



SKIES THE LIMIT ACADEMY'S PARENT HANDBOOK

**8450 Maplewood Drive
Manassas Virginia 20111**



ABOUT SKIES THE LIMIT ACADEMY

Skies The Limit Academy was created for the convenience of the working parent. Our philosophy is to provide a High Quality Child Care program in a loving and learning environment.

The following handbook should answer most of your questions regarding the people, policies and programs that make Skies The Limit Academy so valuable for families. We want you to be happy with your decision to choose Skies The Limit Academy; so if you have any questions not covered in this handbook please contact our Director.

OUR MISSION

Skies The Limit Academy's mission is to provide innovative programs that help children, families, and employer work together to be their very best.

We are committed to providing the highest quality childcare, early education, and work/life solutions.

We strive to:

- Nurture each child's unique qualities and potential
- Support families through strong partnerships
- Create a work environment that encourages professionalism, growth, and diversity
- Grow a financially strong organization

We aspire to do this so successfully that we will make a difference in the lives of children and families in the communities where we live and work.

TEACHERS

At Skies The Limit Academy we will provide the kind of care and education you want for your child. For that reason, our teachers are specifically chosen because of their dedication to meeting the developmental and educational needs of children. Each member of our staff meets and exceeds the qualifications set by state laws and completes a full orientation and six-week, comprehensive, basic training program. In addition, teachers attend continuing education programs and Skies The Limit Academy training seminars. We encourage teachers to earn a nationally recognized teacher certificate, called the Child Development Associate (CDA), or to obtain further college credit.

OUR TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

The first five years of childhood are the most important in development and learning. Our programs are designed to help children reach their fullest potential. Skies The Limit Academy's programs feature a full day of developmentally age appropriate lessons and activities that your child will enjoy. Whether infant, toddler, or pre-schooler, our curriculum, provides lessons that help develop the whole child intellectually, physically, emotionally and socially.

Each day the children have many activities and fun play experiences to choose from all of which are planned for the specific age and interests of your child and with the goal of preparing your child for the next level of learning.

PROGRAMS

INFANTS AND TODDLERS

The infant time period is perhaps the most significant period of development. Children begin learning at birth. We encourage babies to communicate by playing games like peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake. Through holding, singing and talking to your child, we give individualized care and attention that will help lay the foundations for language and learning. Feeding, sleeping and other activities are all individualized and will complement your schedule at home. We require that an infant be at least six weeks old at the time of enrollment. Until your baby is on regular food, we will follow your written diet plan. We also require a physical examination and current immunization before and throughout enrollment. We ask you to provide the following:

- Formula or breast milk for your infant. (Please label with your child's name and date. Milk can be served to children beginning at one year of age)
- Disposable diapers and wipes
- Baby food/special meals (please label all containers with your child's name and date. We will discard leftovers at the end of the day.)
- Two complete changes of clothes are to be left at the center.

TWO-YEAR OLDS

Our two-year old program is designed to stimulate the child's development in the areas of language, creativity, cognitive learning, as well as emotional, social, and physical growth. The teacher develops a daily schedule and a weekly lesson plan by selecting activities in the six developmental areas. Each day the child experiences creative play, story time, art time, music and movement, language and concept development activities. Center time brings lots of fun as the child explores the creative play materials specifically designed for two-year-olds. Parents receive a "Rainbow Report" that outlines the child's activities for the day, including meals, creative activities, toileting progress, nap time and disposition.

TWO- YEAR OLD PROGRAM OUTLINE

Breakfast and Center Activities
Quiet Play Activities
Circle Time-Music and Movement
Outside Play
Center Activities Including Daily Art

Lunch Table Manners
Storytime
Nap-Quiet Time
Snack-Outside Play
Center and Game Activities

THREE-YEAR OLDS

Listening to stories, retelling events, dramatic play with puppets and props, music and movement experiences form the core of the three-year old program (as the child develops language and concept skills.) Hands-on activities provide opportunities for exploration of concepts such as classification, seriation, spatial relationships, and numbers. The teacher selects a weekly theme to develop these skills with a variety of center play areas provided for the child's personal exploration. Building with blocks, pretend play in the home living area, painting, constructing with different materials, exploring books, and working with manipulative materials enhance the child's small motor and problem-solving skills, as well as his or her sense of creativity and self-expression.

FOUR-YEAR-OLDS

The four-year-old child is ready for the exploration of concepts in the areas of reading, math readiness, science, social studies, continued improving of his or her language and physical development skills. Utilizing a selection of readiness resources, the child is presented with a thematic, hands-on approach to learning new skills. Math Their Way, a children's-centered approach to learning math concepts, is introduced at this level. Alphabet and phonics awareness is initiated through daily stories and games. The child's curiosity, independence and self-confidence are fostered through the use of center play activities. Field trips in the community are planned. Parent communications regarding the field trips are facilitated through the teacher's lesson plans, which are sent home each week.

THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLD PROGRAM OUTLINE

Breakfast and Center Activities	Storytime
Quiet Play Activities	Center Activities Including Daily Art
Circle Time-Music and Movement	Lunch-Table Manners
Language and Literacy Group Time	Nap-Quiet Time
Outside Play	Snack-Outside Play
Hands-On Math Group Time	Center and Game Activities

KINDERGARTEN

The five-year-old child is ready for the development of reading, math, and handwriting skills that will prepare him or her for the more formal learning environment of elementary school. Our full day program uses a selection of readiness materials that present science, social studies, music, language, and physical development activities in a monthly thematic format. The reading readiness program focus is the development of literacy skills that include listening, speaking, computer lab, writing, phonics, and beginning reading. Our math program is Math Their Way, a child-centered, manipulative approach to learning math. A Palmer Handwriting Program is introduced and used in daily writing activities. Creativity, curiosity, and confidence are developed through daily center activities in the arts, home living, library, games, blocks, and science centers. Field trips add to the child's enjoyment and understanding of the curriculum. Parents are informed of the classroom activities through the teacher's lesson plans, which are sent home weekly.

KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM OUTLINE

Breakfast and Center Activities	Lunch -Table Manners
Quiet Play Activities	Storytime
Circle time-Theme Development Activity	Nap-Quiet time/Reading Time
Reading/Literacy Activities including Daily Art	Snack-Outside Play
Center Activities Including Daily Art	Music and Movement
Outside Play	Science/Social Studies
Hands-On Math Activities and Centers	Center and Games Activities

SCHOOL AGE PROGRAM

When we developed our schoolage program, we kept two things in mind. One: Your child has spent 7 hours of his/her day working; a recreational based program is in order. Two: Your child probably wants to let loose and have some fun. We've designed a program that is fun and loosely structured, yet filled with both imagination and information. After a snack, the children are free to choose their activities from a variety of selections: outdoor play, arts and crafts, dramatic play, age appropriate board games, dancing, computers, books or quiet time. If you wish for your child to do homework at the center, our staff will be happy to help your child if assistance is needed. A special area is designated for such activities.

LICENSING

Skies The Limit Academy is a State Licensed School that meets and exceeds the regulations established by the Virginia Department of Social Services and the local fire and health departments.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Parent involvement with your child's school life greatly enhances the child's learning and self-concept. There are many ways to participate; a few ideas are listed below:

- Show your interest in the projects that your child brings home
- Help maintain open communication with the Director and teacher by letting them know how they can best help your child grow at this time
- Volunteer to read stories to the class
- Be a field trip chaperone
- Share your occupation or travels with a class
- Make games for classroom use
- Share cultural information or special talents
- Visit the school at any time during the day. Come for lunch!

REST PERIODS

After hours of exciting educational and fun activities your child needs rest. Most states establish a set rest period for Toddlers and Pre-Schoolers. In the State of Virginia there is a requirement that your child will have 2 hours of rest time. We will provide the cot and you are required to purchase the cot cover. Your child may bring a favorite sleeping blanket or sleeping toy from home. We only ask that you label it and wash it every week.

FIELD TRIPS

Field Trips are a great way to teach by giving your child hands-on real world experiences. We will plan many field trips, including possible stops at nearby parks, museums and local fire stations. Of course we will require your permission for your child's participation on the field trips and we will notify you prior to scheduled events. Some of our field trips will have a related fee. Because of safety precautions, we only allow children four and five year old to be transported in Skies The Limit Academy vans or buses for field trips. (Additional Restrictions may apply. See the director for details)

POTTY TRAINING

Getting over this difficult phase of development. Teamwork is the key. We will make every effort to coordinate our program with the one you start at home. We will not start any toilet training until you decide the time is right (Most children start around the age of two). When you decide, we ask you to supply us with at least two complete changes of clothing (including socks), an ample amount of disposable diapers and training pants for each day your child attends. If your child has just started toilet training, he or she may still wear a diaper at rest time.

DISCIPLINE

Learning self control is a normal part of growing up, therefore Skies The Limit Academy's policy is never to embarrass or ridicule a child when he or she misbehaves. Nor do we allow the use of corporal or physical punishment. Instead we use positive strategies that strengthen the self-esteem of children. Most situations can be handled by redirecting a child to another, more appropriate activity. This approach is called "Positive Redirection."

BIRTHDAYS

When your child has a birthday, we want to help celebrate. We welcome any treat you would like to provide. We ask you to please send enough treats for every child in your child's class. In the State of Virginia homemade treats are prohibited. The reason for this is because some children have food allergies, so please discuss and schedule your plans with the teacher and director.

CLOTHING

A full day at Skies The Limit Academy can include activities such as singing, painting, dancing, eating and playing, both indoors and outdoors. Your child should wear comfortable, washable clothes, as well as rubber-soled and closed-toe shoes to the center. We also ask you to bring at least two (2) changes of clothing. To avoid losing a favorite sweater or jacket, we ask that you label clothing that might be taken off or changed during the day, including bathing suits, towels, and hats. We cannot be held responsible for lost or damaged clothing.

PERSONAL ITEMS

At Skies The Limit Academy, your child will be playing with fun, educational toys every day. Therefore, we ask you to keep your child's toys or special personal items at home for fear of loss or breakage. Occasionally there are "Show and Tell" and sharing times when your child can bring in an item as long as it is safe and it is labeled with his or her name. If your child happens to lose anything while at the center, contact the Director immediately. Although we'll be more than happy to look, we cannot be held responsible for lost or damaged items.

PRAYER

We provide care for children from families with various backgrounds and beliefs. For that reason, we do not teach religious doctrine at our center, but we have designed our learning programs to teach, love, caring, and respect for others no matter what their religious affiliation.

REGISTRATION

An interview is conducted with the parents/guardians and child to explain our philosophy and program to determine the child's developmental needs. The parents/guardians must pay a registration fee of \$55.00 and submit a copy of both the child's current immunizations and completed registration form before the child can be admitted to the program. The registration form includes the child profile, the parent/guardian statement of understanding and a notarized copy of the medical authorization form. A recent copy of the child's physical examination must be submitted within 30 days of registration. The registration fee is paid annually and is non-refundable.

LATE PICK UP POLICIES AND FEES

Children picked up after the schools closing time will incur a late fee. The charge is \$5.00 per family for the first fifteen minutes past closing and \$1.00 for each minute past the first 15 minutes. The Director or closing supervisor to call the parents and all listed emergency contacts for the child. If a contact cannot be made for the child by 8:00 PM, child protective services will be notified. Children may not be dropped off at the center after 12 noon unless the director has given prior approval.

OPERATING SCHEDULE

Skies The Limit Academy will operate Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

HOLIDAY CLOSING

Our school will be closed in observance of the following federal holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King's Birthday, President's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the day After, Christmas Day. There is no reduction in tuition for school holiday closings.

SNOW POLICY

We will strive to open our center, as long as it is safe for our teachers, regardless of the weather. We will follow the Manassas Park School Closings. If Manassas Park Schools are delayed opening we will open on time (6:00 AM).

ABSENCE/VACATION

We started our center based upon the number of children enrolled therefore we cannot give tuition refunds for days a child is absent. An exception will be made for an extended absence, such as a vacation or prolonged illness, of five consecutive days or longer. In these cases, arrangements can be made to hold a child's place at a charge of half the regular fee, up to a maximum of three weeks per year. Parents/Guardian must inform us, in writing, in advance of their intention to use this option. This option may only be used if the family has been enrolled at Skies The Limit Academy for a year. The half-tuition for a vacation week must be paid in advance. If this tuition is paid after the vacation week a \$50.00 late fee is charged.

WITHDRAWAL

It is requested that parents give a two-week notice in writing if it becomes necessary to withdraw their child. Upon withdrawal it is required to give two full weeks of tuition.

HEALTH

Our health policies are designed to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of all our children and staff. A copy of the child's immunization record must be received prior to admission. Updated immunization information must be obtained once every six months for children under the age of two and between the child's fourth and sixth birthdays. A recent copy of the child's physical examination must be dated within:

60 days prior to an admission for children ages 6 months and younger

90 days prior to admission for children ages 7-18 months

6 months prior to admission for children 19-24 months

12 months prior to admission for children 2-5 years.

All immunization updates for the child must be administered at the designated time and reported in writing to the Director.

SICK CHILD PROCEDURES

Parents will be contacted when their child has a temperature of 100 degrees or more, experiences vomiting or diarrhea, or exhibits symptoms of a communicable disease. Parents are expected to pick up an ill child as soon as possible.

24-Hour Recuperation Period

The 24-hour recuperation period ensures that the child has had adequate time to recover from the illness and is no longer contagious.

If a child has a fever, the temperature must remain normal for 24 hours before the child can return to the center.

Prescription medication must be administered at home for 24 hours before the child can return to the center.

Diarrhea is a common ailment for infants and toddlers. It is defined as three consecutive loose bowel movements. Diarrhea is usually caused by a contagious bacteria or virus, which has the potential of spreading to other children and staff. For this reason, when a child has diarrhea, the parent will be notified to pick up the child as soon as possible. The child cannot return to the center until 24 hours after the last occurrence of diarrhea. A child with severe diarrhea (three days or more) should be seen by a doctor.

Children experiencing vomiting cannot return to the center until 24 hours after the last occurrence of vomiting. A doctor's written permission to return to school is required for a child infected by a contagious disease.

MEDICATION

Medication is secured in a locked box, placed in a cabinet or refrigerator. All medications can be administered only after the parent's submission of the Authorization to Administer Medication form is filled out. Medication shall be in the original container with the prescription label, directions, child's name, dosage, and times.

We do not administer over-the-counter medications.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY

If the parents/guardians cannot be contacted in a medical emergency situation, the hospital must have parental authorization to perform emergency services. The Medical Authorization form must be completed in full, signed by the parents, and notarized. This form is submitted with the child's registration information.

SAFETY

When dropping off and picking up a child, guardians must turn off the motor of their car. Parents are required to check their child in and out of the building each day. The computer is located near the entrance of the building. The child must be escorted from the car to his or her classroom and left under a teacher's supervision.

When children are picked up, the parent must inform the supervising teacher. Children will be released only to those individuals who have been authorized on the child's registration form or added to the list in writing. Changes to this authorization must be made in person. Individuals will be asked to show their driver's license to verify their identity and authorization when picking up a child.

When a child has an accident that requires first aid, an accident report is written after the director sees the child. Parents are notified by phone and receive a copy of the accident report.

REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

We are required by the State of Virginia to report any and all instances of suspected child abuse. When a staff member has information or evidence of suspected child abuse, the Director is informed and the Department of Social Services is contacted and given this information. The Department of Social Services will determine what, if any, action will be taken.

MESSAGES

The teacher cannot accept verbal messages from parents, through their child. Please send a note, call, or talk to the teacher directly.

OUTDOOR PLAY

Children are required to play outdoors for an hour each day, weather permitting. Please dress your child appropriately for outdoor play during the cold weather season. Outdoor play restrictions for a child must be in writing and accompanied by a doctor's medical statement noting the reason for the restriction.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline will be constructive in nature and include techniques such as:

- Using limits that are fair, consistent, and appropriate for the child's development level
- Providing children with reasons for limits
- Giving positively worded directions
- Modeling and redirecting children towards acceptable behavior
- Helping children to constructively express their feelings and frustrations to resolve conflict
- Arranging the classroom environment in a way that promotes desirable behavior

When time-out is used as a disciplinary action, the child will be placed in an area in the classroom that is within sight and sound of the teacher. The duration of the time-out will be one minute for each year of age of the child. There will be no physical punishment or disciplinary action administered to the body. Verbal abuse will not be tolerated. The withholding or substituting for food or naps will not occur.

DISMISSAL

Our services will be terminated under the following conditions:

- The child's tuition account becomes more than two weeks in arrears.
- We do not receive parental support and help when a child is found to have a learning or behavior problem. This includes failure to attend parent conferences and following through with medical and/or educational specialists.
- The child's behavior pattern threatens his or her own health and safety or threatens the health and safety of other children and staff.
- The parents are no longer supportive of our program and philosophy and become negative and uncooperative in their actions and options, which may undermine the operation of the school.

FOOD POLICIES

PRESCHOOL AND SCHOOL AGE MEALS

Breakfast and lunch are served daily. The afternoon snack is served after nap time for our younger children. School-age children are served a snack soon after their arrival at the center.

A high nutritional standard is used for all the food prepared by the school. Milk, fruits, sources of protein (meat, fish, or cheese), and vegetables are components of each daily menu. Our meals and snacks meet the nutritional standards of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Child Care Food Program. Our monthly menu is posted and copies are sent home each month.

The categories of food permitted from home are:

- Special diets for religious or medical reasons (physician's authorization required).
- Beverages and foods for celebrations and field trips.

The center will guarantee that no food brought by one parent for a specific child will be consumed by another child unless the food is intended to be shared by other children, such as a birthday cake for a party. All unused portions of food brought from home will be discarded or returned to the parents at the end of each day.

In the case of misplaced or inedible food brought from home, the center will provide a meal to take the place of this food.

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

Children are transported to field trips and to and from the public schools serviced by our School Age Program. Children are supervised at all times while being transported, and van safety rules enforced. Children are strictly monitored around traffic. Staff will ensure that streets are safe to cross for the children and, if necessary, stop traffic before leading the children across a street. All children are secured by seat belts. Children who weigh less than 40 pounds must be secured in a child safety seat.

Licensed and trained van drivers drive our vans. Our vans are regularly inspected and maintained for safety. The van drivers have access to emergency phone numbers and assistance from the center, if needed, at anytime.

- **Parent Handbook can be changed without prior notice**