

Sweet Pea's Learning Center

SP Learning Center, LLC

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Owners: Chad and Jinna Hartline

Policies and Procedures

Welcome and Introduction

We believe all children are a blessed gift from God, and we have dedicated ourselves to making childhood the most enriching experience possible. Sweet Pea's Learning Center is licensed by Bright From the Start, a division of the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. Our educational programs and nurturing staff will stimulate your child's social, emotional, mental, and physical development on a daily basis. We hope that this handbook will serve as a guide to the operation of our school and will answer many of the questions that you may have about Sweet Pea's Learning Center. Policies may be amended as necessary. A copy of these policies is available at the front desk for all parents. If you have questions, please e-mail Jinna Hartline at jinna.hartline@splearningcenter.com

About Us

Since coming under new management in the summer of 2009, Sweet Pea's has engaged in consistent growth and constant improvements to the facilities as well as the curriculum.

The staff at SPLC takes pride in the role they play in your child's early development. SPLC has a team of dedicated teachers that thrive in teaching children independence, gaining self-confidence, and all the fundamentals of learning to ensure appropriate social development and school readiness. All of our staff has appropriate curriculum and safety trainings including staff members with approved teaching certificates and special needs certificates.

With qualified leadership areas of developmental needs can be identified and addressed using proven research based strategies all while working together with parents or guardians to ensure a suitable educational experience for each individual child.

Our spacious classrooms and playground allow children to explore their surroundings with freedom to engage in hands on activities while utilizing various learning tools in a safe and nurturing environment. Teachers plan and implement age appropriate activities that encourage children to learn, play and explore. Our teachers engage in quality interactions with each and every child developing a sense of love, respect and safety in the school environment.

Ample opportunities are provided for children to interact with and learn from teachers as well as their peers through socially appropriate interactions. The staff at SPLC strives to develop strong

relationships not only with the children but with their families as well. SPLC makes every effort to establish a professional, coordinated effort between center experience and home life. We understand the trust that is involved with leaving your child in someone else's care and seek to develop that trust with every opportunity. While recognizing the fact that you are your child's first and most important teacher, we respect and value your input into your child's educational experience. For this reason we offer programs to encourage greater participation from you, the parent, into your child's educational experience at SPLC.

Our goals

- To help the children in our care develop a positive view of themselves and others.
- To help the children in our care develop a genuine love of learning.
- To help the children in our care develop an appreciation for the differences among people and how to celebrate those differences.
- To help the children in our care to learn how to cooperate and be a positive member of a community.
- To help the children in our care to develop the basic skills in key content areas of literacy, mathematics, science, technology, creative expression and the arts, health and safety and social studies that prepares them for the next level of learning.

Philosophy

Sweet Pea's Learning Center provides a place where children can grow in a stimulating and challenging educational environment. Teachers enrich our atmosphere with warmth and a passion for education. The first years of a child's development lay the foundation for acquiring social skills and competence in communication, reading, mathematics and reasoning skills that are essential for scholastic success.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Sweet Pea's Learning Center does not discriminate against individuals because of race, religion, or national origin. Children will be admitted to the Center without discrimination and in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. To best ensure that their needs are met, when children with special needs are enrolled, there will be consultations with the parents and, as needed, the child's medical advisor, the staff who will be involved, and any other appropriate individuals. Additionally, an assessment to determine the full scope of needs and appropriate services may be required. Assessments may be made on a periodic basis after a child with special needs is enrolled to ensure that the child is continuing to have his/her needs adequately met.

State Licensed

Sweet Pea's Learning Center is licensed and regulated by Bright from the Start: GA

Department of Early Care and Learning. Annual unannounced inspections of the center are conducted to ensure all state standards, policies and procedures are met. A copy of the state rules and regulations and a copy of our most recent licensing review are available to review upon request or online at www.decal.ga.gov.

General Information

Sweet Pea's Learning Center provides a variety of educational and extracurricular programs:

Infant Program

Our infant program, developed for children age 6 weeks through 12 months, provides personalized care in a nurturing environment. Activities include tummy time, language development through songs, fingerplays, reading, and picture identification, and outside blanket time.

Toddler Program - the toddler program is designed for children age 12 months (and walking independently) through 36 months. Children will grow and learn in a safe and nurturing environment while being encouraged to explore and discover through a series of comprehensive skill building activities.

Preschool Program - the preschool program serves children ages 3 to 4 years old. Our program offers children a rich classroom environment that fosters development of cognitive, language, math and social skills, as well as creativity.

Summer Camp and After-school Enrichment – the summer and after-school programs serve students who are in Pre-K -5th grade. Activities include academic reinforcement, units of study, team building, outdoor activities, snack, water park fun and field trips.

Special Needs - Sweet Pea's Learning Center complies with Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). We will work with parents or guardians and any other professionals (such as other educators or health care professionals) assigned to work with the child to create an individualized assessment about whether the center can meet the particular needs of the child in a group setting without fundamentally altering our program.

Hours of Operation & Holidays

Sweet Pea's Learning Center operates from 6:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m., Monday - Friday and operates year round from January until December.

The center observes and closes according to the following schedule:

New Year's Eve

New Year's Day

Memorial Day

Independence Day

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Day and the Friday after

Christmas Eve

Christmas Day

Tuition

Tuition costs are averaged over the year; therefore, full tuition is due these weeks.. The weekly fees are as follows:

6 weeks-12 months- \$130
13 months-3 years (or potty trained)- \$120
3 years-4 years- \$110
Before and After Care- \$60
Summer School Age Care- \$100

It is important for our teachers to maintain a secure and stable environment for your child. In order to accomplish this, we must offer our staff the security of knowing that their employment with Sweet Peas is secure and stable. In order to make this possible we have averaged tuition costs for a period of one year. Your tuition helps to support the staff and is therefore due whether your child attends one day or five days. You must make your tuition payment in order to hold your child's place. Tuition may be paid in advance monthly or weekly. Payments can be made with cash, checks, or PayPal (link on www.splearningcenter.com)

After six months of attendance; vacation credits are available for up to one week per year when students are out of school for any reason Monday through Friday. Requests for credits (vacation) should be put in writing in advance. A breakfast snack, lunch and snack are included in tuition. Sweet Peas Learning Center may contact the Department of Family and Children's Services if a child is not picked up within 1 hour of the center's closing, or for frequent late pick up of children. This is solely at the discretion of the administrative staff.

Although our school is run very efficiently, due to the increase in cost of staffing, continuing education and equipment there may be an annual increase in tuition. If there is ever a need to increase the cost of tuition to maintain our high quality of services, parents will be provided with written notice at least 2 weeks in advance. In our ongoing effort to provide the highest quality of services to our students and families, there will be an annual \$50 supply fee applied each school year in April.

Returned checks must be paid for in cash within one day of notification. If two checks are returned, money orders or cash will be necessary for all future payments.

ENROLLMENT/ADMISSION PROCEDURES

Enrollment Forms

There are several forms that must be completed and returned before your child may be admitted to the program. There are NO exceptions. This is to ensure compliance with state regulations and to make sure we are providing the best possible care for all children. All forms must be updated annually, or immediately upon any changes.

For each child, a signed copy of the following should be on file:

- o Application for Admission
- o Medical and Liability Release Form
- o Vehicle emergency / Medical Form
- o Child Profile

- o State of Georgia Immunization Record (Form 3231)*
 - o Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form
 - o Permission to Administer Topical Medication, if applicable
 - o Infant Feeding plan (for children under the age of one)
 - o Change of clothes in a gallon Ziploc type bag with all clothing labeled with child's name
 - o Photo Consent
 - Safe Sleep Policy (for children under 1 year of age)
- If your child requires any special treatment or services, these requirements should be clearly defined in writing before your child's first day.

On the Application for Admission, complete address and phone numbers are required. It is extremely important to keep this information updated and current since this is our only means of contacting you. Georgia law requires that these forms be complete and be updated by the parents if any changes of information occur.

Changes in Family Schedule

No refunds, prorates or credit is given for, changes in family schedules, or absences due to illness or injury. By enrolling your child you are agreeing to the weekly tuition fee for as long as your child is enrolled, regardless of the number of hours you and your child use the service.

Items Supplied by Parents

Parents are required to provide the following items for each child enrolled:

- Diapers and wipes, if needed
- Breast milk or formula in bottle labeled with the child's full name and date every day
- Extra change of clothing in a gallon Ziploc type bag with all clothing labeled with child's name
- Other items may be requested on an as-needed basis

Diaper cream, sunscreen, or any other necessary topical ointments must be supplied by parents and accompanied by a consent form that will be placed in the child's file.

Parents are encouraged to dress their children in seasonally suitable play clothes that are appropriate for inside and outside play. Please realize that the hands-on way in which children learn can result in messy clothes! Each child should have a complete change of clothes at the center at all times, including underwear and socks. Children who are beginning toilet training must have three extra changes in their cubbies each day. Parents should check every day for soiled clothing to be taken home, and periodically to make sure that the clothes still fit and are appropriate for the season.

While we love to see our children share, we discourage children from bringing items from home to share. Toys and items brought from home to the center are at risk of breakage and/or loss. The center cannot assume responsibility in the case of breakage or loss. We will provide ample supplies/toys for all children. All personal belongings should be marked with your child's name. Any personal belongings that cannot be identified will be placed in a Lost and Found box. If no one claims any of the items at the end of each school year, they will be discarded or donated. If you bring and leave a diaper bag, please do not put medicines, small objects, or other dangerous items in the bags as they may be kept within reach of the children.

Child Records

Sweet Pea's maintains files on each child enrolled. The following items will be included in these files:

- Health records that document the dates of services verifying that the child is current immunizations (as outlined by the American Academy of Pediatrics)..
- Current information about any health insurance coverage required for treatment in an emergency.
- Current emergency contact information for each child. This information must be updated annually or more frequently if needed.
- Names of individuals authorized by the family to have access to health information about the child.
- Instructions for any of the child's special health needs such as allergies or chronic illness.
- If a child is overdue for any health services, as the parent/guardian, you must provide evidence that an appointment has been made in order for your child to remain in the program. If you have chosen not to have your child vaccinated for medical or religious reasons, a form stating this must be on file. If your child is under-immunized or not immunized at all for any reason, your child may be excluded from the facility if a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs in the program. Children without a current immunization form (or medical/religious exemption on file) will not be allowed to remain in the program after the 30-day grace period. This is Georgia state law.

Emergency Contact Information

Parents are expected to provide the center staff with any and all contact numbers we might need in order to reach you. This includes home, work, and cell phone numbers as well as e-mail addresses. We also require the names, complete addresses, and phone numbers of at least two people from different households who could pick up your child in an emergency. Please be advised that center staff is authorized to call your emergency contacts to pick up your child if we are unable to reach you in a reasonable amount of time depending on your child's condition. Parents must notify the center immediately upon any changes in name, address, phone number, place of employment or any other pertinent information. In the event of a need to evacuate the center (in a weather emergency, for instance), our evacuation location will be Dade Elementary School Lower Gym.

Authorized Persons

Children shall ONLY be released from the center to those individuals whose names are on file with the center. If a teacher is not familiar with the person picking up a child, he/she will ask the individual to show identification before the child can be released. Please let anyone that might pick up your child know that they will be asked to show a picture ID so they are prepared and not offended. We care as much about the safety of your child as you do. Please note that children will not be released to anyone who appears to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.

This policy is strictly enforced for the safety of your own child. Although you may list additional authorized persons to pick up your child on the Application for Admission, we would appreciate knowing if someone other than the parents will be picking up your child.

Custody Issues

In case of separated or divorced parents where visitation rights are denied to one parent, we cannot deny releasing the child to such parent unless a court decree or separation document is in your child's file with us. The document must clearly forbid such parent from picking up the child from our program. The court decree must also be specific to the rights of visitation and if the parent is allowed, on certain occasions, to pick up the child from the center.

Arrival and Departure Procedures

All children must be escorted in and out of Sweet Pea's by their parents or guardians. Parents should make sure that their children are under the direct supervision of an adult before leaving the premises. It is important that parents adhere to the procedures for bringing children to school and picking them up as it ensures their health and safety. Upon arrival at the center, parents should accompany their child to the classroom or playground where they will begin the day's activities. Make sure you sign your child in and the time you arrived as well as sign out when you depart for the day. This will be done through the Kinderlime app on the iPad located in the front lobby. On admission to the center, parents and guardians will be assigned PINs that will be used everyday at drop off and pick up time. This is a state law requirement. Greeting your child's teacher(s) when you arrive or depart lets them know when your child is present in the center and gives you an opportunity to discuss any changes in eating or sleeping patterns or any other news about the home that might help them understand your child. If you arrive or depart during times when the teacher(s) are engaged with the group or other children, you may always write a note for them or contact them later in the day when the children are napping. To support your child's growing sense of daily, predictable, and secure routines and the learning experiences that are planned for your child and the other children please plan to arrive in time to help your child settle into the center before 10:00am. Breakfast snack is served at 9 a.m.

Termination

The contract for child care may be terminated by either the parent/guardian or the center by giving two weeks written notice in advance of the ending date. While verbal communication with your child's teacher is appreciated, it will not be considered a valid notice. Payment by parent/guardian is due for the notice period, whether or not the child is brought to the center for care. The center may terminate the contract without giving any notice if the parent/guardian fails to comply with the contract terms, including but not limited to timely payment of fees, or if the care of the child poses a direct threat to the health and safety of the teachers and/or other children enrolled. Every effort will be made to prevent the notice of termination of a child from center participation. Sweet Pea's Learning Center, however, reserves the right to give notice of termination of enrollment under these conditions:

- Tuition payments are one month behind and no payment plan has been arranged.
- Lack of follow through on special arrangements for payment.
- Failure to adhere to policies and procedures as communicated in the parent handbook.
- The program is unable to meet the developmental needs of the child.
- Consistent behavioral problems that result from failure to obtain requested child guidance evaluation(s).
- The child's behavior threatens the health and safety of himself or herself, the other children, or staff of the center.

- The parent or guardian exhibits behavior which is detrimental to the health and well-being of the children and staff in a classroom or negatively interferes with the normal functioning of the classroom.
- Parental disputes between divorced parents/guardians that become administratively disruptive to the center.

The center reserve the right to request immediate withdrawal if there is a threat to the health and safety of those in the center.

Grouping and Staff/Child Ratios

Children are grouped in the Center to comply with Georgia State Licensing Rules & Regulations. Children are enrolled and grouped so as not to exceed Georgia Licensing Rules & Regulations. These ratios are:

Infants (6 weeks – 12 months) 1:6

Toddlers (12 months – 23 months) 1:8

Two's 1:10

Three's 1:15

Four's 1:18

Five's 1:20

Our classrooms will never exceed the required ratio during any time.

Curriculum

The early childhood division of the school bases its academic program on a weekly unit of study for academic advancement. Teachers use lesson plans to guide the delivery of information and address individual issues of advanced skill levels or areas of improvement that are needed. Parents may supplement curriculum by bringing in books, materials, or ideas related to the theme for the benefit of the class. Lesson plans are posted each Monday for the unit of study. Lesson plans represent the daily planned program that includes language and literacy, cognitive development, emotional and social development, and fine and large motor development. A variety of teaching methods are used to accommodate the different learning styles and abilities of students.

Each group of children at Sweet Pea's is assigned teaching staff who have primary responsibility for working with that group of children. Teachers are expected to provide on-going personal contact, meaningful learning activities, supervision, and immediate care as needed to protect children's well-being. On-going assessment of each child, as well as each child's individual interests, are used to inform classroom instruction and to make sound decisions about individual and group curriculum content, teaching approaches, and personal interactions.

Daily Schedule

Children may begin their day at Sweet Pea's Learning Center as early as 6:00 a.m. Daily schedules are posted in each room for parents' review. There will be a daily rest time for all children from approximately 12 until 2 p.m. If a child does not sleep during this period, he/she will be asked to rest and possibly participate in a quiet activity. Please refrain from bringing children to school after 10:00 am, as this is very disruptive to lunch and napping schedules. Sweet Pea's Learning Center have an open door policy for all children enrolled in the center.

Parents are permitted to visit our school and participate in any of our activities. We have special calendar events monthly, which include celebrating children's birthdays, themes and special holidays. Parents are welcome to celebrate their child's birthday at school, but should coordinate plans with the teacher in advance

Transitional Planning

Transitions are especially difficult for children. We work diligently to minimize the number of transitions that children must make between groups and teaching staff. Every attempt is made to maintain continuity of relationships between teaching staff and children throughout the year. When a child is ready to transition to another group and/or teacher, the Director, all teachers involved and the child's family will work together to ensure a smooth transition.

We also schedule our day and activities to reduce the transitions children experience during the day. Children will be given sufficient notice as well as sufficient time to transition from one activity to the next. Giving children specific tasks with clarity and consistency is important as is flexibility and attention to individual needs. If you will be picking your child up early, you should consider allowing a few extra minutes to provide your child with an opportunity to transition out of an activity in which he/she may be participating.

Outdoor Play

BFTS Rules and Regulations require outside play time for all children. Infants must be provided with one hour of outdoor time each day. All other children must have 1 ½ hours of outdoor time each day when weather permits. Teachers will use the Child Care Weather Watch Chart to determine if it is safe for outdoor play and to ensure that the children wear the appropriate layers of clothing for the type of weather. When outdoor opportunities for large-motor activities are not possible because of weather conditions, teachers will be prepared to offer similar activities inside. Children must wear shoes that have a back on them to keep them safe during outdoor play. The equipment is always kept in good condition, but sandals and flip flops are dangerous while climbing and running outside.

Confidentiality

In order to provide the best care possible, we do collect a great deal of information about your child and your family. We know that much of this information is personal and we take special precautions to ensure the confidentiality of this information. All confidential files are maintained in a locked file cabinet. Information about children or their families is only shared on a "need to know" basis. If a need arises to discuss a child with someone outside of Sweet Pea's Learning Center, written parental permission will be obtained. Please note that your child's teacher will have access to your child's file to assist him/her in meeting your child's needs. Regulatory authorities may also have access to these records on request to ensure that we are maintaining all required information. As the parent/legal guardian, you may request to review your child's file at any time. To this end, we also request that our families respect our confidentiality policy. Please do not discuss another child and/or family or ask questions about any child other than your own.

Supervision

Teaching staff at Sweet Pea's Learning Center are assigned to a specific group of children for whom they have primary responsibility. Teaching staff supervise by positioning themselves to

see as many children as possible. Infants and toddlers/ twos are supervised by sight and sound at all times. Teachers are positioned so they can hear and see any sleeping children for whom they are responsible. For preschoolers and older children, the teachers supervise primarily by sight and may supervise by sound for short intervals as long as the teachers check frequently on children who are out of sight (for example while a preschooler is toileting). Classrooms and outdoor space must be designed so that there are no areas where children can hide or be out of sight. Teachers should take extra precautions, and ask for assistance if needed, when supervising children during high-risk activities or when near equipment where injury could occur. All employees are expected to use developmentally appropriate guidance and supervision skills. These guidance and supervision skills include awareness, positioning, scanning, redirection, and close supervision. Awareness requires basic knowledge of the children, including knowing each child's range of skills, interests, and ability to interact with others and development stage. Knowledge of children helps teachers to monitor and enhance skills that promote children's positive behavior. Positioning requires being able to see all of the children. Staff should position themselves to be aware of the entire classroom and to see as many children as possible. All children are monitored by sight and sound at all times. Teachers should regularly move around the classroom or outside play area. Scanning involves regularly glancing around the classroom and playground to see children's involvement and what is happening. Redirection is a skill used as an aid in preventing undesirable and unsafe behavior. Children are redirected to other areas/ activities when undesirable behavior is about to happen or occurs. This skill helps ensure the safety of all children. Close Supervision is required for all children in areas that are near where injury may occur. This requires the use of all of the above methods as well teachers being in close proximity to the children. Close supervision is especially needed when children are waiting to be picked up due to illness or injury and need to be kept safe and comfortable.

Special Events and Birthdays

Parents are welcome to celebrate birthdays at school. Advance notice with the teacher is required in order to allow for planning. Birthday celebrations may include face painting, characters, and other appropriate activities. You are welcome to bring a cake (yellow or white is preferred), fruit juice, fruit, muffins, or related items. We discourage excessive sugar such as candy in the goody bags or cookies and cake. Invitations for parties held outside of the classroom should be inclusive of all classmates, and then the teacher will distribute them accordingly. A book donation to the class is a great way to share your child's special day.

Transitioning of Children between Groups

Children are transitioned between groups in the center to ensure that individual developmental needs are met and NOT strictly according to chronological age. The classroom placement of children is determined by administration, based on a number of factors, one of which is parent input regarding their child's needs. Conferences are scheduled prior to all transitions to discuss the child's readiness for transitioning and to familiarize the parents with day-to-day routines in the child's new group. Decisions are made on a case by case basis. Classroom placement may be made at other times of the year if the program staff and parents feel that the move is in the best interest of the child. If at any time you feel your child is not in the most appropriate classroom, please discuss your concerns with the Director.

Infant & Toddler Care

As much as possible, infants and toddlers should remain in the care of a consistent caregiver at the center. Because we are a small center, all teachers may become familiar with these children, but a primary caregiver will be assigned and will be responsible for the basic care of the infant/young toddler. Unless it is deemed unnecessary or inappropriate by the teaching staff and family, we will work to keep infants and toddlers with their teaching staff for a period of at least nine months to ensure a secure attachment/bond.

Safety Precautions

The infant classroom is a “shoe free zone.” Teachers and other visitors are asked to remove their shoes before entering the infant classroom. Baby walkers are not permitted at Sweet Pea’s Learning Center. A toy that a child has placed in his or her mouth or that is otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion is removed from the classroom and hand washed using water and detergent, and then rinsed, sanitized, and air dried before it can be used by another child.

Guiding Children’s Behavior

Positive guidance techniques will be used as a first measure in redirecting a child’s improper behavior. They are always consistent and based on the child’s specific needs and development. We have found that these methods are most effective when coupled with the cooperation of the parents. Although children under three usually cannot remember problems that may have occurred earlier in the day, we ask that you discuss the proper way to act with your child. Children strive to receive approval and praise. Should these methods not succeed, we will make several attempts to work together to resolve the conflict. Time out may be used in the classroom for one minute for each year of their age. Removing them from the fun activities is usually effective, when used consistently. Many parents use this technique at home with great success. Conferences may be necessary for a child who does not respond to these guidance techniques. If you have concerns about your child’s behavior or development, you may schedule an appointment with the Director and she will arrange a conference. Staff members are trained to praise and encourage children while setting limits for behavior. They modify their classroom environment to prevent problems before they occur. Children are treated as individual people, and we try to respect their needs, desires, and feelings. Every attempt is made to make their early learning experiences as positive as possible. However, in the event a child remains unresponsive to continued attempts at positive disciplinary methods and becomes aggressive towards other students, classmates, teachers or administrative staff, Sweet Pea’s Learning Center reserves the right to dismiss the child immediately from its program.

Biting

With young children biting is, unfortunately, common. Though our teachers use best practices to prevent biting, children occasionally do bite each other. When it happens, the area where the child was bitten is immediately washed with antiseptic soap and water. Both children are then given care. An accident/incident form is filled out and the parent of the child who was bitten is given a copy. The name of the child who did the biting will be given only to the parent of that child so that they can work with the staff to eliminate the behavior. An accident/incident form is completed and given to the parent of the child who did the biting. The lead teacher will work with

the parents/guardians to help them form a plan to reduce any future occurrences. If intervention by the lead teachers in cooperation with the parents/guardians does not bring resolution and the problem continues, the Director will help plan additional interventions. Only after all options have been exhausted will a child who bites be asked to withdraw from the program.

Children with Special Needs

Sweet Pea's Learning Center will make every effort to include children with special needs. Staff will assess each child on a case-by-case basis in cooperation with the parents/guardians and other professionals, as appropriate. Every effort will be made to make reasonable accommodations and adaptations that are reasonably achievable.

Open Door Policy and Child Access

Sweet Pea's Learning Center understands the value of the parent and child relationship as the family serves as the child's first teacher, and the bonds of a child and their family is crucial to healthy development. It is for this reason that we maintain an open door policy for all the families of the children served. Parents and family members (those listed as authorized persons) will have open access to their children who are enrolled in the program at all times. The only exception is if there is legal documentation on file in the center that forbids access. Parents of children enrolled in our programs are not required to call prior to arriving or entering the program and may visit unannounced at any time during center operating hours. Our only request is that the child's reaction be considered for visits that will not result in the child leaving with the parent, as this can sometimes be very upsetting for young children. On-going communication is essential between parents and the program to ensure optimal outcomes for children. This communication can take place through face-to-face conversations, e-mails, or telephone calls. Other forms of communication and access include but are not limited to Daily Connect, parent conferences, etc. Conferences can be initiated by the parents/guardians or by staff of the program. While families are welcome to bring their children to attend the program at times that support the family, it is important to be aware of the impact of missing certain aspects of the programs. For example, if you bring your child in every day at 10:00 and pick them up in the afternoon, your child may be missing key curriculum experiences offered during our morning programming. If you bring your child in after breakfast is served (9:00am), you will need to feed your child breakfast at home, etc. It is important to discuss with your child's teacher or the center Director your preferred pick-up and drop-off schedules so that you can fully understand the curricular, developmental, and financial impact that accompanies those decisions. While you are welcome to come and go according to your family's convenience, we want you to be as informed as possible about the impact of those decisions.

Parent Involvement and Communication

Parents are the most instrumental part of a child's development, and we encourage your participation in our program. However, when your child begins school at Sweet Pea's Learning Center, we recommend not visiting in the classroom until he/she is well adjusted in his/her new environment. Thank you for entrusting us with the care and education of your child; we hope you will feel free to visit and participate throughout the year. We want you to be a part of the educational journey and invite you to be involved. We do not recommend discussing concerns with other parents since it does not bring resolution to the matter. Positive relationships between parents and the teaching staff are crucial to maximizing the potential of your child's education.

Parents should support the school in all ways, including resolving issues of concern directly with the administrative staff. Because children learn from observation, parents are also expected to treat all members of the administration and teaching staff at Sweet Pea's Learning Center with respect and in a professional manner. Sweet Pea's Learning Center does not tolerate abusive or inappropriate behavior against its teachers or administration staff by parents, nor does it tolerate such behavior in front of students of any age. Parents may also view information regarding our programs at our website. Visit the Sweet Pea's Learning Center website at www.splearningcenter.com. The administrative email address for the owner is jinna.hartline@splearningcenter.com. All suggestions or concerns may be sent to the email address above and will be reviewed promptly.

Conferences

Parents are encouraged to talk about their child's progress with the teacher on a regular basis in order to keep the lines of communication open. Developmental checklists are implemented for each child. The checklist progresses with each child as they mature into the next age group. Student records and related communications are deemed confidential. Teachers and administrators do not divulge any confidential information obtained from observations, conversations, correspondence, personal records, clerical materials or other sources except as may be legally required.

Photo Release

The teachers at Sweet Pea's Learning Center regularly take pictures to document the experiences of the children. By signing the enrollment application, you give permission for your child's photograph to be used for marketing purposes and on Sweet Pea's Learning Center's official internet website at www.splearningcenter.com.

Grievance Procedure

Although the center makes every attempt to offer the highest quality care to all children and families, there may be occasions when parents have concerns about particular events, situations, or staff. If this occurs, parents are encouraged to talk to their child's direct caregiver as a first point of contact. If they have tried this without satisfactory results, or if the concern is serious enough to warrant immediate administrative review, parents are encouraged to contact the center Director. The Director will then schedule meetings as necessary with appropriate parties to gather relevant information before deciding on a course of action. Parents will be informed, as appropriate within confidentiality requirements, as to the result of the Director's inquiry and action taken. Again, our goal is quality child care and we encourage parents to bring their concerns to us so that we can work together to ensure that quality.

Communication between Family and Center

Good communication between families and the center is essential to maintain the level of service that it is our intention to offer. There are many avenues for maintaining this connection:

- One to one conversations with teachers/Director at daily arrivals and departures.
- Telephone conversations with teachers/Director at mutually convenient times.
- Daily Connect Messaging (Infant and Toddler Rooms Only)
- Written notes/letters.

Official Notices

Changes in policies and procedures and official notices will be communicated in writing and placed in your child's cubby or folder.

Cubbies

Each classroom has a designated place for parents to check every day to collect their child's belongings and for any communications about the day's activities. It is important that your child's cubby be checked daily to ensure that you do not miss any important communication.

Prohibited Substances

Sweet Pea's Learning Center is a smoke free facility. Smoking is prohibited on the grounds, within the center premises.

Prohibited Items

Absolutely no firearms are allowed on Sweet Pea's Learning Center's premises. If you are caught with a firearm of any type, you will be immediately asked to leave. The only exception to this policy is for active law enforcement officers required to carry a firearm.

Emergency Conditions

In case of emergency, we will make every effort to contact you as soon as possible. Keeping your child's forms updated will eliminate delays in reaching you. In emergency situations, it is important that parents pick up their children within one hour of initial contact. In the event of a medical emergency, Sweet Pea's Learning Center will administer First Aid or seek emergency medical attention if it is deemed necessary. If the center must be evacuated for any reason, the children will be transported to Dade Elementary School. Once the children are situated, phone calls will be made to all parents.

Emergency Conditions

Emergency conditions, such as severe weather, power outages, or fire, can disrupt operations and interfere with our operating schedule, as well as endanger our families and employees. These extreme circumstances may require the closing of the facility. When operations are closed due to an emergency, tuition will not be pro-rated. In the event of an emergency or severe weather, you will be notified of any schedule changes or closures. If you are signed up for Daily Connect, we will send you a message notifying you of any schedule changes or closures. If you are not signed up and would like to be, please see the administrative staff.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of a localized emergency such as the loss of power, the Director is authorized to close the center to protect the health and safety of children and staff. There are emergency procedures and equipment in place to ensure the safety and well being of our children, families and staff. Each classroom has posted evacuation and emergency procedures. Be sure to familiarize yourself with these upon arrival. All families will be provided with a written plan for handling all emergencies including severe weather, loss of electrical power or water and death, serious injury or loss of a child. In emergency situations, please refer to these procedures. Do

not call the center as we will be busy taking care of the children. Please note that no center personnel will impede in any way the delivery of emergency care or services to a child by licensed or certified emergency health care professionals.

Religious Practices

Sweet Pea's Learning Center is a Christian learning environment. Each of our meals will begin with a prayer of gratitude. We will also celebrate Christmas and Easter holidays. We do not celebrate Halloween. If you do not wish for your child to participate in this, please let your child's teacher know and your wishes will be respected. We always welcome family members that would like to share their culture with the children enrolled. Please see your child's teacher for more details or to discuss volunteer options.

Conflict of Interest/Contracting with Employees

The teachers in our center are professionals. As such, we expect them to abide by the Code of Ethical Conduct as set forth by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. This principle reads "We shall not use our relationship with a family for private advantage or personal gain, or enter into relationship with family members that might impair our effectiveness in working with children". We ask for your cooperation and support by refraining from asking any of our teaching staff working in the center to provide care for your children at any time other than when they are in the center. We understand the level of comfort that you feel with the teaching staff and how hard it is sometimes to find quality after hours care, but we also know that you expect excellence and high quality from our centers and we expect it of ourselves. Your support helps us achieve those goals.

Pets

From time to time our center may include animals as part of the curriculum. If your child has any allergies to pets, please indicate those on your enrollment/admission materials and talk with the Director and your child's teacher.

Transportation and Field Trips

Sweet Pea's Learning Center does not provide any transportation or participate in field trips.

Hand Washing

Our center is dedicated to providing a healthy and safe environment for the children, families, and employees that enter our program every day. Your support is needed to prevent the spread of germs. Adults should assist children with hand washing as needed to successfully complete the task. If you decide to remain at the center after you have signed your child in, we ask that you wash your hands in accordance with the guidelines listed below. Children and adults must wash their hands at the following times:

- Upon arrival for the day.
- After diapering or using the toilet (use of wet wipes is acceptable for infants).

- After handling body fluids (e.g., blowing or wiping a nose, coughing on a hand, or touching any mucus, blood, or vomit).
- Before meals and snacks, before preparing or serving food, or after handling any raw food that requires cooking (e.g., meat, eggs, poultry).
- After playing in water that is shared by two or more people.
- After playing in sand.
- After handling pets and other animals or any materials such as sand, dirt, or surfaces that might be contaminated by contact with animals.
- When moving from one group to another (e.g., visiting) that involves contact with infants and toddler/twos.
- After re-entering from outside play.
- After contamination by any other means.

Adults must also wash their hands:

- Before and after preparing a bottle and/or feeding a child.
- Before and after administering medication.
- After assisting a child with toileting.
- After handling garbage or cleaning.

Proper hand washing procedure must always be followed. Adults and children shall wash their hands with liquid soap and warm running water. Hands must be rubbed vigorously for at least 30 seconds, including back of hands, wrists, between fingers, under and around any jewelry, and under fingernails. Hands should be rinsed well and then hands should be dried with a single-use paper towel. The paper towel should be used to turn the water off and should then be discarded. Our efforts to minimize the spread of germs include daily cleaning of infant and toddler toys, certain equipment and classroom areas, kitchen areas and bathrooms. Children's cots, mats and cribs are also kept separate and marked for use by one child only. Sheets are washed at least once a week or when visibly soiled. Cribs and mattresses are cleaned weekly or before use by a different child.

Protection from Weather Conditions & Insects

To protect against cold, heat, sun injury and insect-borne disease, Sweet Pea's Learning Center takes the following precautions:

- Parents are requested to dress their children in clothing that is dry and layered for warmth in cold weather and in sun-protective clothing (light with a tight weave) during hot weather.
- Children will have the opportunity to play in the shade while outside. If necessary, children may have sun block/sunscreen applied to their skin for protection. This sunscreen or sun block should have UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher. It will be applied to exposed skin and only when written permission from the parent or guardian is on file. (You may obtain a consent form from your child's teacher.)
- When public health authorities recommend use of insect repellents due to a high risk of insect-borne disease, only repellent containing DEET will be used, and these will be applied only on children older than two months. The insect repellent will be applied no more than once a day and only with written parental permission.

Medication

Children will only receive medication from staff members who have received training in administering medicine AND whose parent has given written permission. Medications must be in

the original container and have the child's first and last name, name of physician, expiration date, manufacturer's instructions or original prescription label that gives the name and strength of the medication, as well as directions on administration and storing. Over-the-counter medication must also be provided in the original container and will only be administered in accordance with the medication guidelines, unless otherwise instructed by a doctor (in writing). New medication forms must be filled out each week. Children that need ongoing medical administration will need a note from their physician. Staff administering the medication will record the action along with: the date, the time and the amount of medication that was administered; any noticeable adverse reactions to the medication; and the signature or initials of the person administering the medication. Parents will be notified immediately of any adverse reactions to medication. All medication will be stored in a locked medicine cabinet or container and not be accessible to the children. It will be stored separate from cleaning chemicals and supplies. Medications requiring refrigeration must be provided in a leak-proof container and will be placed in the refrigerator and not be accessible to the children. Any unused medication will be returned to the child's parents immediately.

First Aid Treatment and Emergency Medical Care

Minor bumps and scratches are inevitable, but it is our responsibility to make every effort to keep children safe by maintaining close supervision and a safe environment. All of the employees at Sweet Pea's Learning Center are trained in CPR and First Aid. Minor injuries will be treated with the appropriate first aid following universal precautions. If an emergency injury or illness occurs, you will be contacted as soon as possible. If necessary, the child will be transported by ambulance to Children's Hospital at Erlanger at 910 Blackford St in Chattanooga, TN where you will be asked to meet us. An employee will be assigned to stay with your child until a parent arrives, or longer if necessary. If your child has a dental emergency, you will be asked to pick your child up to seek appropriate care. All injuries will be documented in Daily Connect. If required, the Director will make a report to Bright from the Start.

Injury at the Center

If your child is injured at the center, an accident report will be completed by your child's teacher and a copy will be given to you for your signature. A signed copy will then be placed in your child's file. If the injury is serious, appropriate emergency care will be administered, emergency personnel called, if needed, and you will be contacted by phone for further instructions. The child's parent/guardian shall assume responsibility for any fees incurred in seeking medical treatment.

Illness/Communicable Diseases

This program is operated as a "well-child" facility. We are not equipped to provide care for sick children. The following illness policies are mandated by our licensing agency and will be strictly enforced for the health, well-being and safety of all concerned. Every course of action is taken to reduce the spread of illness by encouraging hand washing and other sanitary practices. Under no circumstance may a parent bring a sick child to the child care program. If a child shows any signs of illness or is unable to participate in the normal routine and regular activities, the child should be kept home. Sick children expose other children, as well as the center staff, to the spread of germs and require additional care and attention that is not available in a group care setting. Because illness can be a great disruption for all involved, your cooperation in preventing the spread of germs/illness is extremely important. Children will be visually screened

when they arrive in the morning. In the event a child becomes ill and needs to be picked up, the parent(s) will be called and are expected to pick the child up within one hour (60 minutes). If the parent(s) cannot be reached, or have not arrived within an hour, the emergency contact person will be called and asked to pick the child up. In accordance with state regulations and best practices, a sick child will not be permitted to return to care for 24 hours after the condition has returned to normal. The child may return 24-48 hours (depending upon the illness) after they received the first dose of an antibiotic, or as otherwise indicated by a doctor's note. If you aren't sure about whether or not to bring your child to care, please call the center to discuss it. Confirmed allergy related symptoms and non-communicable illnesses typically will not require exclusion.

Symptoms Requiring Removal of Child from Care

NOTE: A fever is defined as having a temperature of 101°F or higher taken under the arm (or 101°F taken orally or 100.4°F taken rectally). For children four months or younger, the lower rectal temperature of 100.4°F is considered a fever. A child must be fever free for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to care. Please note that this means the child must be fever free without the aid of Tylenol or other fever reducing medication.

- Fever AND sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, irritability, or confusion.
- Diarrhea: runny, water, bloody stools, or two or more loose stools within last four hours.
- Vomiting: two or more times in a 24 hour period.
- Breathing trouble: sore throat, swollen glands, loss of voice, hacking or continuous coughing.-
- Runny nose (other than clean), draining eyes or ears.
- Frequent scratching of body or scalp, lice, rash, or any other spots that resemble childhood diseases, including ringworm.
- Child is irritable, continuously crying, requires more attention than I can provide without risking the health, safety or well-being of the other children in care .

In accordance with BFTS rules, the current communicable disease chart of recommendations for exclusion of sick children from care and their readmission will be followed. Any cases or suspected cases of notifiable communicable diseases listed on the disease chart will be reported to the local county health department. Ill children may return to care 24 hours AFTER symptoms of the illness end, which means if the child is sent home with a fever, diarrhea, or vomiting they cannot return until they have been symptom free for 24 hours without the aid of medications.

Parent Notification

Parents of any child who becomes ill or is injured while in care will be notified immediately of any illness or injury requiring professional medical attention, or any illness which may not require professional medical attention but which produces symptoms causing moderate discomfort to the child such as, but not limited to, any of the following: elevated temperature, vomiting, or diarrhea. Special problems or significant developments will be communicated to the parents as soon as they arise.

Infant Sleep Practices

When infants and young toddlers are sleeping, staff will maintain sight and sound supervision at all times. When actively engaged with other children, teachers will be positioned to hear and see any sleeping children. Teachers will also regularly check to ensure that cribs are secure and safe for the child. In accordance with state law and best practices, all infants MUST be placed to

sleep on the infant's back unless the center has been provided a physician's written statement authorizing another sleep position for that particular infant. This practice is to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). All infants will be placed to sleep on a firm, tight-fitting mattress in a sturdy and safe crib with no pillows, quilts, comforters, bumper pads, sheepskins, stuffed toys, or other soft items in the crib. If a child falls asleep outside of the crib, he/she will be placed in a crib as soon as possible. The infant's head will stay uncovered at all times. The infant's sleeping area will be maintained within a temperature range of sixty-five 65° to eighty-five 85° degrees, depending upon the season. When an infant can easily turn over onto his/her stomach, he/she will continue to be placed to sleep initially on his/her back, but will be allowed to roll over onto his/her stomach as preferred by the child. Positioning devices that restrict an infant's movement in the crib will not be used unless a physician's written statement authorizing its use is provided for that particular infant. Swaddling is also prohibited.

Diapering Practices

Diaper changing is considered part of our daily routine and the child being changed is involved in the diaper change through conversations about what is happening. A changing table is located in each classroom serving diapered children. Caregivers' hands are always washed before and after a diaper change, the child's hands are washed after a diaper change, and the changing surface is cleaned and disinfected after each use. Parents are requested to supply diapers and wipes for their children while in care. For children who are not able to use disposal diapers, parents must provide documentation from their health provider. Please check your child's supply of diapers and wipes regularly to ensure there is an ample supply. Diapers are checked/changed a minimum of every two hours, or as needed. Wet and/or soiled diapers are always immediately changed. All program staff has been trained in the proper procedure for changing a child's diaper.

Potty Training Program

Children may begin potty training once the toddler room. Parents should speak with the teachers to discuss an action plan for mastery of toileting skills. Diapers and / or pull ups are recommended based on the needs of the child and what is recommended by staff members. Remember that toilet training for a child occurs over a period of time that can range from a few weeks to several months and include several stages of development. Regressions are not unusual during the process, particularly if the child is affected by such things as illness, a move to a new home or child care center, or a new baby in the family. Accidents are to be expected and never met with disapproval. Daytime control may occur earlier than nighttime control (or during naps taken during the day). If you would like to discuss the signs to look for if you think your child is ready to potty train, please speak with your child's teacher.

Suspected Abuse/Neglect

All employees of Sweet Pea's Learning Center are Georgia-mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect. We are required, by law, to report any suspected instances of child abuse and/or neglect to the local Department of Family and Children Services. If a staff member is accused of abuse or neglect of a child in the program, Bright from the Start will be contacted and requested to provide direction and guidance to protect the rights of all concerned.

Nutrition

One of the most important ways that we can help a child improve their academic ability is to provide a well balanced meal plan. Each meal that we prepare meets or exceeds the USDA requirements for a nutritious meal or snack. Parents will hopefully mimic this at home and limit fast food and outside prepared food. Students are taught that healthy meals should include vegetables and fruit. A breakfast snack is served at 9:00am. A nutritious lunch and snack are included in your tuition cost and are prepared each day by a cook that plans a nutritionally balanced menu. Training in food preparation and health standards helps to prepare the cook for this important role. In addition to other training, a class on nutrition for young children is also a part of the training received by the cook. Students are transitioned and led through a series of self-help skills in order to master feeding themselves in the toddler program. The mastery of independent feeding should be achieved, in most cases, by the age of 2.

Food Safety

We comply with all the standards of the USDA Food Program. You are responsible for notifying us, in writing, if your child has any dietary restrictions. Employees will encourage children to try new foods, but will never require a child to eat particular foods if they do not want too. Food will never be used as a method of discipline.

Food from Home

Occasionally, if a child has a very limited range of tolerated foods, special arrangements may be made with the Director for meals to be provided from home. The Center must have a physician's note on file in order to accommodate any special arrangements. Meals provided from home must meet the USDA guidelines for nutritionally sound and well-balanced meals. If the food is provided from home, it must be provided consistently every day and must be labeled with the child's name and date. As the center promotes healthy eating practices, please do not send chips, snack food, sweet desserts or carbonated beverages to school with your children. Food brought from home for sharing among the children must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers. All unused portions of food will either be discarded or returned to the parents (depending on the arrangements made). Except in these special cases, food should not be brought into the center.

Infant Nutrition

Infants on formula or breast milk will be fed on demand in accordance with the feeding plan provided by the parents. Mothers wishing to breastfeed their child are always welcome. Infants and other young children requiring feeding assistance will be closely supervised. Feeding time is used as an opportunity to bond and communicate one-on-one with the children. Younger children will be held while eating while older children will be joined by their teachers during meal/snack time and enjoy pleasant conversation. A written feeding plan is required to be furnished by the parent for any child less than one year of age. The plan should include information about the time and amount for each food and/or beverage that is to be provided to the child. This plan should be updated whenever the child's feeding habits change. Infants who have not learned to sit will be held for bottle-feeding. Those who are sitting may be held or may sit to be fed, but will still be interacted with during the feeding. Teaching staff will

offer children fluids from a cup as soon as you and the teacher decide together that a child is developmentally ready. Commercial grade diapers are acceptable and diapering of children is performed at a minimum of every 2 hours or as needed. Soiled clothing will be placed in a plastic bag and sent home that day for laundering. Staff will wash hands with warm water and soap and must use a disinfectant on the diapering area between each child diapered. Staff will also perform hand washing procedures with the children after diapering to encourage proper hygiene habits.

Allergies

When your child is enrolled, you should note all allergies on your child's enrollment form. Allergies will be posted in the classroom and special monitoring will be followed by the teacher and any food service staff to ensure the child is not served any unsafe food.

Choking Hazards

Staff will be on the alert for any food or other item that may pose a choking hazard. If a child begins to choke on any food or other foreign object, First Aid procedures will be followed.

THANK YOU!

Thank you for the opportunity to serve your family. We look forward to a long, positive relationship! Sweet Pea's Learning Center is a private school and reserves the right to dismiss a child from our school for any reason deemed necessary by the administrative staff.

I have read and understand the Early Childhood Parent Handbook. I fully agree to comply with all policies and procedures as set forth. I understand that this document is also available on the website for review.

Parent Signature

Date Signed

Please sign and return with your Application for Admission.