiver will go back and talk with the child who bit (if child is verbal and able to talk about the experience) and explain the different strategies he/she can use next time, instead of biting.

- Caregivers will help the children move on without forcing them to resume playing together.

Sprout Kids Academy will maintain an emphasis on proactive purposeful planning of environments and opportunities to develop healthy relationships within the care environment through director support, staff teamwork, and professional development including both training and consultation. Staff are encouraged to seek consultation support from the Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) Infant Toddler Specialists, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Coaches, or other appropriate consultants available in their local community.

Whenever a child or caregiver is bitten, an Incident/Accident Report will be filled out for both the biter and the bitten. Appropriate First Aid care for injuries from human bites will be administered. Incidents will be documented to assist the staff with identifying patterns and preventing future incidents through changing the environment and intentional teaching strategies (e.g., socio-emotional support). A confidential copy of the incident report will be maintained in child's file, and a confidential behavior chart will be used if the biting is not an isolated incident. Parents may request a copy of the incident report. Further analysis of the environment is even more important if multiple children are exhibiting challenging behaviors.

The child with the challenging behavior should be taught in a caring and firm way that the behavior is not acceptable as well as instructed on alternative behaviors. Sprout Kids Academy will also examine the needs of the child, including potential changes to the environment and routines, to prevent future incidents.

To prevent children and caregivers from being unnecessarily harmed, parents will be called to come pick up their child if the child bites more than *four* times in one day. The child will not be allowed at Sprout Kids Academy for the remainder of the day.

If a child bites or attempts to bite another child or their caregiver five or more times within 10 working days, Sprout Kids Academy considers this a recurring issue. If this situation arises, in order to protect other children at the Center, Sprout Kids Academy will meet with the family to develop and document an individualized support plan, including a review of reasonable accommodations and whether additional staffing or other supports are necessary. Costs and service arrangements will be considered in accordance with applicable law and written agreements. Therefore, if this situation becomes necessary, additional support strategies may be required, which may include modified care arrangements.

In rare situations where these steps fail to resolve the problem and the child continues to bite; a decision about continued enrollment will be made on an individualized basis, considering child safety, available supports, reasonable accommodations, and applicable law. Sprout Kids Academy reserves the right to terminate care with no less than a 48-hour notice.

SAFETY & HEALTH POLICIES

It is the parent's responsibility to provide names, relationships and phone numbers of people authorized to pick a child up from Sprout Kids Academy. Any changes should be provided to the Director in writing. All staff members are trained in First Aid; Infant, Child, and Adult CPR; and Universal Precautions. All new staff members will receive and will be required to read the Employee Handbook to become familiar with staff responsibilities in emergency procedures. This information is also reviewed in staff meetings on an annual basis.

Supervision of Children

Keeping children safe is the top priority at Sprout Kids Academy. Children in our care should be directly supervised by sight **at all times**. During a shift, staff should be performing name-to-face counts a minimum of once per hour and interacting with children at all times. This interaction with children should also continue on the playground. While outside on the playground, staff shall be positioned on the playground in such a manner they have a direct view of every area of the playground a child has access to. This includes the strip of playground on the East side of the building.

When a child enters a classroom, whether at the beginning of the day or after a transfer from another classroom, the teacher receiving the child should check the child into his/her classroom on the Tadpoles app after visually seeing the child. If a parent has already checked the child in, you should verify the child is included in your class on Tadpoles and then write the child's name on the attendance whiteboard. A daily attendance record is kept for all children attending Sprout Kids Academy.

If at any time a staff member is missing a child on Tadpoles, has an extra child on Tadpoles (that is not physically present in the room), is over ratio or is over room capacity they should contact the office immediately.

Name-to-Face Checks

There is a feature within our Tadpoles software that allows for simple completion of name-to-face checks. This feature should be accessed and name-to-face checks performed at the intervals/times listed below (if not more frequently).

- Upon BOTH entering and exiting the Sprout building as a class
- Upon BOTH entering and exiting the playground or gymnasium as a class
- When BOTH boarding and exiting a vehicle used for transportation
- Upon BOTH entering and exiting an offsite location (i.e., field trip) as a class
- Once per hour (while in a classroom) during the course of the day

It is important to remember that transitions that happen throughout the day may require more than one name-to-face check during the transition. For example, boarding a van, exiting a van and entering the building will require a total of three name-to-face checks.

Release of Children

Children are to be released only to those parents or adults who are authorized to pick them up, as indicated by the information parents provide at the time of enrollment. Staff members are to check picture identification for any unfamiliar, authorized person or refer the person to the Director. NO EXCEPTIONS.

Child Custody Disputes

Staff will be expected to be familiar with the file for each child in their class. Staff must be aware who is and who is not authorized to pick up a child. The Director informs staff of the policy to follow when there is a problem concerning custody. Under no circumstances are staff members to compromise their safety or the safety of anyone in the Center. In a situation where a problem is anticipated, the Director or the Assistant Director should handle the situation directly with the parent or person attempting to pick up the child whenever possible.

Accident/Incident Report

Incidents involving illness, accident or minor changes in health status or behavioral concerns will be reported to the parent the day of the incident. A description of the incident, including a photo, when possible, will be added to the family's Tadpoles account. This report will be prepared by the staff who observed the incident. At NO TIME should the name of another student involved in the incident or any identifying details of the location of the inflicted injury be mentioned.

An Iowa HHS approved accident/incident form should be completed for each accident/incident involving a child and must be signed by the parent or person authorized to pick up the child the day of the accident/incident. A copy of the report will be made and placed in the child's file. A copy of the report may also be provided to the parent upon request. Minor injuries will be handled by the staff member who has received emergency first-aid training. If a serious injury occurs, paramedics will be called and the child will be transported to the nearest hospital. Under no circumstances will staff vehicles be used to transport children to the hospital. The Director, Assistant Director, or any other staff member not counted in ratio will accompany the child to emergency services until a parent or guardian arrives.

Significant Incident Report

In the event an injury that requires medical attention beyond minor first aid, or an event that requires reporting to our Iowa HHS representative or the Child Abuse Hotline occurs, a Significant Incident Report must be completed. This report is for internal use only and should be completed as soon as possible after the incident. When completing the report be sure to include printed staff and student attendance records for locations/classrooms involved and any and all photos and supporting documentation possible. It is also important to get written statements from all parties directly involved or witnessing the incident to include with the report as soon as possible.

First Aid

Staff will receive training in first-aid bi-annually through an Iowa HHS approved agency. A first-aid backpack will be located in each classroom of the center, on the playground and on field trips. The first-aid kit will contain all items indicated on the First Aid Kit Checklist composed by the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services. Emergency medication or supplies prescribed for a child with special health needs are located in the office.

Inventory in the Center's first-aid kits are checked and restocked monthly as required by Iowa HHS regulations. Documentation stating such may be obtained by contacting the Director. For all incidents involving blood or bodily fluid, disposable gloves will be used. Please let the Director and/or staff member know if your child is allergic to latex.

Water Activities

Children may have a water table in the classroom for them to stand and play with their hands in the water. Water tables may be filled with no more than ½" of water. During water play children are involved in active experiences with science and math concepts. Children with sores on their hands are not allowed to participate with others in the water table to ensure that no infectious diseases are spread. Children are not allowed to drink the water used in water play activities. When the activity period is complete, the water table is drained and refilled with fresh water before a new group of children comes to participate. Outdoor water play may include sprinklers, slip-n-slides, splash pads or blow-up slides. Staff supervise all children by sight in all areas with access to water.

Playground Safety

Sprout Kids Academy meets the physical needs of children by providing an outdoor play area containing a variety of age-appropriate outdoor play equipment and a substantial green space to run in addition to an indoor gymnasium. The "Big Kids" outdoor play equipment was designed by a Certified Playground Safety Inspector and has unique play zones that target all the major motor activities. These play areas are educational environments where the children learn about their physical capabilities and the social skills involved in both organized and informal play. However, the playground is potentially an extremely dangerous place. With proper supervision the playground can be a fun place for children and staff. The chance of injury to children can be greatly reduced if all of the following rules are observed by staff:

- Outdoor play is not a social event for staff. Staff should be engaging actively with children to provide direction and avoid dangerous situations.
- Staff will not "group" together but actively scan the playground.
- Children should have sunblock applied to any exposed skin before going out in the sun from May until September.
- Staff members know how many children are in their care at all times.

- Name-to Face counts should be performed before children exit the building, while children are outside, and before coming back inside the building
- Children should use equipment as intended, such as climbing on designated climbing equipment rather than on slides or fences.
- Children are not allowed to engage in hazardous play of any kind.
- Redirection, distraction, praise, and other techniques of positive guidance are used.
- Staff will be ACTIVELY involved with children and supervise any dangerous areas closely.
- Staff will position themselves in an area of the playground where they can see all areas of the playground accessible to children.
- Staff will keep children in sight at all times.
- Children are not allowed to linger near or hang on playground gates
- Limit the number of children on the playground and age variation to avoid overcrowding or dangerous situations.
- Parents may pick up their child from the playground, but they must sign the child out at one of the kiosk stations in the lobby and exit through the main lobby doors. (Not the playground gate.)

Pets Visiting Center

At various times throughout the year, you may have interactions with a pet brought to Sprout Kids Academy. Any pet or animal present at the facility, indoors or outdoors, must be pre-approved by the Director, shall be in good health, show no evidence of carrying any disease, be fully immunized, and be maintained on a flea, tick, and worm control program. A current Pet Health Examination - Veterinary Health Certificate from a veterinarian shall be on file in the facility, stating that the specific pet meets these conditions. All contact between animals and children shall be supervised by a teacher who is close enough to remove the child if the child shows signs of treating the animal inappropriately or if the animal shows signs of aggression. The teacher shall instruct children on safe procedures to follow when in close proximity to these animals (for example, not to provoke or startle animals or touch them when they are near their food). Potentially aggressive animals will not be allowed on the premises or in the same physical space as the children.

Staff Hand Washing

Staff will wash hands to maintain good personal hygiene and to prevent or minimize the spread of illness or disease. Staff will wash their hands at the following times:

- Upon arrival in the classroom
- Immediately before eating or participating in food service activities
- Immediately before feeding infants
- Before leaving the restroom, either with a child or by themselves
- Before and after diapering
- Before and after administering medication
- Before and after administering non-emergency first-aid to a child
- Before and after water play
- After handling animals
- After nose blowing
- After coming in from outside
- After removing gloves
- After sandbox play
- After cleaning
- After handling garbage

Method of Hand Washing

- Wet hands with clean water.
- Apply soap
- Wash hands under running water, between fingers, around nail beds, under fingernails, and the back of hands.
- Scrub hands thoroughly with soap for at least 20 seconds.
- Rinse well under running water.
- Dry hands using a new disposable towel each time.
- Use the towel to turn off the faucet and discard towel.
- When soap and water are unavailable, use hand sanitizer only when appropriate for the age group; sanitizer does not replace required handwashing after diapering, toileting, or bodily-fluid exposure.

Children's Hand Washing

Staff will assist children with hand washing to maintain good personal hygiene and to prevent or minimize the spread of illness or disease. Children's hands will be washed at the following times:

- Upon arrival in the classroom
- Before eating
- After eating
- After using the restroom & diapering
- After nose blowing
- After handling animals
- After playing outside
- After sandbox play
- Before and after water play

Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting

Environment, toys, and equipment are cleaned/sanitized daily, with the exception of IMMEDIATE health or safety risk.

During cold/flu season and/or known illness outbreaks, toys and surfaces will be sanitized after each use.

Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will not be used. Toys that children have placed in their mouths or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion shall be set aside where children cannot access them. They must be set aside until they are washed with water and detergent, rinsed, sanitized, and air-dried.

Exposure Control Plan

Sprout Kids Academy is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for our entire staff. In pursuit of this endeavor, the following exposure control plan (ECP) is provided to eliminate or minimize occupational exposure to blood borne pathogens in accordance with OSHA standards, thereby protecting our employees.

This ECP includes:

- Determination of employee exposure
- Implementation of various methods of exposure control, including:
    - Universal precautions
    - Engineering and work practice controls
    - Personal protective equipment
    - Housekeeping

- Post-exposure evaluation and follow-up
- Communication of hazards to employees and training
- Recordkeeping
- Procedures for evaluating circumstances

Universal Precautions/Exposure to Blood or Bodily Fluids

Staff will receive training in Universal Precautions annually through an Iowa HHS approved agency. Gloves shall be worn by staff when contact with blood or other bodily fluid is possible and when cleaning contaminated surfaces. Spills of breast milk, urine, feces, vomit, or blood shall be cleaned from the surfaces with soap and water. Surfaces shall be disinfected with the currently approved disinfectant. Any contaminated material used in clean-up shall be disposed of in a double layer plastic bag with a secure tie. Soiled diapers are discarded in their own hands-free lid container which has been lined with a plastic bag and is not used for any other waste placement. Each plastic bag containing soiled diapers is removed from waste cans daily and securely discarded outside the facility daily.

Mildly Ill Children or Staff

Mildly ill children or staff who can participate normally in the Center's activities may remain at the center. This may include children or staff with colds, ear infections, sinus infections or children who are teething.

When a Child Becomes Ill

Staff will assess each child's health upon arrival to the Center. If a child is suspected of being ill or becomes ill throughout the day, the child will be isolated from the group and staff will contact the parents to pick up the child immediately. If the parent is unable to pick up the child within one hour the parent will be asked to contact another person who is authorized to pick up the child.

When a child leaves the center during the day due to illness, a message should be sent to parents via the Tadpoles software system stating the following:

"I'm sorry _____ isn't feeling well and hope he/she feels better soon. Please check the illness guidelines in the parent handbook to determine when he/she can return. We look forward to seeing _____ back at Sprout soon!"

If a child has a known medical condition, such as asthma, diabetes, seizure disorder, etc., parents are asked to inform the Director and staff. If there are any special instructions for the care of a child should a problem arise, parents are to inform the Director and staff.

If there is an incidence of a communicable disease, notices will be sent via Tadpoles. The notice will include the communicable condition, the symptoms associated with the condition, and the period of communicability.

Exclusion of Children or Staff from Center Due to Illness

We wish to provide a healthy environment for all children and staff at Sprout Kids Academy. Children and staff may be excluded from the center until symptoms or conditions are resolved or until a physician has evaluated the child/staff member and determines when he/she can return to the center.

For a **complete list of illnesses and return-to-care/work criteria**, please visit the Sprout Kids Academy website at www.sproutkidsacademy.com, select the **"Parent Info"** tab, and click on **"Illness & Exposure Information".**

Staff should be alert for symptoms in children in close contact with a sick child. Keep in mind, certain communicable diseases must be reported to the local and state Health Department. This reporting will be done by the Director.

A supervised quiet area will be provided for an ill or injured child awaiting pickup. Parents will be notified and expected to arrange pickup within one hour when exclusion is required.

Medication Policy

Sprout Kids Academy will administer medication to children for whom a plan has been established and approved by the Director. If a liquid oral medication is to be administered at the Center, the parent must provide an appropriate measuring device that has clearly marked measurements (medicine cup, dropper, syringe, or medicine sip-vial). The medication must also be in its original container with label intact. Parents must complete and sign a form authorizing staff to administer medication to their child. Forms are provided by the Center. The signed form with specific dosing instructions along with the medication must be given directly to the Director/or designated staff member. The Director/staff member will be the only person authorized to administer medication to a child. All medications must be stored in their original containers with accompanying physician or pharmacist's directions and with the label intact. All medications will be stored in the office so they are not accessible to children and non-center personnel. Medications that require refrigeration will be stored in a sealed container in an area not accessible to children and non-Center personnel.

Non-prescription medications/ointments provided by a parent for a child must also have a written notice from a physician for administration.

As long as an authorization to administer medication is in effect, a notation will be made on the child's medication administration chart in Tadpoles indicating the name of the medicine, date, time, and dosage given or applied. Medications will only be administered throughout the duration of the prescription.

Staff will make a notation if:

- No dose was given because a child is absent from the center on a day the medication is to be administered.
- No dose is given because a parent picks up a child early and the medication cannot be administered.

- A parent forgets to bring the medications; therefore, no medication can be administered.
- The child experiences side effects or negative reactions to the medicine.

Medication will not be administered without a current authorization signed by the parent AND physician.

Sunscreen

If a parent requires their child to use a specific type/brand of sunscreen the parent must provide the sunscreen. That sunscreen shall be labeled with the child's name and stored out of reach of children.

Death of a Child or Teacher

In the event of a death of a staff member or child within our Sprout Kids Academy family, assistance with contacts to social services will be made available for families and staff.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

Field trips may be scheduled throughout the year. Examples of field trips include libraries, picnics, splash pads, ice skating, museums, movies, and other establishments that provide fun and educational tours. Transportation to field trips will be provided (at no extra charge) by Sprout Kids Academy. Transportation of students will be done with our facility's vehicles. Iowa Law requires car safety restraints (seat belts) for all children in the vehicle. Children will use age-, size-, and manufacturer-appropriate child restraints that comply with Iowa law. Children younger than six must use an appropriate child restraint system, and children younger than one year and weighing less than 20 pounds must be rear facing. Older children will use an appropriate booster or seat belt as required by law and proper fit. Parents may request that children over 5 use a booster seat. Our transportation vehicles are equipped with restraint systems, however in rare instances parents may be asked to leave their child's car seat if needed. No child will ride in the front seat of a vehicle. Every driver will have a current driver's license, be over the age of 21 and be listed as an insured driver under the facility's auto insurance policy. Staff will carry with them all emergency contact information for each child attending in a secure container (back-pack) that is immediately accessible. When groups are off-site there must be one adult over the standard Iowa HHS mandated adult to child ratio, with the exception of transporting BASP children directly to/from school in which case the normal adult to child ratio can be followed.

Children, both as passengers and pedestrians, will be instructed in safe transportation behavior with terms and concepts developmentally appropriate for their age. Teaching passenger safety to children reduces injury from motor vehicle

crashes to young children. Young children need to develop skills that will aid them in assuming responsibility for their own health and safety. The following rules apply to children using Sprout Kids Academy vehicles for transportation:

- Children should always stay off the roadway when waiting for a transportation vehicle to arrive.
- When loading/unloading, children must wait for a signal from the driver that it is safe to do so.
- Children shall not walk in front of or behind the vehicle without an adult.
- Children are to line up while loading/unloading the vehicle in an orderly fashion.
- Children should immediately find a seat and put on their seat belt or ask for help with the belt if needed.
- Failure of a child to keep their seat belt on while the vehicle is moving will result in the vehicle stopping until the child is safely secured.
- A staff member must examine each child's seatbelt for proper latching.
- Children must keep their hands, arms, and heads in the vehicle at all times.
- Children must refrain from throwing items out of the vehicle windows.
- Children are not allowed to open the vehicle windows on their own; they need to ask an adult for assistance.
- Children must always conduct themselves in an acceptable manner. Fighting, yelling, using vulgar language, acting rudely or abusively, damaging the transportation vehicle or any other abusive behaviors will not be tolerated.
- Children are to wait until the vehicle comes to a complete stop before removing their seat belts.
- If a child is behaving in such a way that is an immediate threat to others or themselves while transporting, the child will be suspended from our transportation service, and parents will be required to coordinate alternate transportation to/from the activity.

Name-to-Face Checks / Check In for Transportation

As children board a vehicle they should be checked in (or moved) to the appropriate "classroom" on Tadpoles. (Van #1, Van #2, Van #3 or Bus.) A child must be visually seen before being checked in to the vehicle. Children's backpacks and other items should be placed in the front passenger's seat of the van. At that time, staff members should examine each child's seatbelt to make sure it is buckled appropriately. Following this examination, a name-to-face check should be completed on Tadpoles. Completing the name-to-face check will confirm that all seatbelts have been examined for proper buckling. (Seatbelts do not need to be observed after boarding a school bus.)

As children exit the vehicle a name-to-face check should be completed to ensure that no children remain in the vehicle. Each child must be visually seen when completing the name-to-face check. Next, staff members should conduct a full front-to-back sweep of the van, check every seat/footwell, and remove all trash immediately after each trip. The staff member should stop after entering the building to complete another name-to-face check (children must be visually seen to complete this check) and then walk each child to his/her appropriate classroom. After arriving at the classroom, the staff member receiving the children should move (transfer) the children on Tadpoles to his/her classroom after that staff member has visually seen the child enter his/her room. If on a field trip, staff should move (transfer) the children from the appropriate Van to the “Field Trip” classroom after entering the building and performing a name-to-face check.

Transportation vehicles will be serviced regularly and will be in good working conditions. Vehicles are licensed and insured as regulated by Iowa HHS.

EMERGENCY POLICIES

Before a child's first day in attendance at Sprout Kids Academy, a General Information and Contacts form containing an Authorization for Emergency Medical Care must be completed and signed by the parent. This form will specify where emergency medical and dental health care should be obtained. It is the parent's responsibility to review and update this information annually.

Medical Emergency

If a medical emergency arises, staff will first contact 911. Following that contact, staff will contact the parents or guardians. If the parents or guardians cannot be reached, staff will contact the emergency contact person listed on your child’s Emergency Contacts section of the General Information and Contacts form. This form must accompany the child to the hospital. The Director, Assistant Director, or any other staff member not counted in ratio will accompany the child to emergency services until a parent or guardian arrives. Your signature on the General Information and Contacts form gives the hospital permission to care for your child. In the event a limb is severed, the limb shall be ice packed and accompany the child to the hospital.

Dental Emergency

If a dental emergency arises, staff will first attempt to contact the parents or guardians. If the parents or guardians cannot be reached, staff will contact the emergency contact person listed on your child’s Emergency Contacts section of the General Information and Contacts form. This form must accompany the child to the hospital/dentist. If needed, staff will call for paramedic help and your child will be taken to the hospital. The Director, Assistant Director, or any other staff member not counted in ratio will accompany the child to emergency services until

a parent or guardian arrives. Your signature on the General Information and Contacts form gives the hospital permission to care for your child. If a tooth is knocked out, it will be placed in a container of milk to preserve the tooth/teeth for future use.

Emergency Care Plans for Special Health Care Needs

Every child with special health care needs will have an emergency care plan in place upon enrollment. Every staff person will be made aware of these special health care needs and emergency care plans. Such special health care needs may include Asthma, Food Allergies, etc.

Life-Threatening Emergency

In a life-threatening emergency, emergency services will be notified first. Parents will then be notified. A parent's signature on the **General Information and Contacts** form gives the hospital permission to care for a child; **this form must accompany the child to the hospital**. Any child needing transport to emergency care facilities will be accompanied by the Director, Assistant Director, or any other staff member not included in the center's adult to child ratio.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Emergency procedures are communicated to staff in the employee handbook and reviewed with staff at the time of orientation and on an annual basis. Staff will receive training in adult, child, and infant CPR; first aid; and universal precautions. Staff also receive training on mandatory reporting of child abuse, which is renewed every three years. Staff will undergo fire, tornado and intruder emergency procedure training monthly. The Director/Assistant Director will maintain records of fire and tornado drills. The Director and classroom teachers will check exits daily to ensure that all exits are unobstructed.

Sprout Kids Academy has written procedures for different emergencies (fire, tornado, etc.) that are posted and available for parents upon request. Monthly fire, tornado and intruder drills are conducted in accordance with state law, and all staff are trained to deal with these emergencies. Parents will be notified if an emergency occurs and children are moved to another site.

Emergency Plan for Fire

Fire escape routes are clearly marked and posted by each exit of the Center. Staff and children are trained through monthly drills to react quickly and efficiently to the building's fire alarm system.

Drills are conducted once a month at different times of the day to ensure that all children and staff are familiar with exit points. Infants will be placed in evacuation cribs for transport. A staff member from each room will be responsible for checking the bathrooms inside the classrooms for children and taking the classroom's iPad and first-aid backpacks containing emergency medicines and classroom clipboard outside. Staff will ensure that all children are accounted for. The first teacher to the

door will hold the door open as the children and teachers exit the building. The children and staff will meet in the northernmost part of the parking lot or southernmost area of the playground. Staff will ensure that all children are accounted for. The drill will not be complete until all staff and children are out of the building. The Director will check the staff and main floor public bathroom for children and then go to the meeting point. The children will wait for the Director to account for all children and staff. No one will re-enter the building until the "All-Clear" signal has been given.

In the event of a real fire, the above procedures will be followed and 911 will be called. Children will exit the building in an orderly fashion. The Cooks and Director will assist with evacuation of the infant/toddler classrooms. The children and staff will remain in their designated area until emergency vehicles arrive. Parents will be notified and children will remain on the premises at the designated area until parents arrive. If evacuation of the premises is necessary, the children and staff will walk or be transported by facility vehicles to the Clear Creek Amana High School. Parents will be contacted and made aware of the alternative pick-up site. Children and staff may return to Sprout Kids Academy only when fire officials have determined it safe to do so.

Emergency Plan for Tornado

Tornado drills will be conducted once a month at different times of the day to ensure that all children and staff are familiar with the emergency procedure. The signal for a tornado drill is an “all-call” on the phone system announcing a tornado. Designated staff will be responsible for checking bathrooms inside the classrooms for children and taking the classroom iPad and the first-aid backpacks containing emergency medicines and classroom clipboard with them. The staff will lead the children into either the kitchen or the corridor between Juniper and the staff breakroom where they will be instructed to sit on the floor by the wall with their heads bent and arms over their heads.

In the event of a real tornado, the above procedures will be followed. The staff and children will remain in the tornado shelter until the "All-Clear" has been sounded. If there is structural damage to the building, the Director will call 911 and then determine if it is safe to exit the building. If it is necessary to leave Sprout Kids Academy, Staff will follow evacuation guidelines as set out in the Emergency Plan for Fire.

Emergency Plan for Flood

In the event of a flood, if evacuation of the premises is necessary, the children and staff will relocate to Clear Creek Amana High School. Designated staff will be responsible for taking the classroom iPad and the first-aid backpacks containing emergency medicines and classroom clipboard with them. Parents will be contacted and made aware of the alternative pick-up site. Children and staff may return to Sprout Kids Academy when emergency management officials have determined it safe to do so.

Emergency Plan for Power Outage

The Director or designated person will inform the power company of the outage. The Director or designated person will check with staff to ensure that all children are accounted for. Staff will then use their classroom iPad (operating on battery) to create a written attendance list of children in their room. This written attendance list will serve as the classroom roster until power resumes. If it has been determined that the power outage will interfere with continued operation of the Center, parents will be contacted to immediately pick up their children. If it is necessary to evacuate the premises, the evacuation procedures as set out in the Emergency Plan for Fire will be followed.

Emergency Plan for Severe Weather/Blizzard

The Director or designated person will decide at least one hour prior to opening, when possible, if the Center will be closed due to inclement weather. Parents and staff will be notified by text message or email via the Tadpoles software system. Closing information will also be given to local TV and radio stations.

Should severe weather develop while the Center is open, the Director or designated person will decide what action should be taken. If weather is severe enough to close the Center, parents will be contacted by text message or email via the Tadpoles software system and asked to pick up their children as soon as possible. It is our policy to stay open as long as it is safe for staff and children to remain at the Center.

Emergency Plan for Intoxicated/Substance-Impaired Person

Staff will immediately alert the Director or designated person of the situation. If time is of the essence, staff will talk to the parents until the Director or designated person arrives. The Director/staff will talk to the parent about the danger of taking the child and operating a vehicle while intoxicated and ask the parent if there is another adult who can be contacted to pick up the child. The Director/staff will focus on the welfare of the child. If the parent demands to take the child while in such a condition, the Director/staff must release the child to the parent. If the parent does leave with the child and the Director/staff has reason to believe the parent is substance-impaired, the Director/staff must act in their role as mandatory reporters and file a child abuse report to the police or Iowa HHS. The Director/staff shall escort the parent and child to the parking lot to get the tag number, a detailed description of the vehicle and the direction of travel. The Director/staff will then call 911.

Emergency Plan for Bomb Threat

The Director or designated person will call 911 and inform the emergency personnel that a bomb threat has been received. The Director or designated person will follow any additional instructions provided by the emergency personnel at the time of the call. If it is necessary to evacuate the premises, the evacuation procedure as set out in the Emergency Plan for Fire will be followed. Staff and children will return to the building once the search has ended and the building has been declared safe.

Emergency Plan for Chemical Spills

In the event a toxic spill in or near the Center is witnessed by the Director or designated person, 911 will be called immediately. Staff and children will cooperate with official personnel. Staff and children will be brought into the building to a safe location designated by official personnel and the Director or designated person. Staff and children will remain at the designated location until the "All-Clear" signal is given by emergency management officials. If evacuation is necessary, the staff will follow the evacuation guidelines as set out in the Emergency Plan for Fire.

Emergency Plan for Lost or Abducted Child

In case of a lost child, staff will alert the Director or designated person immediately. A complete search of the building and outside area will be conducted by the Director and staff (only if the Staff/Child ratio can be maintained). If the child cannot be located immediately, the Director or designated person will call 911 without delaying for an extended search and provide a description of the child and what he/she was wearing. After calling 911, the Director or designated person will call the parents.

In the case of abduction, a description of the abductor, if available, and the child will be provided to the police. If the Director/staff is warned in advance that an unauthorized person is coming to take a child, the child will be accompanied by staff to a securely locked area. If an unauthorized person arrives to take the child, no information about the child will be released and the person will be asked to leave the premises. If the person refuses to leave, the Director or staff will call 911.

Emergency Plan for Intruder /Lockdown

Should an intruder gain entrance into the building staff with knowledge of the intruder should alert other staff by paging an “all-call” alert throughout the Center using the telephone system. As much information about the intruder(s) as possible should be communicated using the “all-call” system. Details such as location in the building, gender, appearance, clothing should be announced if possible. Following the “all-call” all staff should immediately lock all access points into their classrooms using the keys hanging by the door on the interior side of the classroom, close the blinds on the windows, turn off classroom lights and move the children to the safest corner of the classroom out of view from any windows and instruct the children to be silent. Any staff members with children outside should bring the children to the closest classroom. Procedures for helping children stay quiet include gentle rocking, holding hands, making eye contact and offering pacifiers to toddlers/infants. 911 should be immediately called by any/all staff who feel it is safe to use a phone. If you aren’t sure if the intruder can hear you, call 911 and leave the phone off the hook. All staff and children should remain in lockdown until the Director announces the end of the lockdown.

Emergency Plan for Earthquake

In the event of an earthquake, staff will direct children to drop, cover, and hold on under sturdy furniture when available, staying away from windows and falling objects. Emergency Management and the Director will assess any structural damage before allowing children and staff to remain in the Center. If evacuation of the premises is necessary, the children and staff will walk to the Clear Creek Amana High School. Designated staff will be responsible for taking classroom iPad and the first-aid backpacks containing emergency medicines and classroom clipboard with them. Parents will be contacted and made aware of the alternative pick-up site. Children and staff may return to Sprout Kids Academy when emergency management officials have determined it safe to do so.

Emergency Center Closing

If weather or another unforeseen emergency creates a situation where the closing of the Center becomes necessary, parents will be contacted via text and/or email from the Tadpoles app. This information may also be broadcast via our Facebook page.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICIES

Facility Closure Due to Inclement Weather

Any weather-related closure of the Center will be communicated to staff via text message and/or email through the Tadpoles software. It can also be found scrolling on the bottom of the KCRG news service.

Policies for Late Start or Early Dismissals (Inclement Weather)

If the Clear Creek Amana School District has made the decision to start late or dismiss early and Sprout Kids Academy has NOT modified opening or closing procedures it is anticipated that those children previously scheduled for BASP at the Center will attend BASP for the additional time. There is no additional fee assessed to cover the cost of added care that day. Parents wishing to have their children (who were not previously scheduled) come to BASP that day need to phone Sprout Kids Academy (319-545-5437) to request that staff pick up their children from the designated BASP pick up location. Parents must also notify the school office. The fee for children not previously scheduled for the BASP that day can be found on the rate sheet located on the Sprout Kids Academy website.

Unscheduled morning delays and early dismissals are considered emergency situations by Iowa HHS and staff must follow the applicable Iowa HHS emergency staffing and supervision requirements during that time. This exception should be verified against current rules before adoption. It is however our goal to maintain ratios to ensure the appropriate supervision of the children in our care. If Clear Creek Amana cancels classes for the day after the school day has begun, we will remain open as long as it is SAFE for children and staff to remain.

The safety of the children and staff at Sprout is our first priority. It is our policy to remain open as long as it is safe to have children & staff in the Center. If weather conditions become dangerous and we must close, parents and staff will be immediately notified by text message and/or email via the Tadpoles software.

Qualities of a Sprout Kids Academy Employee:

Attitude

- Be cheerful and have fun!
- Smile!
- Treat others how you would like to be treated.
- Do MORE than is expected.
- Be a good friend to your co-workers.
- Avoid negative talk about parents, children or other staff members. Sprout should be a gossip-free zone.

Communication

- Warmly **greet children and parents** by NAME upon arrival AND departure.
- Have direct contact with each child upon arrival to detect illness, disease or unusual behaviors.
- Talk soothingly to the children, GET DOWN on their level.
- Ask questions if you don't understand. If you are unable to answer a parent's question, respond by saying, "I'll find out for you," or refer them to the Director, Assistant Director or On-Site Supervisor.
- Inform parents & staff of any messages you may have for them.
- **Minimize use of the word "no" and when possible, tell children what they CAN do and not what they can't.**

Participation

- Take the initiative; jump in and do things.
- Hit the floor! Get down on a child's level.
- Interact and be playful! You need to like to play and have fun!
- Don't be afraid to play in front of adults.
- Be mindful of your responsibilities…what you neglect to do, someone else has to make up for.
- Under no circumstances are you to leave your room without letting staff know or without proper coverage under Iowa HHS standards.

Timeliness

- Be on time for shifts.
- Return from breaks promptly.
- Complete paperwork in a timely fashion.

Cleanliness

- Follow Universal Precautions to prevent the spread of germs.
- Follow hand washing procedures.
- Dress appropriately for work.
- Be neat in your appearance and personal hygiene.

Record any damaged or broken items you see on the clipboard in the staff break room. Please include a detailed description of the repair to be performed including classroom location.

Policies and procedures outlined in this handbook are subject to change as decided upon by the Director, Owner, or by changes in the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (Iowa HHS) regulations.