

A-2-Z Academy of Early Learning Parent Handbook

Revised January 2025

Welcome to A-2-Z Academy of Early Learning

Mission and Purpose

A-2-Z Academy of Early Learning (referred to A-2-Z in this handbook) offers a developmentally appropriate early childhood program. We provide safe, healthy and reliable childcare options for working parents. A-2-Z maintains a dedicated, professional staff through competitive salaries, benefits and ongoing professional development training. We aim to develop and maintain partnerships with parents, staff, community, local and state.

Philosophy

Our philosophy is that children learn best through play. Our student activities during their time with us are geared towards developing a love for learning. The main goal is to help create an environment where our students learn a sense of community. Our experienced staff help accomplish this through utilizing Creative Curriculum by Teaching Strategies. This is a research-based curriculum providing a whole child approach to education; children develop not only math and literacy skills, but also promotes critical and creative thinking, complex problem-solving skills. Creative Curriculum utilizes developmentally appropriate strategies for students of all ages to better prepare them for life well beyond their time in a classroom.

Certification

A-2-Z is a Grow NJ Kids accredited center. This certification process is repeated every three years to assure utmost quality care for our students. We are licensed through the state of New Jersey, Department of Children and Families. Our license capacity is 122 students with the resources available to educate students from 0-13 years of age.

Hours of Operation

Childcare services are provided from 6:30 AM to 5:30 PM - Monday through Friday.

Admission & Enrollment

All admission and enrollment forms **MUST** be completed and returned to the office **PRIOR** to your child's first day of attendance.

Tuition & Fees

Payment

- Annual re-registration fee of \$50 due the first week of September
- New enrollment fee of \$50 due at time of enrollment
- All tuition payments are due by the 5th of each month

A-2-Z will make every effort to keep the cost of childcare as reasonable as possible. However, when it is necessary, we will raise our rates according to the circumstances at hand. For your convenience, we accept all major credit cards (credit card processing fee will be added accordingly), check, or money order. All tuition is due regardless of inclement weather, sickness or vacation. You will receive an invoice from Tadpoles each month. The choice of payment is left to each parent. Tadpoles will not save any of your financial information.

Late Pick-Up Fees

Late pick-up is not a program option and will only be considered an exceptional occurrence. Late fees of \$1 per

minute will be assessed beginning at 5:30 p.m and will be due upon arrival.

Late Payment Charges

Any payments submitted after the 15th must be accompanied by a \$25 late fee.

Any accounts that remain unpaid as of the 21st of each month will be subject to dismissal until the account is paid.

Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges

All returned checks or rejected ACH (automatic debits) or credit card transactions will be charged a fee up to the maximum amount allowed by law. Two or more returned checks or rejected transactions will result in your account being placed on “cash only” status.

Holidays

We are closed for the following holidays:

New Year's Day	Labor Day
Martin Luther King's Birthday	Thanksgiving
Good Friday	Christmas Eve- early dismissal
Memorial Day	Christmas Day
Juneteenth	Winter Break
Independence Day	Summer Break

If a holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, we will close the previous or following day.

Check Center for Summer Schedule

Inclement Weather

A-2-Z follows the Long Valley Public School District for school closings, delayed openings, and early dismissals. We will post changes in hours due to inclement weather on our Facebook page, Tadpoles App and through the Nixle text app. Text 07840 to 888777 to enroll, smart phone is not needed.

Definition of Family

In this handbook we refer to family as parent, legal guardian, sponsor, or anyone else who provides for the well-being, best-interest, and responsibility of the child in our care.

Inclusion

A-2-Z believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same education. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation for all children in our program based on his/her individual capabilities and needs.

Non-Discrimination

At A-2-Z, equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

Confidentiality

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released except for those required by our regulatory and partnering agencies (See Below). All records concerning children at our program are confidential.

Other exceptions that allow disclosure without written consent:

- Office Of Licensing or any other regulatory agency

Staff Qualifications

All incoming staff members participate in an orientation interview and ongoing training in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism.

All teachers must possess the following:

- A clear criminal background check with fingerprinting
- CPR/First Aid certification
- Training in Fire Safety
- Training in the Basic Core classes including Recognizing Child Abuse, Infectious disease, and Positive Discipline
- All teachers must also complete 20 hours of ongoing training per year,
 - 60 hours within 3 years
- Staff is trained to implement the standards of Creative Curriculum and how it should be used

Child to Staff Ratios

Age	Child to Staff Ratio
Under 18 months	4 : 1
18 months – 2.5 years old	6 : 1
2.5 years old – 4 years old	10 : 1
4 years old	12 : 1
5 years old	15 : 1

Communication & Family Partnership

To build a solid foundation, it is imperative to establish ongoing communication between our parents and the staff. We welcome your comments, concerns and suggestions. Please feel free to contact the Director regarding any questions or concerns that you might have. We utilize many communication methods outside of one-on-one meetings. Our parent app Tadpoles is our focus for daily communication. You can also visit our website that has valuable information such as special events, staff information and much more. Visit our website at **a2earlylearning.education**.

Throughout the year, we will hold a minimum of 2 formal and informal opportunities for communication. Open house will be held at the beginning of each year so that you are able to meet your child's teachers. Please get to know your child's teacher and visit the center whenever you can. Take time to discuss the day with your child, talk about the work he/she has accomplished, making sure he/she realizes that their accomplishments are very important to you. We look forward to a great relationship with you and your child as part of A-2-Z Academy of Early Learning family.

We understand that parents serve the most important role in a child's life, and we encourage our parents to participate in activities throughout the year. Listed below are questionnaires and surveys forwarded to you throughout the year. Please help us by returning all in a timely manner. These items help us provide and uphold a quality program.

Please keep in mind rest time is from 12-2pm; no student should be dropped off or picked up during these hours to avoid disruption throughout the center.

NOTE: We are a ratio-based center; it is important we have the necessary staff on hand to always support all the children under our care. All children must arrive at the school no later than 9 a.m. to ensure we are properly staffed for the remainder of the day.

Community Participation (3.3.5)

We encourage our parents to be involved in their community. A-2-Z sends out a parent community involvement survey each year. Please return your surveys at your earliest convenience.

Strengthening Families Protective (3.3.1)

The strengthening Families Protective policy is used to assess engagement of and interaction with parents and families. On an annual basis a survey is distributed to our families. A-2-Z very much appreciates your involvement.

Parent Education (3.3.3)

A-2-Z offers parent workshops on many different topics such as:

Positive parent/child relationships, developmentally appropriate interactions, cultural awareness and much more.

Parents will receive invites to the workshops via Tadpoles App when each class is offered.

If there is a workshop that your family is interested in, please contact the director.

Open Door Policy

We have an open-door policy, and we are delighted to have family members participate in our program. Parents and guardians are welcome to visit A-2-Z any time during regular program hours.

Open Door Policy does not mean the doors will be unlocked. For the safety and protection of the children, external doors will be kept locked, always.

Parents are always encouraged to have lunch, read a story, or help with an art project or special parties in the classroom.

Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, Tadpoles, A2Z website, Google)

As we are all aware, social media and its usage is prominent. Teachers are encouraged to take pictures via the Tadpoles app and share them with parents daily. If you wish your child to be omitted from this practice, please choose the correct option on your Enrollment Application. A-2-Z also participates in the sharing of daily operations and routines on outside social media sources: Facebook, Instagram, A-2-Z website, or Google. If you do not wish to have your child's picture shared on public sites, please indicate this option on the Enrollment Application form for your child.

Tadpoles is our main means of communication between staff and parents. This app is utilized by staff to update parents on their child's day at the center. Teachers will post pictures which can only be viewed on this app. Group pictures are inevitable and will be posted on Tadpoles only. Please refrain from sharing pictures or posting them on any website outside of the Tadpoles app. Access to this app is only available between the 5:30 A.M and 6:30 P.M. Only Administration members can contact parents on weekends with emergency announcements : school closures, early dismissals, delay openings. Teachers are not permitted to have Tadpoles on their personal phones; The Tadpoles app is only available to the teachers through A2Z owned tablets.

CURRICULA & ASSESSMENTS

Learning Environment Assessment (2.3.2)

Using our assessment tools, ITERS/ECERS, the center director or assistant director performs observations to see where our strengths and weaknesses are in the implementation of Creative Curriculum. This ensures A-2-Z upholds the best learning environment for your child. We provide a rich learning environment with curricula that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom. We have a flexible daily routine that allows children to advance at their own pace. We strongly believe that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through interest areas. Our program is designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision making, problem-solving, responsibility, independence, and reasoning.

Assessments (2.3.3)

Through our observations with the Creative Curriculum standards, we input our findings into the Gold Assessment Tool. This program is available for children ranging from infancy to 3rd grade. Every three months the data is put into a report; we use this report to identify which techniques work best with our teaching practices to maintain standards set by Creative Curriculum. These results are available to each parent through the teaching strategies website; parents are only able to see their child's development.

Developmental Screening Policy (1.3.6)

Evidence shows that the earlier development is assessed, the greater the chance the child has to reach their full potential. In order to assure that the needs of each child in our care are being met, our center conducts developmental screening at least twice a year. The first screening is conducted within 30 days after the beginning of the school year and six months thereafter. If you are a new family beginning at any time after September, then the screening tool will have to be returned within two weeks from your first day of school.

The screening tool A-2-Z uses is the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, Third Edition ASQ. This tool looks at developmental progress of the children between the age of one month and five and half years. As parent/parents you are the experts on your child/children. The ASQ-3 understands the importance of parent participation in the developmental screening process, therefore you are being asked to take 10-15 minutes to complete the screening tool provided to you. Please return the completed forms to the director within two weeks; you will be notified if any further assessments or actions should be taken at that time.

If a concern is brought to our attention via the developmental screening tool, we will then conduct an additional screening with 4-6 months as recommended by the ASQ-3 and decide on the next course of action. Recommendations can begin with the child's pediatrician; and additional referrals may be provided by the center director for Early Intervention if a student is under 3 years of age. Any child older than the age of three can be referred to the Child Study Team at the local, public school where the student will be attending kindergarten.

Screening and Referral Policy (2.4.4)

A-2-Z utilizes a referral system that links families to services needed to address any developmental and behavioral concerns identified through developmental screenings and performance-based assessments.

Transition (2.4.5)

Your child's transition into childcare should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. We will work with you and your child to ensure the smoothest possible transition within the school setting. Students are placed in a class based on their date of birth and consequently their graduation date. This minimizes classroom changes. Once the decision has been made, based on the child's age and ability, to transition a student then the transition folder will follow the child from room to room. The transition folders have all the information regarding each student, such as screening forms, work samples and much more, so that the teacher in the new room can familiarize themselves with their new students.

Transition from Home to Center

Prior to your child's first day, you will have an opportunity to tour the center, meet with your child's peers and teachers, and communicate any anticipated concerns. At this time, please share the best communication methods that the teacher may use to reach you. We also encourage parents to bring children in to get familiar with the center before their first day.

Electronic Media

Children under 2 years old will not be exposed to any screen time in the center. The AAP has determined that use of handheld devices and screen time can have an adverse reaction to brain development. Our interactive board is the only means of technology used at the center. Each session of interactive board usage will not exceed 15 minutes and is related to Creative Curriculum.

Multiculturalism (2.3.1)

Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment we inhabit. We utilize books, music, games, and a wide range of activities as aids to teach our children respect for our world and the diversity of life upon it. Families are more than welcome to send in native treats for children.

Home Language

A-2-Z will encourage your child's home language through reading, writing, speech and music. Parents are encouraged to let us know if a second language is spoken at home during the application process. If a second language is used our staff is encouraged to learn and teach their class new cultural words. Labeling items in the classroom is also encouraged.

Celebrations

Special holiday parties will be held by the center. Parents are encouraged to donate items for classroom, holiday

parties. Birthday celebrations are one of the most special events in a child's life. We ask our families to celebrate with us! We recommend a pizza party and please consider a healthy, low sugar option as a special treat for the classroom. Store brought items in original packaging are best to ensure food allergies are respected.

Rest Time

After lunch, all children less than 4 years of age participate in a quiet rest time. Infants sleep according to their own schedule and are put to sleep on their backs as per safe sleep practices. Children under one years old sleep in our cribs. Children above age the age of one sleep on cots. Children are not required to sleep and may be given quiet activities after 30 minutes of not falling asleep.

Physical Activity Policy

We understand the importance of physical activity in a child's life as exercise can reduce the likelihood of childhood obesity and promote the development of gross and fine motor skills. Children will be provided with opportunities to play outdoors daily unless prevented by inclement weather. If inclement weather prevents outdoor play, the children will still be provided with time for active physical play indoors. Water will always be available both indoors and outdoors.

- **Infants:** minimum of two-30 minute periods of active physical play daily and will have many opportunities throughout the day for tummy time, crawling, walking, and climbing
- **Toddlers:** minimum of two-30 minute periods of active physical play daily
- **Preschool/Pre-K:** minimum of two- 45 minute periods of active physical play daily

Preschool Potty Learning

Our preschool teachers work towards helping the children achieve this great milestone, but of course we need your help too. As our preschoolers approach a new developmental stage, we understand it could be intimidating for them, but we know they are physically and mentally ready.

To get the process rolling, talk about potty learning as often as you can with your child. Having your child understand there will be no other routine change is helpful; this removes some of the anxious feelings associated with potty learning. Once they realize they can quickly return to their playtime after using the bathroom can help put their busy minds at ease. Limiting the amount of liquid intake before nap and bedtime is crucial. As your child has established a routine wake up time, be ready to take them to the bathroom right away. This will help them get accustomed to using the potty instead of relying on their pull-ups.

As we start to enforce potty learning skills in the classroom, please be mindful of a few suggestions to help our teachers transition through the process smoothly. ***When helping your child get dressed in the morning, offer clothing that is loose and comfortable.*** Children feel more confident in using the potty when they can remove their clothes independently. ***Velcro sided pull-ups are highly recommended;*** we want to avoid fully undressing the children when removing or providing a pull-up for their nap. Please place underwear over your child's Velcro pull-up in the morning so the teachers can easily remove the pull-up upon arrival.

For children that have no previous potty learning exposure, our teachers will keep a pull-up on them all day for one week. After that, we will transition to a pull-up during nap time only. Continuously taking them to the bathroom every hour will raise their confidence throughout the learning process. Once your child is comfortable and confident in using the potty consistently, they will wear underwear all day and we have reached our goal! Thank you for your help and understanding, together we can teach our preschool students the importance of potty learning.

The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.

GUIDANCE

General Procedure

A-2-Z is committed to each student's success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our center works to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the school community.

Thoughtful direction and planning are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people, of property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions.

Challenging Behavior

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness. Each student at the school has a right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place
- Be treated with respect
- Receive the help and support of caring adults

Guiding Behavior

Discipline at A-2-Z will always be directed from a loving atmosphere in a positive manner. By teaching right from wrong, establishing routines, setting limits and stating the rules our staff will help your child develop self-discipline and self-control over their own actions.

At **NO TIME** will physical or verbal abuse be used. No child will be denied food, bathroom privileges or rest periods as a means of discipline.

Our staff is instructed that all recurring discipline problems must be brought to the attention of the director. At which time, the director will discuss the problem with the student's parents/guardian.

Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with the parents as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

Attendance & Withdrawal

Absenteeism Policy (3.3.6)

We care about the health and wellbeing of the students under our care. If your child is going to be absent or arrive late, please notify us via the Tadpoles app or call the school at 908-684-3510.

Vacation

The school closes for two weeks each year; one week in the winter and one week in the summer. The exact dates are provided for each school year.

Withdrawals

You must provide A-2-Z with a written notice when withdrawing your child, at least two weeks in advance. Failure to meet the notification requirements will result in additional fees.

Transfer of Records

Whether transitioning to the next program setting or to a new classroom, your child's records will be transferred internally. If your child is transitioning to a new school, a written request from you with instructions to where the records should be sent is required.

Drop-Off & Pick-Up

General Procedure

We open at 6:30 AM. Please do not drop-off your child prior to the opening. There is no drop off after 9 am without a doctor's note or prior approval from the center. New Jersey law states a Parent/Guardian must accompany their children and sign them into the center on the Tadpoles app in the lobby.

We close at 5:30 PM. Please allow enough time to arrive, sign your child out, and leave by closing time.

Cell Phone Usage

The time you spend in the center dropping off and picking up your child are the primary windows of time we have to communicate with you about your child. To make the best use of these opportunities, as well as to be attentive to your child and other children, we ask that you DO NOT use your cell phone at any time during drop-off or pick-up.

Authorized & Unauthorized Persons

Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. If you would need a person who is not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick-up your child, you must notify us in advance, in writing. Your child will not be released without prior written authorization. The person picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy. No person under the age of 18 is authorized to pick up any student in the center.

Failure to Show

If a child has not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. Provisions will be made for someone to stay with your child as long as possible. However, if after one hour we have not been able to reach you or a person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency.

Right to Refuse Child Release

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up the child, or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child.

Reoccurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

Suspension/Termination of Care

In unfortunate circumstances, it may be necessary for A-2-Z to terminate a child's attendance if all efforts have been exhausted for (a/multiple) continuous issue(s).

We will make every effort to correct these issues before a termination decision is made. As a center we will always use the best interest of the child, classmates, and overall environment in our decision.

Reasons for suspension and termination may include (but not limited to):

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to him/herself or other children & staff
- A parental conflict that includes physical or verbal threats or intimidating actions toward staff members
- Continuous failure to pay or lateness of tuition
- Failure to complete necessary paperwork for child's enrollment such as information and health records.
- Parent/Guardian tardiness at pick up
- Child has not adjusted to the center in a timely manner
- Child is physically and or verbally abusive to other children and staff
- Excessive biting
- Continuous breaking of A-2-Z policies

A child **WILL NOT** be terminated for these reasons:

- Parent/Guardian made a complaint against the center to the Office of Licensing regarding violations of licensing standards
- Parent reported abuse or neglect to authorities
- Questioning the center about certain policies and rule

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

PLEASE LABEL EVERYTHING

What to Bring for INFANT/TODDLER: (0-30 Months)

- 0-12 months sleeveless sleep sac: blankets are not best practices while sleeping. No pillows or stuffed animals permitted.
- 0-12 months: fill out the Feeding Plan and make changes as your child grows.
- 12-30 months blankets and sheets are provided. No pillows or stuffed animals permitted.
- Infants: supply all formula, pre-mixed in bottles. All bottles and tops marked with your child's name, date and content. It is also recommended that you always leave an "emergency" can/packet of formula or breast milk at the center.
- Diapers and wipes should be brought in on a weekly basis.
- Diaper creams with medical authorization forms.
- Two changes of clothes. If your child has stomach issues/drools excessively, please supply extra clothes.
- Pacifiers must be labeled with your child's name.
- When your baby begins eating cereal and baby food, you may bring in a box or jars of food to last a week. The teachers will let you know when your supply is low. Please be sure that all these items are marked clearly with your child's name.

What to Bring for PRE-SCHOOL: (30 Months – 4 Years Old)

- Two changes of labeled clothing/underwear/socks
- Pull-ups & wipes if not yet potty trained
- All bedding is provided by the center
- Cups are sent home daily to be washed and returned the next day
- All food is provided by A2Z, included in our tuition

Jewelry

A-2-Z prohibits necklaces and bracelets. These items can create a choking hazard, and we do not want to risk losing them. Earrings should have secure screw backings as so children cannot pull them out and choke on them.

Lost and Found

Belongings that are not labeled will be placed in the lost and found bucket in the lobby. Items not claimed within 30 days will be donated.

Toys from Home

We understand that children are eager to show their friends their belongings from home, however, in a school setting this can create some issues. A-2-Z will not be responsible for toys from home getting lost or broken during the school day.

Nutrition

Meals

A-2-Z provides all meals at the center. Our menu is compiled with all religious and allergies in mind. Please inform us as to any restrictions ahead of time. All parents are provided a copy of the menu every month.

Food Allergies (1.3.3)

Families are expected to notify us regarding their child's food and environmental allergies. Any child with diagnosed allergies is required to provide us documentation detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments and care from their pediatrician. A list of the child's allergies is posted in each classroom as well as the kitchen. We are trained to familiarize ourselves and consult the list to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

Toddler Feedings

(Please note that we are a peanut-free facility)

- Children are encouraged to self-feed to the extent that they have the skills
- Children are encouraged, but not forced to eat a variety of foods
- Round, firm foods that pose a choking hazard for children less than 4 years of age are not permitted. These foods include: hot dogs, whole grapes, peanuts, popcorn, and hard candy

Scheduled Eating Times

These times are an estimate, we will accommodate accordingly.

Toddler - Pre-K classes

- Breakfast at 8:30 am
- Lunch at 11:30 am
- Additional snack at 2:30 pm and 4 pm

Breastfeeding / Infant Feedings 1.3.2

Our center is a breastfeeding friendly site. We understand the important role that breastfeeding can play in an infant's health and nutrition. Our staff is trained in the appropriate handling of breast milk, and they understand the benefits breastfeeding can offer. If you are sending in breast milk, please be sure to label it in red with your child's name and date milk was expressed. Breast milk will be stored in a refrigerator in the Infant Room. Formula bottles must be pre-made. You may bring a container of formula for back-up purposes only. Formula or Breast milk not consumed by day's end will be returned to parent or discarded with their consent. Formula and Breast milk are never warmed in the microwave. Moms are encouraged to come in at any time to breastfeed. A semi-private space within our infant room with a rocking chair and an electrical outlet nearby is provided for our nursing mothers. Information on the benefits of breastfeeding and healthy eating is shared with all parents.

- Infants are held during feeding. Older children that can hold their bottles are placed in feeding chairs
- Children under 6 months will not be fed solid food without written instruction from either the parent or the child's health care provider
- Children under 12 months are never fed cow's milk
- Feeding times will vary with each infant's personal schedule. Parents should share their baby's feeding schedule with the staff in their classroom

Additional information on the benefits and the supports for breastfeeding families can be found at the CDC website <http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/pdf/BF-Guide-508.PDF>

Health

Medical Home Policy (1.2.3)

A-2-Z believes that children's health and medical needs are best cared for in an environment that promotes the sharing of information about a child's growth and development with their parents/caregivers. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends all children have a Medical Home: the delivery of advanced primary care with the goal of

addressing and integrating high quality health promotion, acute care, and chronic condition management in a planned, coordinated, and family-centered manner. In order to establish a proper Medical Home, it is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics that all babies and children have a primary pediatrician who knows the family and the child well and understands the individual's medical history to play a central role in the coordination of the child's medical care. An Emergency Room, an urgent care center, clinic, or specialist cannot be considered a Medical Home since they cannot take on the central role of primary care. A-2-Z encourages all parents/caregivers to establish a primary pediatrician for your child to serve as their Medical Home.

Universal Health Form

Prior to enrollment each child must have a completed Universal Health Form. These forms are included in your registration packet. Your pediatrician must complete this form and sign it once a yearly physical has been completed. Please also ensure the pediatrician completes the vision, hearing, and dental screening portion of the form. Any concerns noted by the pediatrician will be followed up by the center.

Immunizations

All children are required to have an up-to-date immunization record prior to acceptance to the center.

Physicals

Routine Physicals are required according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. A copy of your child's physical should be received before but must be received no later than 6 weeks after your child begins the program. Families are responsible for assuring that their child's physical is kept up-to-date and that a copy of the results are held at A-2-Z.

Illness

We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children you may not bring a sick child to the center. The center has the right to refuse a child who appears ill. You will be called and asked to retrieve your child if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms:

- Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities
- Fever of 100.4
- Any COVID19 symptoms
- Diarrhea (twice in an hour)
- Vomiting
- Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours
- Impetigo
- Strep throat

This is not an all-inclusive list. We will try to keep your child comfortable, but he/she will be excluded from all activities until you arrive.

Children who have been ill, may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for 48 hours
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual activities
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling
(not related to teething)

Or unless:

- The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious, and the involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage
- If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual activities
- Head lice (Children with head lice will not be allowed to return to the center until they have been treated and no

further head lice or nits are detected during a health check)

Medications

We at A-2-Z will refrain from dispensing medication as much as possible. If medication must be dispensed, then the following will be applicable: All medications should be handed to the director with specific instructions for administration.

Medications should never be left in the child's bag or classroom.

- Prescription medications require a note signed by a parent or guardian and pediatrician. The medication must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and the name and phone number of the physician. All medications must be in the original container (you may request pharmacies to fill your prescription in two labeled bottles)
- Please specify the dosage and time(s) to be administered for each medication
- Medication will not be given on an 'as needed' basis
- Non-prescription medications require a note signed by the parent or guardian and pediatrician. Nonprescription medication should not be administered for more than a 3-day period unless advised by the child's doctor. All medications must be left in their original packaging
- A written order by the physician is required
- If you would like your child to wear either sunscreen or insect repellent, you must provide a spray form of each. The center is not responsible for supplying them. Please make sure to label them with your child's name.

Communicable Diseases

When an enrolled child or an employee of the center has a (suspected) re-portable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health. We will take care to notify families about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments. Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:

Bacterial Meningitis	Hemophiliacs Influenza (invasive)	Poliomyelitis (including suspect)
Botulism	H1N1 Virus	Rabies (human only)
Chicken Pox	Measles (including suspect)	Rubella Congenital and Non-congenital (including suspect)
Diphtheria	Meningococcal Infection (invasive)	Tetanus (including suspect)
	Any cluster/outbreak of illness	

SAFETY

Clothing

****Please label EVERYTHING****

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including painting, outdoor play, sand, weather, and other sensory activities. Our playground is used as an extension of the center and daily programs are conducted outside whenever weather permits. Backless, open toe shoes, and flip-flops are not appropriate for center play and make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities and remain safe. We are not responsible for lost or damaged items.

Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play

Outdoor play will not occur if the outside temperature is greater than 90°F or less than 35°F degrees depending on humidity and wind chill. Immediately upon the threat of the severe weather all children will be taken inside. If there are severe winds, children will be taken to the interior classrooms away from windows. Staff will be required to take roll and make sure all children are accounted for.

Safety Checks

Each classroom is inspected daily for safety hazards and is signed off by NJ licensing on a semi-annual basis. Our outdoor playground is inspected daily and annually with an approved checklist.

Injuries

All staff is CPR and First Aid Certified

Safety is a major concern in childcare therefore, daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. First aid will be administered by a trained caregiver if your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives. Any time a child is admitted to the hospital due to an incident at the center the NJ Office of Licensing is notified immediately.

Biting

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once. When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten. We will also help guide the biter to learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting. Notes will be written to the family of the child who was bitten and the biter's family. We will work together with the families of each to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change.

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness. When a child becomes physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all of them. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent and understandable to the child. Please note that there is an expulsion policy that all parents receive in their child's registration package. Please review and ask questions if needed.

Respectful Behavior

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your child from our care.

Smoking

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants and young children's developing bodies. The use of tobacco or vapes in any form is prohibited on the center's premises.

Prohibited Substances

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on the center's premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited. Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind altering or polluting substances is required to leave the premises immediately.

Dangerous Weapons

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children, staff or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises. In cases that clearly involve a gun or any weapon on our premises, the police will be notified, and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

Parental Custody

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to the enrolled child. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody without court documentation.

Suspected Child Abuse

We are mandated by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse, neglect, or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may investigate. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

EMERGENCIES

Lost or Missing Child

In the unlikely event that a child becomes lost or separated from a group, all available staff will search for the child. If the child is not located within 10 minutes, the family and the police will be notified.

Fire Safety

Our center is fully equipped with a fire suppression system. We also have with a fire alarm system which is directly connected to the police and fire department. Fire extinguishers are provided in all applicable areas.

Emergency Transportation

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

Hurricane/Tornado Watch/Warning

In case of a hurricane watch we will stay in touch with the national hurricane center, the weather channel on TV and radio, for current information. Should there be a hurricane warning posted, parents are expected to pick up their child immediately as the center will need to close. If for any reason we are caught here at the facility and unable to leave, all children will be taken to the interior classrooms away from all windows. After the move is completed, staff will take roll to make sure all children are accounted for. Staff will be instructed to stay calm and assure children they will be safe until parents can get to them.

Loss of Power, Structural Damage

Emergency lighting will be used for short term power loss. Please keep in mind that the center's phones DO NOT work if we lose power to our building. If the local power company determines the power loss will be for an extended amount of time, parents will be called from our cell phones and asked to pick up their child.

Media Relations

In any emergency the Director will be the designated spokesperson communicating to any media outlets. Staff will direct all questions and information to the Director. No child information will be shared without prior consent of the parents.

Policy & Procedure – Referral to Outside Resources

Policy

When an A-2-Z staff member determines a family needs outside services such as medical, dental, developmental, financial, mental health, clothing, food, shelter, etc., the staff member will assist the family by following the procedure below.

Responsibility:

This policy applies to all staff and is strictly enforced by the director. Staff will be trained in this policy during orientation and the policy will be reviewed with staff annually. Failure to comply with this policy is grounds for written warning and corrective action. Repeated failure is grounds for termination.

Procedure:

1. The staff member will communicate the need, in confidence, to the director.
2. The director will maintain a list of approved organizations and resources for outside services. If no resources are on the list for their specific need, the director will make inquiries to find the appropriate resources.
3. The staff member and director will confer on the subject and determine if the circumstance indicates need for a third-party professional. If a professional is required, the director or administrator will contact the professional and assume responsibility for the referral.
4. If no third-party professional is required, the director will confer and agree who will communicate the referral to the family.
5. After a reasonable amount of time, the person who communicated the outside resource will check back with the family to make sure the referral was helpful. If it was not, additional resources will be sought.

Management Approval

Signature _____

Date _____

Referral to Outside Services

Child Name: _____

Referral give to (family member name): _____

Name of outside service to which family was referred: _____

Referral Date: _____

Name of individual who made the referral: _____

How referral was made (verbal, written, email, etc.): _____

Names of other individuals consulted if any: _____

Reason for referral: _____

Follow up/ results after referral: _____

Others note: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

General Resources for Parents and Families

Child Development and Special Needs

Zero to Three <http://www.zerotothree.org>

NJ Parent Link (provides links to various types of services) <http://www.nj.gov/njparentlink/>

Moms2Moms <http://ubhc.rutgers.edu/mom2mom/links.htm>

Early Intervention System (birth to 3 years) <http://nj.gov/health/fhs/eis/index.shtml>

Family Link (birth to three years) <http://www.familylinknj.org/>

Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN) www.spanadvocacy.org

Autism Speaks <http://www.autismspeaks.org/>

Parent workshops and informational articles may be found at:

Upcoming Parent/Family Events/Workshops in the Morris/Sussex County Region

<http://www.morrisussexresourcenet.org/news-events/events/>

United Way Success by 6 http://www.unitedwaynj.org/ourwork/ed_successby6resources.php

National Association for the Education of Young Children <http://families.naeyc.org/>

Oral Health

Healthy Children <http://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/oralhealth/Pages/Teething-and-Dental-Hygiene.aspx> and www.healthychildren.org

American Academy of Pediatrics <http://www2.aap.org/commpeps/doch/oralhealth/index.html>

Nutrition and Physical Activity

Let's Move <https://letsmove.obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/>

Eating Healthy www.nutrition.gov/life-stages/children

My Plate <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/>

Communicable Diseases/Preventive Health Care

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/>

Medication Administration Safety

Healthy Children <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/medication-safety/Pages/default.aspx>

Mental Health Services

Primary Screening Center for Morris County:

St. Clare's Hospital

25 Pocono Road

Denville, NJ 07834

24/7 Hot line: (973) 625-0280

Behavioral Health Services Central Intake: 1-888- 626-2111

Emergency Services Affiliated with Screening Center:

Morristown Medical Center

100 Madison Avenue

Morristown, NJ 07960

24/7 Hotline: 973-540- 0100

Mental Health Association of Morris County- (973) 334-3496 <http://www.mhamorris.org/>

Directory of Morris County Mental Health Services

<http://oem.morriscountynj.gov/directory-mental-health/>

Perform Care (behavioral health for children)

1-877- 652-7624 <http://www.performcarenj.org/index.aspx>

General Child Safety

Healthy Children <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/default.aspx>

Safe Kids <https://www.safekids.org/safetytips>

Housing Assistance

<http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dfd/programs/emergency/>

<http://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/dhcr/offices/ha.html>

Additional Resources

Child and Family Resources <http://www.childandfamily-nj.org/>

Devereux Center http://www.devereux.org/site/PageServer?pagename=nj_index

Children's Safety Network <http://www.childrenssafetynetwork.org/>

Family Partners of Morris and Sussex Counties <http://www.familypartnersms.org/>

Caring Partners of Morris and Sussex Counties <http://www.caringpartnerscmo.org/>

Deirdre's House:

Morris County center for child victims of abuse and/or neglect

<http://www.deirdreshouse.org/>

Jersey Battered Women's Services, Inc. (JBWS): Emergency Shelter

24 Hr. Hotline: (973) 267-4763 TTY: (973) 285-9095 Office: (973) 267-7520

Health Care

NJ Family Care <http://www.njfamilycare.org/default.aspx>

New Jersey State Pharmaceutical Assistance Programs and Medicare Part D

<http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/doas/home/pbp.html>

NJ Drug Card - <http://www.newjerseydrugcard.com/index.php>

Substance Abuse

Prevention is Key www.mcpik.org

Health and Human Service Resources

First Call for Help: Dial 211 or 1-800- 435-7555

NJ 2-1- 1 is a statewide information and referral service
that is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Go to www.nj211.org to search their resource database on your own.

Morris County Department of Human Services <http://morrishumanservices.org/services.asp>

New Jersey Regional Crisis Hotlines

2nd Floor Helpline: 1-(888) 222-2228

Geared for children and young adults ages 10-24 years of age.

Free and confidential helpline for youth ages 10-24 to call 24/7. Visit the web site at www.2ndfloor.org

Contact We Care: 24/7 Helpline 908-232- 2880

Information and referrals, crisis suicidal helpline and listening service and
covers Bergen, Essex, Middle sex, Morris, Passaic, Somerset and Union Counties.

Family Crisis Intervention (Adolescent): 24 hour: 1-908- 298-7800

Addictions Hotline of NJ: 24 hr.: 1-800- 238-2333

Gambling: 1-800- GAMBLER

Parents Anonymous Helpline-Referral: 1-800- THE-KIDS

National Child Abuse Hotline: 1800-422- 4453

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800- 273-TALK

National Runaway Switchboard: 1-800- RUNAWAY

NJ AIDS/STD Hotline: 24hr: 1-800- 624-2377

Family Handbook Acknowledgment

I have received the A-2-Z Academy of Early Learning Family Handbook, and I have reviewed the family handbook with a member of the A-2-Z staff. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself with the Family Handbook and to ask the center's management any questions I may have regarding any policy, procedure or information contained in the Family Handbook. The handbook may be updated, and notice will be provided as updates are completed. Please sign this acknowledgment and return it to A-2-Z prior to enrollment.

Thank you for choosing A-2-Z to be your child's home away from home, and we look forward to getting to know you and your family.

Child's Name: _____

Parent/ Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

A-2-Z Staff Signature: _____ Date: _____