



ADVENTURES WITH RITA

Childcare and S.T.E.A.M. Academy

Parent Handbook



4008 Pontoon Rd • Granite City, IL 62040 • adventureswithrita.net

"Where Learning is Always an Adventure!"

This handbook was developed for families of *Adventures with Rita, Daycare and STEAM Academy, LLC* to provide information about the policies and procedures governing the operation of the daycare center and STEAM Academy. Each new family is asked to read the handbook in its entirety and submit an acknowledgement of receipt at the time of enrollment. Your family’s involvement directly affects the success of the center. To demonstrate the importance of families, we share with you a brief history of our childcare center. We hope your experience with us will be rich and rewarding to both your child and your family. Welcome!

Our Values

Quality Care and Trust: *When parents are looking for early learning and child care programs they need to find someone they can trust. We will continue in our efforts to ensure and continuously improve our services to meet the needs of the children and families we service.*



Life-Long Learning: *We consider education to be our family legacy. Our namesake, Harriet “Rita” Roberts-Jackson, dedicated more than 30 years to the education field; growing and nurturing young minds to reach their full potential. Following her passion and love of learning, our directors, her daughters, will take their years of combined teaching experience to create an environment of life-long learning that supports all learners. We put ourselves and our learning on the same level as the child’s and commit to our own professional*

development and personal growth. We learn alongside the children and their families and embrace the opportunity to learn and grow each day.

Partnership: *Respectful relationships are very important and on which our organization operates. We believe that the quality of care we provide is measured by the quality of relationships we nurture and grow with our children, families, and staff. We are committed to ensuring these relationships are respectful; warm and caring; honest and open; fair and equitable.*

Mission

The purpose of Adventures with Rita is to provide and promote licensed, high quality, affordable, and accessible early learning and child care programs to meet the needs of children and families in Madison and surrounding counties.

Vision

We exist to provide a safe, developmentally inclusive environment for infants, toddlers, preschool, kindergarten and school age children. Our focus is to provide a stimulating early learning and child care experience which promotes each child's social/emotional, physical and cognitive development. Our goal is to support and nurture the children's and our own natural desire to be life-long learners. We are committed to the families we serve, providing support and encouragement.

Welcome!

Thank you for choosing Adventures with Rita for your child! Our facility is a STEAM based daycare and learning academy, managed by Illinois and Missouri state certified teachers with over 3 decades of experience of nurturing the minds and hearts of children. The Executive Director and Assistant Director are responsible for the staffing, curriculum, and overall management of the day-to-day operations of the center. It is our hope that each family will have a rich and rewarding experience with AWR and recommend our center to other families looking for care.

Curriculum

AWR utilizes three different but complementary curriculum styles for our younger students: Play-based, Thematic, and Emergent curriculum. AWR implements the three curriculum styles throughout our center in ways that are age appropriate. AWR strives to create an atmosphere for the children that is mutually rewarding to both the staff and the children.

Each month the staff will post a curriculum schedule that identifies the theme and concepts the children are learning. Staff will post this schedule in the classroom. The schedule will detail specific activities planned for the children for that month that adhere to these three curriculum styles.

AWR believes that Play-based centers are the most developmentally appropriate for young children. Play-based curriculum is defined by teachers setting up an environment in which children can learn by open exploration. Play-based centers allow children to explore themes through self-directed activity that allows children to build confidence in their physical and social abilities.

Thematic curriculum is teacher-directed and used to introduce themes and concepts to young children. Thematic curriculum helps children explore themes through song, reading, and other teacher directed activities.

Emergent curriculum arises naturally from adult-child interactions and situations that allow for "teachable moments." It connects learning with experience and prior learning. It includes all interests of children and responds to their interests rather than focusing on a narrow, individual, or calendar-driven topic. Typical implementation of emergent curriculum is after an idea or interest area emerges from a group of children. In emergent curriculum, both adults and children have initiative and make decisions. This power to impact curriculum decisions and directions means that sometimes curriculum is also negotiated between what interests children and what adults know is necessary for children's education and development.

For our school-aged students, we offer a common core based enrichment program that compliments and supplements what the students are learning in school. Each child's studies are differentiated according to each child's ability and then scaffolded to ensure lessons are not too hard or easy but "just right". STEAM lessons are scheduled daily, while center-based STEAM activities are available during free choice activity time.

Daily Schedule

Daily schedules are developed with the following in mind:

- Matching the age and abilities of the children.
- Outdoor time, both structured and unstructured, every day.
- At least two large blocks of time for child-directed learning.

Mixed Age Group Daily Schedule
2-5

Time	Activity
6:30 am -7:15 am	Arrival/Parent Communication/Free Play/Toileting
7:15-7:30 am	Hand Washing/Toileting
7:30-8:30 am	Breakfast
8:00-8:10 am	Handwashing
8:10-8:30 am	Morning Meeting
8:30-9:30 am	Adventure Time-Teachers will visit with individual students on the following: STEAM projects, fine motor and writing/drawing, creative arts, geography, cultures, sensory activities, and practical life skills
9:30-9:50 am	Toileting and Handwashing
9:50-10:15 am	Music and Movement
10:15-10:50 am	Outside Classroom/Gross Motor/ Adventures with Explorations
10:50-11:00 am	Handwashing
11:00-11:25 am	Lunch
11:25-11:50 am	Toileting/Hand washing
11:50am -12:30pm	ELA-Language and Literacy/Reading Circle/Recall/Foreign Language Instruction
12:30-2:30pm	Rest time
2:30-2:45 pm	Toileting/Hand washing
2:45-3:00pm	Afternoon Snack
3:00-3:45 pm	Center Time-Puzzles/Manipulatives

3:45-4:30 pm	STEAM in the Garden/Outdoor Activities
4:30-5:00 pm	Handwashing/Toileting/ Free Play
5:00-6:00 pm	Transition Activities/Closing and Departure

Environment

AWR strives to maintain a professional environment that treats all families in a fair and courteous manner. As such, AWR maintains a strict policy prohibiting sexual harassment and discrimination because of race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, disability, medical condition, marital status, sexual orientation, age or any other basis made unlawful by applicable law. This policy applies to all persons involved in the operations of AWR and prohibits such discrimination by any employee of the school, including board members, administrative personnel, teachers, aides, or any other paid staff member.

General Procedures

Enrollment Procedures:

AWR shall enroll only those children eligible under the center's written enrollment policies. The center shall not use eligibility criteria that screen out children with disabilities, and shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices and procedures to accommodate children with disabilities.

A written enrollment application shall be on file for each child with the signatures of the enrolling parents.

AWR enrolls children in the program on a continuous basis as vacancies permit. Should a specific class become full, AWR will maintain a waiting list on a

first-come, first-serve basis, however, AWR grants priority for enrollment to families as follows:

First priority is to current AWR families with new children and part-time families who wish to increase the number of days of enrollment. Priority is determined between these families by the date of notice of intent given to the Executive Director in writing. Second priority is to returning families who left on good terms. As openings become available, the Executive Director will notify the appropriate families on the waiting list in order of priority. Once the Executive Director has notified a family that they have a space and the family accepts, they cannot lose their place to a family with a higher priority.

In certain circumstances, it may be necessary for AWR to provide enrollment to families with a lower priority in order to match up open vacancies with the needs of families on the waiting list. AWR will use its best efforts to secure spaces for interested families according to the priorities established; however, AWR reserves the right to fill vacancies according to the center's needs.

Proof of Identity: Parents or guardians must provide a certified copy of the child's birth certificate or other reliable proof of identity and age of the child. The center shall make a duplicate and return the original certified copy to the parent or guardian no later than the end of the next business day after receipt. If a certified copy of the birth certificate is not available, the parent or guardian must submit a passport, visa or other governmental documentation as proof of the child's identity and age and an affidavit or notarized letter explaining the inability to produce a certified copy of the birth certificate. AWR is required by law to notify the Illinois State Police or local law enforcement agency if the parent or guardian fails to submit proof of the child's identity within the 30 day time frame. AWR shall also notify the parent or guardian in writing that the Illinois State Police or local law enforcement has been notified as required by law, and advise the parent or guardian that he or she has 10 additional days to comply by submitting the required documentation.

AWR is required to report to the Illinois State Police or local law enforcement agency any affidavit received which appears inaccurate or suspicious in form or content.

Registration Requirements

Please submit the following forms prior to your child's first day at AWR:

1. Identification and Emergency Information
2. Physician's Report (child's preadmission health evaluation and consent for emergency treatment)
3. Parent's Report (child's preadmission health history) Immunization Record
4. Permission to Participate (in center activities)
5. Enrollment Contract

Failure to provide the required forms may result in delaying your child's participation in the program.

Hours and Tuition

AWR is open from 6:30 a.m. until 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. AWR does not allow parents and children into the center prior to 6:30 a.m. and parents must pick up children by 6:00 p.m. Failure to pick up your child by 6 p.m will result in a late charge at a rate of \$5.00 flat for the first five minutes and \$1.00 for each minute thereafter. Payment for late pick-ups will be due immediately with payment submitted before the child returns to care. Parents must notify staff if they expect to be late for pick-up. Failure to pick up your child by 6:30 p.m. without notification may result in staff calling Child Protective Services. Prior to such a call, AWR staff will attempt to contact parents or an emergency contact for the child.

The center closes for all recognized state and federal holidays and teacher in-service days. Directors provide a schedule of all holidays and teacher in-service days. Teacher in-service days are mandated by state licensing and are utilized to

provide scheduled training to the staff. The Executive Director will attempt to schedule in-service training on dates and times that will minimize inconvenience to families of AWR. If the center must close to provide training, the Executive Director will provide a 30-day advance notice to parents.

Monthly tuition rates are posted on the parent/guardian information wall. Communication of any changes in tuition rates will be in writing at least 30 days in advance unless a financial emergency emerges. Tuition is payable in full without regard to the child's attendance (sick days, vacations, and holidays). Adventures with Rita does not give discounts or credit for children who are absent on their regularly scheduled day. Families will be responsible for the full tuition rate if they fail to provide a 30 day written notice of withdrawal.

Tuition is due and payable on the last day of the week preferably by money order, Cashapp, paypal, electronic bank debit, etc. No cash will be handled on site. No personal checks, please. Failure to submit payment by the end of the fifth day of the month will result in a late fee based on the current tuition rate schedule.

Delinquent Tuition

Tuition is due on the last day of the week. There is a grace period before late charges are assessed. We must receive tuition by the 5th day of the due date. If the 5th falls on a weekend or a closed holiday, the tuition must be paid the Friday before. An automatic late fee of \$25 will be assessed after the 5th day. A \$15.00 late fee will be added each additional day that we do not receive payment. If tuition and all late charges are not received by the 10th day after payment is due, daycare services will be terminated. If enrollment terminates due to unpaid balances, AWR will make every effort to recover any unpaid tuition. This includes utilizing a collection agency or initializing the small claims court process.

Tuition Assistance

All parents are ultimately responsible for ensuring the center receives full payment for their child's tuition. If your family receives tuition assistance for payment of your child's tuition, and the organization facilitating payment fails to pay the full payment of the tuition due, the parent is responsible for submitting the tuition differential. AWR will notify the parent immediately following receipt of the organization's payment of any tuition differential due in writing. Once notified, the parent is to submit payment no later than 15 days after notification is made of the amount due. Failure to submit any payment differential within 15 days of notification will cause the child's enrollment to terminate. If the parent fails to make payments according to the approved written payment plan, AWR shall terminate the child's enrollment.

Sign In / Sign Out

State law requires that a parent/guardian sign each child in and out of the center on the days of care. This procedure includes the parent/guardian clearly writing (signature must be legible) and noting the time the child enters and leaves AWR in the binders provided in the office. Each class has a separate binder with the children's names filed alphabetically by the last name of the child. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure that any authorized person dropping off or picking up their child is adhering to this policy.

During drop off, the parent/guardian needs to contact a staff member to make them aware of the child's presence. This enables the staff member to greet the child, do a brief health check and find out any information needed for the child's day (e.g. when the child last ate, how the child slept the night before, medications, etc.). Obtaining this information is imperative for staff to assess the needs of your child for that day.

During pick up, the parent/guardian again needs to contact a staff member to make them aware of the child's departure. No child will leave AWR with someone other than the parent or guardian, unless there is written authorization, or that person's name is on the emergency information form under "Authorization for Pick-up." A phone call is not sufficient documentation for arrangement of pick up by someone not previously listed as authorized to pick up.

If parents fail to sign their child in, the Executive Director will notify the parent, and the parent will be required to come and sign their child in. Parents who routinely forget to sign their child in or out will receive a written notice, with a copy placed in their file. This notice will serve as documentation. Repeat offenders may be terminated from the program.

Parking and Drop-off

The four parking spots directly in front of the building is a 20-minute maximum pick-up and drop-off zone. AWR is not responsible for any fines received for parking.

Withdrawals

Parents may withdraw a child from the program at any time. Final tuition payment and payment for any parent hour balance are due at the beginning of the final week of care. A 30-day written notice is required prior to withdrawal. Parents wishing to withdraw their child, but who fail to provide a 30-day written notice, will be responsible for tuition for the remaining 30 days or any portion thereof. In addition, parents leaving on bad terms (such as not giving notice) will lose their priority status as “returning families” as described above.

Termination of Enrollment

AWR is committed to providing individualized attention and care to each child enrolled in the program.

Any child who, after attempts have been made to meet the child's individual needs, demonstrates inability to benefit from the type of care offered by the facility, or whose presence is detrimental to the group, shall be discharged from the facility.

In all instances, when AWR decides that it is in the best interest of the child to terminate enrollment, the child's and parents' needs shall be considered by planning

with the parents to meet the child's needs when he or she leaves the facility, including referrals to other agencies or facilities.

Health and Safety Procedures

Sick Policy

The primary aim of AWR is to protect your child to the greatest degree possible. Health checks are done every day as each child enters the center. The check consists of observing the child's general appearance, feeling body temperature, and observing the skin for rashes or obvious signs of illness. After this check, AWR staff may determine not to accept a child for that day. If a child should seem extremely fatigued or ill during the day, AWR will notify the parent to pick up the child. We are not equipped to care for sick children. If this is your child's first group experience, it is quite possible that he or she will have more illnesses than before. We are counting on the cooperation of parents in keeping children home who are ill, or who seem unusually fatigued, or show symptoms of possible illness. When a child becomes ill with a communicable disease or anything the Centers for Disease Control deems contagious, the parent should notify the Executive Director immediately so that the center can notify other parents of their child's exposure. In many circumstances, illnesses are most contagious prior to the child exhibiting any signs. As such, AWR asks that parents notify the center regardless of when the child first became ill.

Conditions for Exclusion from AWR

The Executive Director will notify families of children exposed to contagious illness at AWR. Parents are required to notify AWR within 24 hours of any serious illness in the family, including diagnosis and cause of illness. This is required even if the child is kept at home or if it is a sibling or parent who is ill.

The following is a list of infectious diseases or symptoms that will require exclusion of a child from AWR:

- Covid-19
- Fever greater than or equal to 100.2 degrees F

- Severe abdominal pain, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Skin rashes/blisters (until diagnosed and treated)
- Epiglottitis
- Hepatitis
- Chicken Pox
- Measles or Rubella
- Mumps
- Tuberculosis
- Whooping Cough
- Giardia
- Conjunctivitis
- Ringworm
- Lice or nits
- Strep Throat
- Influenza
- Norovirus

In addition to the above, if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms, AWR asks that the child be kept at home:

- A painful, red throat, even if fever is not present
- A deep, hacking cough
- Difficulty breathing or untreated wheezing
- Complaints of stiff neck and headache accompanied by other symptoms
- Yellow discharge from the eyes
- An unusual yellow coloring of the skin or eyes
- Cuts or openings on the skin that are pus-filled or oozing

Once a child is treated and is not contagious, assuming the child is feeling fit to participate in the daily activities, the child may return to care.

Picking up a sick child

If your child develops any of the listed symptoms after arriving at AWR, you will be called to pick up your child. In order to minimize the other children's exposure to illness, when you are notified to pick up your sick child, you must do so within

45 minutes. (Please note: sick children must be isolated from the other children and AWR staff is not staffed to provide sick childcare.) If your child is not picked up in the allocated 45 minutes after you or your office is notified, you will be charged according to the late pick up charges described above which will be payable immediately. Staff will make every effort to make your child comfortable until you arrive.

If staff is unable to reach a parent/guardian, the staff will contact those people authorized to pick up the child from AWR. Remember, it is always the parents' responsibility to be available or have someone available to care for their child should he or she become ill at daycare.

Return to the Center

Generally, a child who has been ill cannot return to AWR until 24-48 hours after initial treatment with medication, if appropriate. In addition, the child must be fever-free and no longer showing symptoms of illness. The Executive Director will consult with the County Health Department or a health consultant as needed. The final decision as to whether a child may return is at the discretion of the Executive Director. In certain situations of illness, the Executive Director may require a written note from a physician before allowing the child to return to care.

Medication Policy

- 1. Both prescription and non-prescription medication shall be accepted only in its original container.** Prescription medications shall be labeled with the full pharmacy label. Over-the-counter (non-prescription) medication shall be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name. The container shall be in such condition that the name of the medication and the directions for use are clearly readable.
- 2. Medication shall be administered in a manner that protects the safety of the child.** A specific staff person shall be designated to administer and

properly document the dispensation of the medication each day.

Prescription medication shall be administered as required by a physician, subject to the receipt of appropriate releases from parents which shall be on file and regularly updated. Prescription medication shall be used only for the child named on the label. Over-the-counter medications may be dispensed in accordance with manufacturer's instructions when provided by the parent with written permission. The day care center shall maintain a record of the dates, times administered, dosages, prescription number, if applicable, and the name of the person administering the medication.

3. **Medications shall be safely stored.** A specific staff person shall be designated to administer and properly document the dispersal of the medication each day. 2) Prescription medication shall be administered as required by a physician, subject to the receipt of appropriate releases from parents which shall be on file and regularly updated. Prescription medication shall be used only for the child named on the label. 3) Over-the-counter medications may be dispensed in accordance with manufacturer's instructions when provided by the parent with written permission. 4) The day care center shall maintain a record of the dates, times administered, dosages, prescription number, if applicable, and the name of the person administering the medication.

4. **Medication shall not be used beyond the date of expiration.** When a child no longer needs to receive medication, the unused portion or empty bottle shall be returned to the parent.

Any topical products, such as diaper ointment, sunscreen or insect repellent, whether supplied by the parent or by the child care center, shall be approved by the parent in writing prior to use on the child.

AWR staff will not administer any medication (prescription or non-prescription) without a completed medication form signed by a parent/guardian. Prior to requesting AWR staff to administer medication, a parent or guardian must have

administered the medication to the child for at least 24 hours to ensure no allergies exist to the medication. A physician's note must accompany all prescription and non-prescription medications and include in writing the dosage and times for each administration if parents request AWR staff to administer the medication.

Each medication must have the child's name on it and will be stored in a secure cupboard or in the refrigerator at the center while the child is in care. Medications are not to be stored in a child's cubby or diaper bag where a child may have access to them. Parents are required to adhere to our policy and keep any medications separate from the child's belongings left at AWR.

AWR does not allow the use of non-prescription medications on a child while the child is in the care unless a signed physician's note is on file. If a parent wishes to administer non-prescription medication to a child during the time that a child is in the care of AWR, the parent must provide a medication form detailing the name of the medication, the reason for the use of the medication, and the time and dosage the parent is administering to the child. In addition, the parent must allow the staff of AWR to take the child's temperature prior to administering any medication and must administer the medication with a staff member present. If in the opinion of AWR staff the child is unable to participate fully in the program, AWR will ask the parent to take the child home for the day and adhere to the 24-48 hour waiting period before returning to care. If a parent fails to adhere to the AWR medication policy, the parent will receive a written warning. Multiple violations of the medication policy may result in the termination of enrollment.

Parents are asked to provide sunscreen and any necessary ointments for their children. If these are prescription items, parents must provide AWR with instructions for their use. Parents should label with their child's name and must fill out a medication form that will remain on file at the center. AWR will apply non-prescription lotions or ointments, such as sunscreen or diaper cream to children as needed if they are not provided by the parent.

Note: Children coming to daycare immediately after receiving immunizations frequently run fevers and don't feel well. Please attempt to make doctor

appointments at the end of the day so that children don't have to return to daycare after being immunized.

Medical Emergencies

In the event of an accident or medical emergency requiring immediate treatment, a staff member will perform first aid and/or CPR while another staff member calls 911 immediately. A third staff member will then contact the parents and the child's physician. In an urgent situation, AWR's top priority is to ensure that the child's immediate medical needs are treated.

Immunization Records

As part of our state licensing requirements, we must have evidence that each child has received the standard childhood immunizations. This evidence is required prior to admission. Infants are likely to receive most of their immunizations during the period of time they attend the center. Failure to maintain current immunization records on all children is an infraction of state licensing requirements, which can result in penalties and fines against the center. For this reason, and to ensure the health and safety of our children, it is the center's policy that parents must provide evidence of immunizations at appropriate age intervals as recommended by the American Pediatric Association.

The Executive Director is required to keep current immunization records. Parents must provide a written notice of any temporary delays in receiving immunizations. The Executive Director will audit immunization records periodically and may request updated records. If requested to provide updated immunization records, parents will have one week to comply with the request. Failure to comply may cause a temporary suspension from care. Once the parent provides the information to the Executive Director, the child may return to the center.

AWR understands that some families have religious or personal beliefs that prevent them from giving their child the recommended immunizations. While we respect the beliefs of those families who choose not to immunize their children, AWR must take every precaution to protect the health and safety of all enrolled

children. For this reason, AWR will require a signed statement from the family detailing why they have not immunized their child prior to enrollment. This statement will remain on file at AWR and must identify which immunizations the child has not received.

Discipline Policy

Often in pre-school settings, conflicts will arise between children. AWR attempts to allow children to work out conflicts or frustrations with their peers and without immediate adult intervention. However, if a child is having difficulty, the staff will intervene by suggesting words or actions that the child can use to convey the message the child is trying to communicate. Extremely aggressive or hostile behavior, or repeated problems, may result in redirecting the child or removing the child from the other children for a short time. We use these methods to help children resolve conflicts because we believe that if you give children the opportunity to be responsible for working out problems, they learn to accept the logical consequences of their behavior.

Praise and positive reinforcement are effective methods of behavior management of children. When children receive positive, nonviolent, and understanding interactions from adults and others, they develop good self-concepts, problem solving abilities, and self-discipline. Based on this belief, AWR uses a positive approach to discipline and practices the following discipline and behavior management techniques.

WE DO:

- Communicate to children using positive statements.
- Communicate with children on their level.
- Talk with children in a calm quiet manner.
- Explain unacceptable behavior to children.
- Give attention to children for positive behavior.
- Praise and encourage the children.
- Reason with and set limits for the children.
- Apply rules consistently.
- Model appropriate behavior.
- Set up the classroom environment to prevent problems.

Provide alternatives and redirect children to acceptable activity.
Give children opportunities to make choices and solve problems.
Help children talk out problems and think of solutions.
Listen to children and respect the children's needs, desires and feelings.
Provide appropriate words to help solve conflicts.
Use storybooks and discussion to work through common conflicts.

WE DO NOT:

Inflict corporal punishment in any manner upon a child. (Corporal punishment is defined as the use of physical force to the body as a discipline measure. Physical force to the body includes, but is not limited to, spanking, hitting, shaking, biting, pinching, pushing, pulling, or slapping.)
Use any strategy that hurts, shames, or belittles a child.
Use any strategy that threatens, intimidates, or forces a child.
Use food as a form of reward or punishment.
Use or withhold physical activity as a punishment.
Shame or punish a child if a bathroom accident occurs.
Embarrass any child in front of others.
Compare children.
Place children in a locked and/or dark room.
Leave any child alone, unattended or without supervision.
Allow discipline of a child by other children.
Criticize, make fun of, or otherwise belittle a child's parents, families, or ethnic groups.

Conferences will be scheduled with parents if particular disciplinary problems occur.

Child care staff shall help individual children develop self-control and assume responsibility for their own actions. Imposing physical activity or withholding active play shall not be used on children as a form of discipline.

- 1) Limits and consequences shall be clear and understandable to the child, consistently enforced and explained to the child before and as part of any disciplinary action.
- 2) Discipline shall be developmentally appropriate and logically related to the child's act and shall not be out of proportion to the particular inappropriate behavior. The child shall be made aware of the relationship between the act and the consequences.
- 3) Firm positive statements about behaviors or redirection of behaviors shall be the accepted techniques for use with infants and toddlers.
- 4) Removal from the group to help a child gain control shall not exceed one minute per year of age. Removal from the group shall not be used for children less than 24 months of age.

5) Children shall not be disciplined for toilet accidents.

The following behaviors are prohibited at AWR:

Corporal punishment, including hitting, spanking, swatting, beating, shaking, pinching and other measures intended to induce physical pain or fear; threatened or actual withdrawal of food, rest or use of the bathroom; abusive or profane language; any form of public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment; and any form of emotional abuse, including shaming, rejecting, terrorizing, or isolating a child.

Preschool and school-age children shall have reasonable opportunities to resolve their own conflicts.

Discipline shall be the responsibility of adults who have an ongoing relationship with the child.

When there is a specific plan for responding to a child's pattern of unacceptable behavior, all staff who affect the child shall be aware of the plan and cooperate in its implementation.

Clinical behavior management plans may be developed to meet the needs of a particular child if developed with the parent and a professional clinician. This must be documented in the child's file. All staff working with the child shall receive training on implementing the plan.

Complaint Process

Purpose

The purpose of the complaint process is to identify the means for stating and resolving the complaints of families of AWR. AWR expects that all parents and guardians will strictly adhere to the complaint process of AWR. Failure to adhere to the complaint process may result in termination of enrollment. The design of the complaint process is to:

1. Provide all parents/guardians of AWR with a uniform method of voicing concerns and/or complaints involving the functions, directions, processes, and performance of staff.
2. Assure that allegations/concerns/complaints receive prompt and impartial consideration to bring about satisfactory resolution for all concerned.
3. To provide a ready means for resolving individual or group problems of a sensitive nature quickly, informally, and at the lowest level possible.
4. To provide AWR with a forum of open communication which leads to the highest possible quality of care for the children and an exemplary working environment for staff.

Steps in the Process

1. Parents who believe that a problem exists should first discuss the issue(s) with the Executive Director. This action is encouraged within 30 days of the incident that gave rise to the complaint.
2. The Executive Director will hear the complaint and perform whatever investigation deemed necessary to provide the complainant with an informal assessment of the matter. The Executive Director's informal assessment shall be concluded within ten (10) days of receipt of the complaint. A written determination will be given to the parent at that time.
3. If resolution with the Executive Director is not satisfactory, the parent may file a formal written complaint with the owner. A formal complaint must be filed within fifteen (15) days of receipt of the Executive Director's recommendation for resolution.

The owner shall act to resolve the problem at a scheduled meeting. Attendance by parents at the meeting is encouraged.

The owner may deliberate on complaints privately and provide disposition of the complaint. Such disposition will be noted in the meeting's minutes. The owner will notify the parents of the decision in writing within one week of making a decision.

Family Removal Process

The following policy and procedure shall be used to resolve problems resulting from a parent who has engaged in conduct abusive to the staff, or who has otherwise disrupted the program. These procedures are designed to provide prompt and early resolution of this type of problem in an atmosphere of confidentiality to protect all parties involved. All written records shall be kept in a separate confidential file maintained by the Executive Director.

As a rule, the Executive Director shall meet with a parent who has engaged in conduct abusive to staff or who has otherwise disrupted the program. If, after the meeting, the Executive Director is satisfied that the parent will conform his or her actions to the best interest of the program, no further action will be taken. The Executive Director shall record the meeting in writing and file accordingly.

If the Executive Director is not satisfied with the outcome of the meeting for any reason he or she may take any of the following actions:

1. Issue a written warning to the parent that such continued conduct or disruption will result in termination of the family from the program.
2. Request the parent to attend a conference with the Executive Director and the owner. During the conference, the Executive Director and the parent shall agree on a specific plan of action as to how the parent will modify his or her behavior. A period of time shall be agreed upon, after which the parent's behavior shall be reevaluated by the Executive Director and the owner. The Executive Director shall make a written record of the conference.
3. Recommend termination of the family to the owner. The child shall remain in the program until the owner makes their determination. The owner shall take prompt action on the Executive Director's recommendation after reviewing all relevant information, testimony, and written records, including any written statements by the family. Any determination by the owner on the Executive's recommendation shall be recorded in writing.
4. Immediately terminate the family from the program in instances where the Executive Director determined that the health, safety, or welfare of the program is threatened by the continued presence of the family. Upon taking this action, the Executive Director shall request a special meeting as soon as possible to discuss the action.

If the Executive Director takes any of the actions described in one through four, inclusive, the owner shall be immediately notified, and a written record shall be prepared detailing the reasons for the action.

If the owner, pursuant to subdivision 3, or the Executive Director, pursuant to subdivision 4, terminates a family from the program, the family shall immediately be notified in writing of the decision by certified mail, return receipt requested. The notice shall inform the family of their appeal rights as provided herein.

A family that is terminated from the program may appeal the decision within seven (7) days of the receipt of the written notice. A written statement must be submitted to the owner requesting the owner to reconsider the decision and detail the reasons why the decision should be reversed or modified. In considering the request, the owner shall review all relevant records, including the written statement by the family and any written response from the Executive Director. The owner may meet individually with the Executive Director and parent to hear oral statements. The owner shall promptly mail a final decision, the family shall be notified in writing by first class mail and return receipt requested, and the final decision shall be recorded in writing.

General Information

Nutrition

AWR provides breakfast (until 8:30 a.m. daily), morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack. Menus are prepared and posted weekly, but may be subject to change. AWR strives to serve meals and snacks that are low in sugar and use lean white meat and whole grains whenever possible. Due to the high incident of allergies, AWR request that now outside food be brought into the facility. Please see AWR administrative staff for exceptions to allowable food.

Special Day Snacks

You may bring a special snack to share with the other children in celebration of your child's birthday. Please inform the Executive Director or AWR staff about the birthday at least one week in advance of when you would like to have the celebration and what you intend to bring. Please note that all birthday snacks must be appropriate for pre-school aged children and approved by the Executive Director or AWR staff prior to the date of the celebration. Snacks should be in unopened, store bought packages in individual servings and parents are always welcome to join in on the celebration.

Special Diets

Parents must inform the Executive Director if your child has a food allergy or requires any special diet at the time of enrollment. A signed physician's note must accompany all food allergy notifications and proper medications must accompany the child to school in case of accidental exposure. In general, AWR does not accommodate special diets beyond elimination of certain foods. Parents of infants are required to provide updated information to the Executive Director and AWR staff when adding new foods to their infant's diet. Introduction of new food must be at home and at least 24 hours before informing the Executive Director or infant teachers to add a food to an infant's diet. AWR will post all food allergies and dietary restriction notifications in public view in the classrooms and kitchen.

Clothing

Your child's clothing should be weather appropriate, washable and suitable for ACTIVE play. Clothing may become stained by paint, markers, dirt, etc so please do not send your child in any clothing that is unsuitable for pre-school activities. LABEL ALL CLOTHING! THERE SHOULD BE AT LEAST ONE SET OF SPARE CLOTHES IN CASE OF ACCIDENTS OR SPILLS FOR ALL CHILDREN, INFANTS SHOULD HAVE AT LEAST TWO SETS OF SPARE CLOTHES. Clothing needs to be easily accessible in the cubby. For the pre-school children, AWR staff may request the child to retrieve their own clothing. As such, if clothing is stored in a bag, the child should be able to access the bag without assistance. AWR staff will bag all wet or soiled clothing and place in your child's cubby to go home. AWR staff requests that parents check their child's cubby daily for any soiled clothing.

Shoes

AWR does not allow open toed shoes such as thongs or "jelly shoes," ballet slippers or slick bottomed party shoes on the play yard. These types of shoes are not safe in the play yard and can create a danger to the child. AWR recommends sneakers or closed toed shoes as they are the most comfortable and safe, and allow for uninhibited outdoor active play. If your child cannot tie shoes, it is recommended that they wear sneakers with Velcro or slip on shoes (slip on shoes must have a full back).

Toys

It is quite natural for young children to want to bring toys to school. A child may bring a special comfort toy and/or blanket from home for naptime. AWR asks parents to keep fragile items, and items that do not keep with the non-violent philosophy of AWR at home. Parents are responsible for labeling all items and AWR is not responsible for any soiling, breakage or losses that might occur. Please check with your classroom teacher for the appropriate time to bring a share item.

Naps

Infants are on their own schedules and may nap as frequently as they need. Preschool children nap or rest together after lunch. All children will rest during this time. If your child does not regularly nap, staff will provide your child with a quiet independent activity to do while the other children nap. When children enroll, they must bring a small blanket and crib sheet used for naps. Parents must launder these and return them at least weekly. Children may bring a special blanket, pillow, and/or sleep toy from home. Parents are responsible for upkeep on these special items. **PLEASE CLEARLY LABEL ALL BLANKETS, SHEETS, AND PILLOWS WITH THE CHILD'S NAME.** Any pillows should be in a pillowcase and be able to fit inside the child's cubby.

Cubbies for Children and Parents

Each child will have one "cubby" that is assigned to them and that contain their personal items, extra clothes and bedding. Parents are encouraged to pack these items in a drawstring bag, tote, or backpack that fits within their assigned space and is easily accessible to the staff and children. Occasionally AWR staff may place memos or other communications in the child's cubby, in or around the sign in books, or posted on the Parent Board. Please check these locations daily. Parents are responsible for all such information. Any unlabeled items may be placed in the lost and found.

Bottles, Diapers, Pacifiers and Toilet Training

Infant bottles and pacifiers will be given as prescribed by the parents. Your child will not be allowed to carry a bottle around AWR or sleep with a bottle in the crib. Children will be either sitting or held when drinking a bottle. AWR does not provide formula, bottles, bottle liners, and/or pacifiers; these must be brought from home. Please label these items clearly with your child's name. Each infant will have a designated area in the refrigerator for bottles. Bottles must be pre-prepared by the parents with either formula or breast milk. Parents are welcome to provide pull-ups or organic diapers at their own expense if they prefer.

Children are offered the use of the toilet when they show interest. Parents are encouraged to talk with the Executive Director and AWR staff about their toilet training plans for their child. Our trained staff is available to assist children and parents with the potty training process; however, in order to be effective, parents must be committed to being consistent with toilet training at home and at school. AWR believes that each child adheres to their own schedule of when they are ready to toilet train. The expectation is that the child will be fully toilet trained prior to transitioning to the preschool class (3 year olds). If a child is not fully toilet trained by the time they are three years old, the parents will continue to pay the toddler room tuition rate until they are fully toilet trained. The child may remain in the toddler class if they are not developmentally ready to transition to the preschool class.

Communication with Teachers

Parents are encouraged to maintain open communication with their child's teacher. While teachers are always accessible to parents during drop off and pick up times, this is not the time to initiate in-depth conversation with your child's teacher about any behavior concerns. We ask that parents request a meeting with the Executive Director and the teacher to discuss their concerns. Parents are also encouraged to register with [classdojo.com](https://www.classdojo.com) for their child's respective classroom. Classroom updates and communication will be provided regularly through ***classdojo.com***. It is important for parents to communicate with their teacher whenever there is something going on with their child that may affect their behavior at school. Examples may include a recent death in the family, a divorce, loss of a family pet, a parent out of town, or anything that the parent feels could potentially influence the child's behavior while at school. Parents are encouraged to keep staff informed in order to provide the best possible care for the child.

Parent Concerns

AWR asks that parents discuss any concerns they have with other enrolled children with the Executive Director. It is inappropriate for parents to involve themselves with the discipline of another enrolled child. It is natural for children this age to experience some disagreement with other children. AWR expects that families will have confidence in the ability of staff to resolve any issues that may develop between children.

Other - Parent Interests

Newsletter and Parent Board

Parents, the owner, and staff contribute to a quarterly newsletter, which includes information about events at AWR, curriculum the children are learning, upcoming holidays, and other news. AWR maintains a Parent Board at the entrance of the center. Here you will find important communication items such as recent memos and community news that may be of interest. Parents are responsible for reading the announcements posted on the Parent Board and are encouraged to offer suggestions on items they would like to see on the Parent Board. Parents are encouraged to check the Parent Board for updates daily.

Parent Conferences

Either AWR staff or the parent may request a parent conference at any time. Parents are encouraged to maintain open communication with AWR staff. Occasionally, there may be a need to hold a conference to ensure the parents and staff are clear on the objectives for the child. In addition, AWR suggests that parents request a conference with a new teacher or whenever the child transitions into a new class.

AWR is not equipped to accommodate children with severe handicaps or aggressive behavior. AWR will counsel children with aggressive behavior, and will work with the parents on controlling this behavior. AWR will terminate enrollment for children that are a danger to themselves and others if significant improvement is not apparent after counseling.

Requests for Changes to Schedule

Changes or additions to the days that a child receives care must be approved by the Executive Director and will be accommodated as space is available. All requests for changes to the child's schedule must be made in writing to the Executive Director. The parent or guardian should submit schedule changes as much time prior to the change taking effect as possible to improve the chances of having the change approved.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Parents who wish to arrange for special classes, such as mandarin, computers, music, etc., are invited to coordinate with the Executive Director. Extra-curricular classes are voluntary and subject to a fee.

Childcare at Home

AWR strives to create an atmosphere that maintains the integrity of the teacher-child relationship. As such, AWR staff cannot provide childcare to your child outside of the center.

Security

AWR utilizes secured doors on all entrances into the center and classrooms. Each classroom is monitored with recorded cameras while the facility is in operation. All entrances are locked throughout the day. Parents/guardians are buzzed in through the front entrance only.

Emergency Plan

AWR posts the emergency plan in each classroom and in the office of the center. AWR staff trains continuously on the evacuation procedures of the center and the children participate in regular evacuation drills. Each classroom is equipped with an emergency backpack that includes a First Aid kit and other items that would be essential in an emergency. In the case of an emergency, the staff's first priority is to ensure the health and safety of every child and staff member. Following, staff will begin to contact each family and arrange for pick up of the child.

Changes in Information

It is extremely important for parents to update their child's file with any changes in information such as phone numbers, home address, employer, medical history, etc. AWR asks that families notify the Executive Director or Assistant Director whenever there is a change in information that is relevant to the care of your child. If AWR attempts to contact the family of a child and discovers that the information on file is not current, AWR will ask the parent to provide updated information prior to the child returning to care.

Pesticide Policy

The management of AWR is committed to providing a safe environment for the children in our care. We seek to prevent children from being exposed to pests and pesticides. Exposure to pests (insects, cockroaches, rats, mice, etc.), pest residue, and the chemicals used to control them can aggravate or cause health problems for children and staff. Allergic reactions to pest residues and the absorption of chemicals used for pests control often are more serious for children due to their smaller size and proximity to the floor. The Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach minimizes the exposure of children and staff to pesticides, and includes a variety of non-chemical and chemical methods to prevent and eradicate pests. While pesticides may be used to remediate infestations of pests (such as insects, weeds, and rodents) that may be found in the facility and its surrounding grounds, only the least toxic products will be considered and combined with non-chemical methods.

AWR will implement and practice IPM to manage pests in the building and on the grounds to minimize the exposure of pests and pesticides to children and staff. As such, we commit to the following:

1. Contact - Ms. Tiffany V Jackson is the designated IPM Coordinator for this facility. This person will act as a liaison between the building occupants and the pest management professional.

2. Maintenance and Sanitation – Maintenance, remediation, and sanitation will be conducted in a timely manner to prevent pest access and harborage (water leaks repaired, holes or other access routes sealed, proper food storage, clutter eliminated, etc.).

3. Pesticide Use and Storage –

a. Regularly scheduled applications of pesticides are NOT permitted.

b. Storage of pesticides in the facility is NOT permitted.

c. Staff are prohibited from bringing pesticides into the facility (no residential or any other pesticides allowed).

d. Only certified pesticide applicators or registered technicians that have working knowledge of IPM principles and practices may apply pesticides. Any pest management professional hired to provide pest management or other services must comply with this IPM program and notification policy and be knowledgeable about IPM practices. **Pest management professionals must refrain from routine pesticide spraying, provide detailed service reports with each visit and give recommendations for pest prevention.**

e. When necessary, use of least-hazardous pesticides may be considered after nonchemical management practices have failed. Pesticides will not be applied when children are present at the facility. Toys and other items mouthed or handled by the children will be

removed from the area before pesticides are applied. Children may only return to the treated area after two hours of a pesticide application or as specified on the pesticide label, whichever time is greater. In the event of an emergency where pests pose an immediate health threat to children and staff (e.g. wasps) and pesticides are applied, ensure that children will not return to the treated area within two hours of a pesticide application or as specified on the pesticide label, whichever time is greater.

4. Head Lice - Pesticide applications to the facility for head lice are ineffective and thus are prohibited by this policy. Non-chemical control options (combs, etc.) are used instead.

5. Notification - Parents and staff will be notified of a pesticide application at the facility at least three operational days in advance except in emergencies where pests pose an immediate health threat to children or staff (bees). Parents and staff will be notified as soon as possible when advance notice is not provided and include an explanation of the emergency, the reason for the late notice and the name of pesticide applied.

6. Recordkeeping - All records of pesticide applications and advance notices will be available upon request for at least 90 days.

This policy does not apply to the following exempted uses of pesticides:

- Germicides, disinfectants, bactericides, sanitizing agents, and chemicals used in normal cleaning activities;

- Personal insect repellents applied to the person with parental consent; and

- Gel bait or manufactured enclosed insecticides where children do not have access to the bait. **(Granular baits and rodent baits are not exempt.)**
 - Ms. Tiffany V Jackson will cover policies, plans, and procedures with all new staff (paid and volunteer) during orientation training. They will sign that they have read, understand and agree to abide by the content of the policies.
 - During enrollment this policy will be reviewed with the parents. Parents will sign that they have read, understand, and agree to abide by the content of the policies.
 - A copy of all policies will be available during all hours of operation to staff and parents in the policy handbook located in the main office.
 - Parents may receive a copy of the policy at any time upon request. A summary of this policy will be included in the parent handbook.
 - Parents and staff will receive written notification of any updates.

Suggestions for Improvement

AWR always accepts suggestions on ways to improve the program we provide. We ask families to discuss suggestions for improvement with the Executive Director or the owner.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT

I, _____, received a copy of the Parent Handbook for Adventures with Rita Childcare and STEAM Academy on _____ (date).

I understand that I am being asked to review the information contained within, and that I may raise any questions that I have about the stated policies with the Executive Director of Adventures with Rita or the owner.

I understand and agree to follow the policies and procedures as stated in this Parent Handbook. I understand that I am responsible for ensuring that any person authorized to act on my behalf for my child understands the policies and procedures stated in this Parent Handbook. I understand that failure to adhere to the policies of the Parent Handbook may result in my child’s enrollment being terminated by Adventures with Rita Childcare Center and STEAM Academy.

Parent Signature

_____ Print Parent Name
_____ date

_____ Print Child’s Name

_____ Print Child’s Name

_____ Print Child’s Name

_____ Print Child’s Name

_____ Director’s Signature

Executive Director, Adventures with Rita Daycare and STEAM Academy

_____ Date