



The Creative Pre-School

Home of the
Beyond Centers &
Circle Time Curriculum



Parent Handbook

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Creative Pre-School, home of the Beyond Centers and Circle Time Curriculum. The school you have chosen for your child is a nationally recognized model for the inclusion of children with disabilities and accredited by APPLE (Accredited Professional Preschool Learning Environment). In a concerted effort to improve the quality of care for all children, Creative has partnered with Kaplan Early Learning Company to carry our books, posters, videos, and training materials nationwide. Our curriculum has been adopted as a national Pre-K curriculum for the Republic of Indonesia and is recognized as a successful curriculum for pre-kindergarten programs by the Department of Education in Florida and Georgia. Consultants from our training group, The Creative Center for Childhood Research and Training, Inc. (CCCRT), have provided training for parents and early childhood educators throughout the United States as well as Japan, Singapore, Indonesia, and the Caribbean.

The Creative staff is chosen and trained to provide care for your child in a loving environment throughout each day. We accept the trust you have placed in us by enrolling your child and promise that he/she will receive the best possible care and educational experience we can provide. In an effort to insure your comfort and confidence in our program, we encourage you to use this handbook as a guide to our policies and programs.

We appreciate that you have chosen Creative. With your help and cooperation, we can work together to provide the best care for your child. Creative views itself as a partner in helping to support the development of your child. Please feel free to visit often and participate in parent meetings whenever possible.

Sincerely,
Creative Pre-School Staff

2746 W. Tharpe Street • Tallahassee, Florida 32303
386-1450 Big School • 385-8545 Baby House • 422-1283 FAX
cccrf.comcast.net www.cpstally.com

Additional Hours of Care: If you require care during our regular business hours in addition to your contracted hours; you should discuss this with the **Director (not the teacher)** of the program to ensure that it is feasible. It is the parent's responsibility to inform the office about payment of these extra hours. Payment is expected at the time of care. For example: If your child is in a half day space you can lengthen their time with us as needed when approved by the director.

Admission: The Creative Pre-School has a waiting list of families seeking entrance to the program for their child/children. Tours are offered semi-annually and participants are provided complete information concerning the organization and operation of the program. Upon completion of the tour a waiting list application may be submitted to the office. When an opening occurs, a family from the waiting list will be invited to join the Creative program. Once the space is accepted, all new children and families are expected to visit the program prior to entrance so that the child and family become fully acclimated. (Please see the attached letter on the visitation policy.)

Though we strive to offer slots to siblings of existing students before new families we cannot guarantee the time the space will be available. **If you are expecting a child, please let us know as soon as possible when you will need a space.** Our baby room spaces are limited and are usually filled a year in advance. We will do our best to meet your needs while maintaining the ratio that works best for this program.

Automobiles: Cars should be parked on the side and front of the buildings. **Be aware of blocking the regular flow of traffic.** The staff is assigned parking spaces starting at the wooden train proceeding down Nani Drive and around the house behind the baby house. Do not leave your car with the MOTOR RUNNING or the keys in the ignition. Purses and other valuables should be locked inside your car. We are on a busy street and have had several incidences of theft. **CHILDREN SHOULD NEVER BE ALLOWED TO RIDE IN VEHICLES WITHOUT BEING PROPERLY RESTRAINED IN A CAR SEAT OR WITH A SEAT BELT.**

Babysitting: Employees who offer to baby sit in your home, **must** have approval from the main office. Please check with any of the directors for information about staff who are available to sit after school hours. Parents must make arrangements directly with the employee and all payments are between the parent and the caregiver. Teachers in the 90-day probationary period are not allowed to baby sit Creative Pre-School children. We will not recommend a person to work alone with children that we have not fully trained.

Birthdays: Children may celebrate their birthdays at school during lunch. All children's birthdays will be celebrated within their program area; e.g. Big School celebrates during the lunch circle with crowns, etc. If your family wishes to provide a special snack for your child's birthday celebration, please make sure it is healthy. Fruit and breads, cakes, or cookies that are made with healthy ingredients are desirable. We strive to limit the sugar intake of our children.

For your private parties we ask that you consider inviting all the children in a playgroup and /or a food family so that no one is left out. Smaller parties are best for children of the preschool age. Toddlers do best with the number of friends that they are in age. Example: Two friends for a two year old and three friends for a three year old.

Child Abuse: Any suspected abuse of a child is to be reported immediately to the director and the main office. Staff is legally responsible for reporting this. PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE IN SUCH MATTERS.

Children's Clothing: Your child should come to school dressed appropriately for the weather and ready to play. Comfortable, durable play clothes are suggested, and sturdy sneakers are highly recommended. Sandals, boots, jellies, and flip-flops are inappropriate and unsafe for play activities.

- Send a change of clothing so that your child can be changed as needed during the day.
- Please label all articles of clothing brought to school. We cannot be responsible for unlabeled items.
- Children are encouraged to show responsibility for their personal items. Labeled coat hooks, buckets, and lockers are provided to facilitate the development of responsible behavior.
- Dirty or wet clothing taken off children will be put into labeled plastic bags and placed on the child's art hook to be taken home.

Conferences: Conferences concerning your child's progress are provided with the input of the entire staff. Parents, who would like a conference, can set an appointment through the program director or the main office. Please do not expect impromptu conferences with individual teachers during program hours. Our staff is instructed not to counsel parents about their children. All conferences will be made in a professional manner with the input of all staff working with your child.

Contracts: Each family is required to maintain a contract with the Creative office concerning their child's participation in the program. Creative provides care for a specific number of children. In order to maintain a child's program

space, a minimum of four full days or 5 mornings must be contracted and paid for throughout the year, regardless of vacations or illness. Families are expected to financially fulfill their contracted hours for the current contract period.

Diary or Daily Log: A daily log is kept in each program area. Information about vacations, unusual comings and goings, or special requests should be written in this log. This is a public log and should not be used for complaints or concerns.

Discipline: The environment of the Creative Pre-School is structured to allow the children choices of play activities and materials. This structure gives the child control over his environment and avoids behavior problems involving conflicts with others. Children are encouraged to develop language skills that help them communicate their needs and feelings to others. Adults and older children model language for them so that they may gain skills in using this tool for problem solving.

When a child is experiencing difficulty being self-directing and using language in one area, he/she will be offered another play space. In the event that the child still does not have control over his/her self, cannot make appropriate choices, or use language to solve his/her problems, then he or she is removed from the problem situation and offered a personal space away from others in order to regain control. The child imposes time limits in this personal space. The child may return to the group or activity whenever he/she feels they are in control of themselves.

Guidelines for behavior are clearly explained to children. Appropriate behavior is modeled, and language is continuously encouraged in order to avoid conflict and allow the children opportunities for decision-making and self-direction.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IS NEVER APPROPRIATE AND NEVER USED

Diseases and Illness: All children with any signs of illness must be isolated and leave the program. Parents will be contacted immediately. Please be prepared to promptly pick up your child if he/she becomes ill at school. It is not the responsibility of Creative Pre-School to prove illness. We are bound by the health guidelines provided to us by the Health Department and these guidelines require that all children who are ill or suspected to be ill leave the program.

ANY FEVER, RASH, VOMITING, OR DIARRHEA IS CONSIDERED TO BE AN ILLNESS. CHILDREN SHOULD NOT RETURN UNTIL ALL SYMPTOMS HAVE BEEN RESOLVED WITHOUT MEDICATION FOR 24 HOURS. We must protect ourselves and the other children from illness by strictly adhering to this policy. A note from a physician is

required if a child may return to the program after being treated with antibiotics for 24 hours. If, however, our experience dictates that additional time is necessary to maintain the well-being of our children and staff, Creative reserves the right to delay return to the program.

Electronic Media: Videos and computers are used **minimally** within the Creative Pre-School program and **never** used with children under the age of two. Creative encourages families to avoid excessive use of electronic media. Stories and personal interaction prepare children for later school success not video or television.

VCR tapes and DVDs **that support the current theme** are acceptable if parents have previewed them to ensure that there is no objectionable content. (I.e., racial, sexist, and violent scenes) These are used only at the Big School and only if the content can add to the topics under discussion.

Field Trips: Occasionally special trips such as our trip to the Jacksonville Zoo are planned for the 4 and 5 year olds. A bus is rented for this event and parents are notified of all plans at least a month in advance.

Grievances or Problems: Creative staff is trained to develop positive language and conflict resolution skills. Creative needs to know when a family is unhappy with any facet of our program. Creative staff is prepared to listen and address all concerns. Parents should always feel free to openly discuss their needs and/or concerns in a private manner with their child's caregiver, the program director, or Dr. Pam. Families often are concerned that when they voice a problem their children may be treated differently. Creative is a professional program and all staff are dedicated to meeting the needs of families and children. Open communication with our families is vital to the continued excellence of our program. Creative staff will work diligently to address any concerns you may have. Do not hesitate to let us know how we can better serve your family.

Health Records: Within 30 days of enrollment, each child must have a written statement from a licensed physician on file stating that:

A. The child is in good health, or that any known irregular condition is under treatment.

B. Immunizations appropriate to the child's age are up to date or in the process of being brought up to date.

NEW PHYSICALS ARE REQUIRED EVERY TWO YEARS; IMMUNIZATIONS SHOULD BE REPORTED TO THE OFFICE AS THEY OCCUR ON A FORM FROM THE PHYSICIANS OFFICE.

The Health Department checks these records quarterly. The following is a list of needed immunizations and tests:

Vaccine	2 months	4 months	6 months	12-15 months	4-6 years prior to enter Kindergarten
DTP	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
HIB	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	
POLIO	1st	2nd	3rd		4th
MMR				1st	2nd
TB test				1 st (12 mos.) and again if date of entry is 1 yr after TB test	

- Hepatitis B shots are being given by some pediatricians (birth, 2 mos., 6 mos.) and are mandatory to enter Kindergarten check with your doctor concerning this immunization. Also available at 1 year is the new chicken pox vaccine.
- Ask your pediatrician when your child should receive the H Flu Vaccine.

Special problems (allergies, etc.) MUST be brought to the attention of the program director. If your child has a severe or even life-threatening allergy an action plan form should be filled out and placed throughout the school.

If your baby or toddler has special needs concerning diapers, cream for diaper rash, etc, please inform the staff.

Holidays: Creative will be closed on most legal holidays. We plan these dates around those of the State and the public schools. The specific dates each year will be posted at the beginning of the school year in September and a copy provided for each family.

The longest holiday period is during the winter holidays. We use this time to refurbish the buildings and rest. PLEASE PLAN AHEAD... WE PREFER STAFF NOT BE REQUESTED TO CARE FOR CHILDREN DURING THIS TIME.

Your monthly fee payment is based on a twenty day per month schedule. Since some months have more than 20 school days, this gives families extra days of

unpaid care during certain months. These extra days cover the Creative holidays.

IN THE EVENT THAT PUBLIC SCHOOLS ARE CLOSED DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER OR OTHER EMERGENCY CONDITIONS, THE CREATIVE PRE-SCHOOL WILL ALSO BE CLOSED. Every effort will be made to notify local TV and radio stations of our closing.

Information Form: Creative requires that **CURRENT** contact information be on file for parents and other involved parties so that we may reach you quickly in case of an emergency or illness. **Please give the main office changes in home and work numbers as soon as they occur.** An e-mail address will help the office contact your family with special information.

Kindergarten: Creative Pre School has provided a quality kindergarten since 1973. Children who have attended Creative's pre-school program may stay for their kindergarten year. Creative's kindergarten is developmental and provides for each individual child at his or her own pace. A presentation for potential kindergarten families will be provided each year. Child development and kindergarten expectations are discussed during this presentation. All families of children eligible for kindergarten will receive a conference during the spring of the pre-kindergarten year. This conference will address each child's readiness for kindergarten and recommendations for placement will be made. Upon request, Creative staff will write letters of introduction to the child's new program upon parental request.

All Creative Kindergartners must attend everyday on a half-day basis at the minimum. The kindergarten day officially begins at 8:30 a.m., Monday-Friday. Holidays are the same as the regular program.

Leaving and Picking Up Children: For your child's safety, the Leon County Health Department requires that he or she be personally received by a staff member and signed in and out. We prefer that you walk through the building to pick up or leave your child and sign out on the sign out sheet. PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE YOUR CHILD ON THE FRONT STEPS TO WALK INSIDE ALONE, REGARDLESS OF AGE.

We insist on being notified when a different person is sent for pickup. NO CHILD WILL BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE WITHOUT NOTIFICATION AND NEW PERSONS MUST HAVE A PHOTO ID.

Any person suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or otherwise exhibiting impaired judgment, will not be allowed to remove a child from the premises.

May Day: This is our special annual family celebration with pony rides, refreshments and other fun family activities. Our kindergarten graduation and a singing program involving all children two-years-old and older are highlights of the event. The date is usually in the latter part of May, 3 to 6 p.m., on a Sunday afternoon. Please watch for signs as the date approaches and plan to attend this very special event.

Meal Time: The sharing of food is basic to our humanity. We pay close attention to the quality of food we serve and to the manner in which it is served. Our meals are important social and language rich experiences.

Breakfast and lunch are served each day with an afternoon snack at the Big School. Breakfast, lunch, supper, and two snacks are served to toddler children. We make our own baby food and our babies are fed on demand.

A typical breakfast consists of fruit and milk, cold or hot cereal, or bread. A protein is served with each breakfast. Lunches consist of protein, vegetable and fruit, bread product, and milk. Vegetarian meals are provided when requested. A low sugar fruit juice is served for all snacks. Creative is consistently aware of salt, sugar, and additives. We strive to limit all of these for the health of our children and staff.

Creative discourages children from bringing food from home unless it is to be shared with their food family. We avoid the use of gooey, sweet birthday goodies, but do encourage healthy snacks for birthday celebrations with food families. A times, we have children enrolled who have serious allergies and food from home may be unsafe for them to be around.

All the children throughout the program are served the same meal unless they have a special dietary need that we can meet. Children who are allergic or have other special diets will receive a meal that is as closely related to the regular meal as possible. These special cases should be defined by the family's lifestyle, religion and/or allergies and not by the child's likes or dislikes. A request form should be filled out for special food requests or a written list signed by the parent. Please be sure that we can meet your needs before you enroll in Creative.

By law we cannot provide infant formula; however, you do have the option of preparing bottles at home or bringing formula, which we will prepare here. Please label formula cans clearly. Nursing mothers are welcome and Creative

strives to support this important process. Parents of babies should inform us of a desired schedule for starting solid foods. Fresh puréed baby food made from frozen veggies and rinsed canned fruit is provided daily along with instant cereals.

Parents can access "The Creative Pre-School" cook book by visiting our on line web-site, www.cpstally.com. This book provides families information that will help them have happier family meals. Please feel free to make you copy and use it to cook recipes your child/children like.

Medicine: If your child requires medication to be given during school hours, we must have a permission slip signed DAILY with the following information:

1. Child's name
2. Medicine name
3. Date
4. Dosage and number of times to be given
5. Parent signature

We give medicine at 12:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. If your child needs to receive medication at another time, please write it in the daily log and inform the director. The Health Department does not allow medicines to remain in the school unless they have signed in by parents or guardians. Please take medicines home after use each day.

It is the parent's responsibility to let program staff know if a child has any physical issues that would restrict their participation in the program. (I.e., if they have tubes in their ears and cannot play in water)

Parents Club: Creative has a very strong parent's organization. This organization supports the program and staff as well as its families. Please check with the office for the names of the current officers. **Your child will benefit from your involvement in the program. All newsletters and other parent information is sent out through this organization so be sure we have a correct e-mail address.**

Parenting: The Creative Pre-School staff works closely with our families and are concerned about and supportive of family needs. Conferences and additional family advice and support are available upon request. Parenting and child development workshops are offered throughout the year. Our evening programs are held on weekday evenings and babysitting is provided. Parents and staff are encouraged to attend these workshops. At Creative you have the unique opportunity to tap into an amazing resource of knowledgeable staff with over 40 years of experience who are leaders in the field of early childhood education.

Creative has many contacts with the counseling community and can often be of assistance obtaining special services should the need arise in your family.

Photography/Video Permission Form: Video and photographic images of the Creative program are used in training presentations, training videos, on our website, and in print media. As a parent you will be asked to sign a permission form allowing your child to be photographed for these purposes. Names of specific children are not used and children are never depicted in a disparaging way. If your child is involved in any videos or images used in books or training materials that are created by organizations outside of Creative or CCCRT you will receive updated information about its use and purpose. **THIS IS A REQUIREMENT FOR ADMISSION TO THE CREATIVE PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAM.**

Ratio: Creative has an adult to child ratio in all areas in the program well below the State and local ratios. The direct adult to child ratio does not take into account aids, directors, or kitchen and office staff.

- Big School: 1 to 10
- Young Toddlers: 1 to 4/5
- Older Toddlers: 1 to 6
- Infants: 1 to 4

Research Permission Form: Creative Pre-School is a model program for the state of Florida and the nation. Creative was chosen as one of six model preschool programs in the United States by a study conducted by Ohio State University and the Ohio Department of Education. Creative is accredited as an Accredited Professional Pre-School Learning Environment (APPLE). Because of our quality programming we are frequently visited by educators, early education students, parents, and the press. Creative is dedicated to the improvement of programming for all children. Because of our dedication it is important that Creative families share our concerns and participate in our efforts. Children enrolled in Creative are a part of our training efforts and may be involved in research.

The Creative Center for Childhood Research and Training (CCCRT) is a non-profit organization co-located with the Creative Pre-School. The board members of CCCRT are involved in the Creative Program and provide leadership for all training and research provided.

School Hours: The Creative Pre-School is open from 7:15 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday (excluding planned holidays). Opening and closing times are not flexible. Most of our staff works a full day. The buildings close at 6:00

p.m. **sharp**. There are no provisions to care for children after this time therefore there is no late fee charged.

Smoking: No one, including parents, is be allowed to smoke on the grounds. Creative feels strongly that smoking is hazardous to the health of children and adults. We do not want to be exposed to the effects of passive smoke or the negative modeling experience that occurs when valued adults smoke in the presence of children. Creative reserves the right to refuse employment to smokers.

Staff Training: All Creative staff meet the State requirements for training. This involves a specific number of hours that introduce them to State regulations concerning childcare programs, abuse and neglect, and child development. In addition to this, Creative provides workshops and on the job continuous training to all employees. All Creative staff **MUST** maintain current first-aid, CPR training, meet all employment screening required by the State and be working on or have the Florida Child Development Associate equivalency, a National Child Development Associate, or appropriate college degree.

Creative staff hires and fires one another and are chosen because of their abilities to work within a team program and their skills and concern for young children.

Toys and Personal Articles from Home: Limit the toys that your child brings from home to special items for sleeping, books, or unit materials for sharing circles. Label everything with your child's name. VCR tapes and DVDs **that support the current theme** are acceptable if parents have previewed them to ensure that there is no objectionable content. (I.e., racial, sexist, and violent scenes)

- Small toys, make-up, gum, are not allowed at school.
- NO WEAPONS OF ANY KIND, PLEASE

Tuition and Registration Fees: A materials fee is charged each year. This amount is used to purchase an accident insurance policy for each child, new play equipment, and expendable supplies. This amount is due initially when your child is enrolled and during September of each year thereafter.

Families of new children will pay a one-time only admission fee when a space is offered to them. This amount is non-refundable and secures the child's space in the program. This fee is per child excluding siblings of existing children.

Tuition is due on the 1st of each month.. **WE RELY ON THE PROMPT PAYMENT OF TUITION TO MAKE PAYROLL FOR THE STAFF.**

A multi-child discount is offered for fulltime children attending the program.

Creative enrolls a limited number of children and employs trained quality staff. Your tuition pays their salaries and must be received on time in order to ensure continuity of staff and a reserved place for your child. To maintain your space at Creative you are responsible for the full contracted payment regardless of absences.

Withdrawal: Should you decide to withdraw your child from the Creative program, WE MUST insist on at least 30 days notice. Our cost of operation is fixed and based on a specific number of children. This is a necessary and strictly enforced policy that helps us financially provide excellent care for every child.

Workshops/Parent Education Opportunities: The Creative Center for Childhood Research and Training is a small, non-profit corporation that functions within the Creative Pre-School. Workshops on parenting skills and techniques, stressing the development of a positive self-concept and methods of constructive interaction, are offered from time to time throughout the year. Check with the office for more specific details.