

WISH UPON A STAR



Accredited Child Care Center

321-726-1580

<http://www.wishuponastarinc.com>

PARENT HANDBOOK AND
ENROLLMENT PACKAGE

Our Philosophy

Our objective is to see that every child is loved and well cared for during the hours away from home. We strive to make every child feel accepted and appreciated, as well as to stimulate his/her excitement for learning. We attempt for each child to learn good personal manners, as well as healthy eating habits. Each child is encouraged to express themselves through their own ideas and experiences through play. Our desire is to help in developing a happy, well-rounded, disciplined child.

We believe that play is a child's work and children play to learn, grow, and to experiences the world around them.

Wish Upon A Star encompasses a philosophy by which children are allowed to develop naturally each at their own individual pace. Therefore, our programs are based on the individual social, intellectual, and physical development of each child. We believe children are happy and secure when they have plenty of opportunities to succeed each day. Success breeds self confidence, and the self confident child approaches learning as fun and actively searches for information and solution to problems. As a result, they develop into well-rounded capable adults.

To make this philosophy work, our teaching staff guides each child in a clean, safe and specially prepared environment using carefully designed materials based on his or her developmental needs, to give children the opportunity to learn through choice and discovery.

We accept infants, toddlers, preschoolers as well as school-aged children, without regard to their race, color, religion, creed, national origin, gender, or any other category designated by law.

Wish Upon A Star is licensed by the state of Florida.

Our Code of Ethics

The first and perhaps most significant element needed for effective quality education of our children begins with the environment. It is important that we model the ethical obligations that are reflected in the foundational values, ideals, and principles set forward in the code. As caregivers, we are required to demonstrate ethics on a daily basis in the way we say and do things. As administrators, we need to show our staff that we are all accountable on all levels.

The code of ethics identifies standards that represent ideal practice and principles describing practices that are required, prohibited, or permitted.

Ethical responsibilities to children:

We always have to ensure that children's needs are our first priority in every aspect. On the other hand, we are always trying our best to provide a high quality program based on the best practices in early childhood education, and it is no longer acceptable to operate without those standards. We take our time to create a safe, age appropriate and well balanced environment for all children.

With the increasing number of early childhood programs around the country, teachers, children and parents are discovering the benefits of educating young children with special needs together with their same age peers. Our team believes in the importance of the early years, and that this is the best time for children to begin to respect and understand all people's differences. We are always trying to create a successful program where every child in the classroom has the ability to reach his or her fullest potential. We look at children with special needs as children who may need support for learning in different areas to varying degrees, but they receive no lower form of care than any of our other children. We strive for our classroom to always demonstrate increased acceptance and appreciation of diversity, and to always show greater development in moral and ethical principles through creating warm and caring relationships.

Ethical responsibilities to families:

Our communication with the parents affirms our ethical approach to respect, trustworthiness and fairness. It is the policy of the center to provide equal educational opportunities for all families regardless of their race, sex, national religion, religious belief or affiliation, age, marital status, family structure, disability, or sexual orientation.

And we always keep in mind that diversity within the center brings a helpful mix of enthusiastic and different opinions. We have an open door policy for our parents who are welcome to participate and observe in our classroom without an appointment. Parents are invited and encouraged to become involved throughout our daily activities.

Ethical responsibilities to personnel:

The center strives to communicate with its personnel through staff meetings, posting information on bulletin boards and throughout the center and through a one on one meeting when necessary. Professionalism is demonstrated by courtesy, respect, and self-control. All center employees should demonstrate the highest standard of ethics during the performance of their assigned duties. The Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in job application procedures, hiring, firing, advancement, job training and other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment. It is the policy of the center to provide equal employment opportunities for all persons without regards to race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age veteran status, political affiliation or sexual orientation. Throughout the center we encourage staff to bring in materials and experiences from their cultures to promote awareness within the community of our school.

Ethical responsibilities to community:

Our efforts to develop a core set of character principals for our children and our staff will make a huge difference in families we serve. We are constantly trying to accomplish success by adhering to a value system based on a commitment to our customers: children, parents, business associates, and many others. We are always advocating in behalf of children and families to increase awareness of the public and policy makers about the importance of the early stages. As educators, we know what that will mean in terms of the real success of the children.

Ethical responsibilities to agencies:

As child care providers we are required to keep up with the continuous changes in regulations and standards. Ongoing collaboration between us and the agencies and governing bodies is the key to success on meeting our goal, which is improve services for our children and their families. We also know that constant support and pressure is needed throughout the process to keep providers moving forward.

Hours of Operation:

Monday-Friday

6:30am to 6:00 pm

New Child Orientation:

Parents and children are welcome to tour our facility at any time without an appointment. We encourage each child to explore the classroom and meet the teachers before their first day to establish a sense of familiarity with our center. Families are asked to bring a family photo to display in their child's classroom for added comfort. Parents/Guardians are also welcome to call or visit any time with our Open Door Policy.

Open Door Policy

We have an open door policy for our parents. This means that parents are welcome to participate and observe in our classrooms and on our playground without an appointment. This also means that parents are invited to become involved in field trips.

Attendance

Please note that even when your child/children do not attend, you are still responsible for payment for that week. Holidays and days we are closed are included in the weekly rate. You will still be charged the full tuition for the week.

Parents are allowed a 2 week vacation per year where tuition is waived.

Wish Upon a Star will experience closures during hurricane season if all Brevard County Schools are closed or if there is any damage brought to our facility.

Arrival and Pick Up

On arrival, please accompany your child/children into their classroom. Use the main entrance of the facility only for safety measures. Be sure to sign in on the computer at the front desk. Before departure, sign out as well. They will also be signed in/out by their teacher, but it is extremely important that you sign them in/out as well due to regulations by environmental health. Any person picking up a child from the facility suspected to be intoxicated/ impaired will be required to have alternate pick up or transportation for their child.

Home transportation may be requested and will be accommodated based upon on family need and center availability.

Volunteering

Our parents are welcome to volunteer their time and talents in our classrooms, at special activities, on field trips, or on the playground.

Fee Policy

There is a non-refundable annual registration fee of \$50 per family. This is due upon registration and again in January of each year.

Fees are to be paid on Monday of each week. If payment is not received by Tuesday of the week, parents will be charged a late fee of \$15 and the child will not be allowed to return until payment is made in full unless arrangements have been made.

Tuition for the first three weeks must be paid my cash or money order. After this point you may also begin paying by check.

NO PRORATING OF WEEKLY FEES.

A fee of \$29 will be charged for all returned checks and payments from then on must be made in cash. NO EXCEPTIONS.

Holidays

These holidays are subject to change based on Early Learning Coalition approval.

Martin Luther King Day	Thanksgiving Day
President's Day	Day after Thanksgiving
Good Friday	Christmas Eve at 12 pm
Memorial Day	Christmas Day
Independence Day	Day after Christmas
Labor Day	New Year's Eve
Veteran's Day	New Year's Day

Enrollment Requirements

Please allow yourself enough time to fill out and submit the proper required forms. You have 2 weeks from the date of enrollment to bring the physical and shot records. All other forms listed below are due at time of enrollment or before.

Enrollment Form

Authorizations Form

Child Participation Form

USDA Free and Reduced Food Form

Influenza Virus Information Brochure

Know Your Child Care Facility Brochure

Community Development Block Grant Program Form

Current Physical and Shot Records (the “yellow” and “blue” forms which can be obtained from your child’s physician). All children must have a *current* physical and shot record on file per state law. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in dismissal of your child from the center until information is completed.

It is our policy that you renew your enrollment forms annually. People move and phone numbers change. We need to be able to reach you should an emergency arise with your child.

Suspected Child Abuse Policy

All child care professional are mandated by Florida law to report any suspected child abuse to the Florida Child Abuse Hotline. Suspicions will be documented and reported to the Florida Child Abuse Hotline. We are not required to inform you of our suspicions.

Signs of abuse may be physical or based on things a child has told to us.

Confidentiality

It is our intention to respect the privacy of children and their parents, while ensuring that they access high quality care and education. We will not disclose information unless it is necessary for the safety and well-being of a child.

An employee of Wish Upon A Star may in the course of his/her duties gain knowledge of or have access to personal information relating to children and families and/or other members of staff. It is a condition of employment that all staff and volunteers understand the importance of respecting this information in a discreet and confidential manner.

Staff

We believe that the teaching team is the cornerstone of our philosophy. Therefore all of our staff have completed the state screening and background checks through the county offices as well as at the local police departments. Most of them are certified by the state department and have either a Florida Child Care Professional Credential (FCCPC, formerly Child Development Associate or CDA) degree or degree exceeding or meeting the requirements set by the local child care agencies. They receive additional training during the course of their employment every year.

Wish Upon A Star upholds the staffing ratios as set forth by the accrediting agencies, APPLE and NECPA, at all times in order to ensure the utmost safety of all children. This includes while children are napping, on the playground, and being transported by Wish Upon A Star vans.

Curriculum

Each classroom has a program designed specifically for the children's needs. However, we will not force a child to do an activity if they choose not to participate. The curriculum may vary due to the class ability or individual ability. Teachers are encouraged to take advantage of any learning opportunities that may arise throughout the day.

Staff and Parent Interaction

You are welcome to have a brief conversation with your child's teacher at pick up or drop off times. Our first priority is to *all* of the children in our care, and we cannot be distracted from them to talk, therefore, if a lengthy conversation is necessary, please let us know and we will be happy to set up a conference time that is convenient for everyone.

Field Trips

Our Pre-K and VPK classes may occasionally participate in an off-site fieldtrip. Parents will be notified of the details in advance of the trip and asked to sign a permission form before child will be permitted to attend. Parents or family members can volunteer to attend the field trip, but may not transport any children.

Our school age children attend field trips daily during the summer and school breaks. A schedule for these trips will be posted for parents to view.

Parent Conferences

We encourage parents to speak with teachers on a daily and ongoing basis concerning the progress and development of their child/children.

Parent conferences will be scheduled twice a year, in the spring and fall, to discuss your child's development on a more formal and extended level. You will be given notification a week before your scheduled conference to be sure it has been scheduled for a time you are able to attend. You may request a conference at any other time throughout the year as well.

School Age

If being transported by Wish Upon a Star bus, children must arrive at the center by 7:00 am.

Parking

The south wing of our parking lot is designated for parent parking while our north wing is designated for staff. Please do not block our front entrance. The right side of our covered entrance may be used for "quick" visits. Please be respectful of our other parents and do not park in the covered area if you plan to spend more than a few minutes in the building. The left side of our covered entrance is a NO parking zone. Please be considerate to this facility and others.

Late Pick Up Policy

Our staff is not available to supervise your child/children before or after the scheduled hours of operation. Please make arrangements to pick up your child by 5:50 pm daily.

There is a \$1 per minute late fee for every minute after 6:00 pm that you are late. If you are late, a phone call is appreciated, but the late fee still applies.

Extended hours can be requested and will be accommodated upon availability and approval by the director.

Drugs and Smoking Policy

The unlawful possession, use, distribution, sale or manufacturing of illicit drugs and alcohol on center grounds is strictly prohibited. Smoking is also prohibited in all center buildings or areas of the center. Please deposit any cigarette butts in receptacle before entering facility.

Weapons

In order to keep our children safe, no one may bring or use weapons of any kind on the premises for any reason. This includes firearms, ammunition, and any other object that could reasonably be perceived as a weapon. Persons attempting to bring a weapon on the premises will be asked to leave. Failure to comply will result in a 911 call to the police. Possession of weapons of any kind by staff, parents or children may be cause for immediate termination.

Complaints

We believe that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our center and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach to the appropriate member of staff (for example your child's teacher). If this does not achieve the desired result a meeting with the administration can be arranged.

Emergency

Accidents happen, especially with children. In case of an emergency, staff will make every effort to contact you at the numbers you have provided in our child's registration packet. If your contact numbers change, it is your responsibility to update your child's registration forms. In the event a child has an accident or incident on a day when the child's parent or legal guardian does not pick up, the teacher will sign the accident or incident report and write parent or legal guardian did not pick up on this day. The parent or legal guardian will be notified by telephone of the accident or incident and asked to sign the report the next time they drop off or pick up the child.

In the event of an emergency or injury that requires immediate medical care, Wish Upon A Star will contact 911 first and establish a plan for the child. The parent/guardian will immediately be contacted after 911 is aware of the situation.

Wish Upon a Star is not responsible for expenses incurred for transportation to the hospital, and/ or medical bills.

Emergency Policies

An evacuation agreement has been established between our facility and The Palms Rehabilitation next door. In the event our building has to be evacuated, we will relocate here.

5405 Babcock Street NE

Palm Bay, FL 32905

Phone (321) 722-0660

Fire Drills

Fire drills are held monthly. Every room has an evacuation plan located by the exit door. If you happen to be in the building during a fire drill please follow the evacuation plan located in the classroom you are in. It is very important your child stays with their class and teacher during fire drills as each teacher is accountable for their children and will be conducting head counts. Stay and wait for the “all clear” sign prior to returning inside the building.

Hurricanes

The center will be closed for a hurricane if the school district closes their schools. If a storm should occur during the day, parents will be called to pick up their children and the center will close as soon as possible.

Tornadoes/Flood/Lockdown/Outside Smoke

We will also conduct tornado, flood, lockdown and outside smoke drills periodically. If you are in the building during any emergency drill please follow the evacuation procedures. It is very important your child stays with their teacher and classroom during these drills.

Suspicious Individual

If you should see a suspicious individual in or around our center, contact the director or a staff member immediately. If there appears to be emanating danger, call 911.

Custody

If there is a custody issue please notify the administration of the potential for the problem. A reminder will also be posted at the front desk and all teachers will be notified.

Health

We accept only well children. We are depending on you to help us maintain a policy that will ensure the health of all children. If your child/ children show signs of illness the night before, such as fever, sore throat, coughing, vomiting, diarrhea, rashes, inflammation of the eye, etc. the child should be kept home until symptoms have improved. Should your child become sick while at Wish Upon a Star, we will call you and we expect the child/children to be picked up immediately. A written note from the doctor must be provided upon return for certain contagious illnesses (see exclusion policy). We are obligated to enforce this policy under the Brevard County HRS regulations. Should your child/children have a contagious disease, please notify us so that we can inform other parents.

Discipline

We believe in positive discipline. We feel children need to learn inner control. If they should lose control, we use positive redirection. If the child cannot regain control by this method, we then use a “safe place.” This gives the child a chance to calm down and regain control. There will be no corporal punishment or humiliation used. Discipline will be age appropriate, respectful, not tied to food or toileting, and within appropriate developmental expectations. However, biting, kicking, spitting, or disrespect to other children or to teachers and staff will not be tolerated. If our discipline methods do not work, the parents will be called and the child will be sent home for the rest of the day. If behavior continues, the child will be dismissed from the center

Medication

No medication (over the counter or prescribed) will be given to a child at Wish Upon a Star. The ONLY EXCEPTION will be a nebulizer, inhaler or Epi-Pen as these are for life threatening illnesses.

Diaper Changing and Potty Training

Wish Upon A Star follows the diaper procedure guidelines approved by the Department of Children and Families and our accrediting agencies. These procedures are posted near the changing stations in all classroom.

Wish Upon A Star teachers work directly with parents to assist children with potty training. Children are never forced to participate with potty training and are encouraged as signs of readiness develop. Communication with parents remains open throughout the process. Potty Training is a big deal for not only the child and parents but also the teachers, and we love to celebrate it together!

Napping

Infants less than 12 months of age are placed on a firm, tight-fitting mattress for sleep in a crib. Unless the child has a note from a physician specifying otherwise, infants are placed in a supine (back) position for sleeping to lower the risks of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). All pillows, quilts, comforters, bumpers, stuffed toys, and other soft products will be removed from the crib. If a blanket is used, the infant shall be placed at the foot of the crib with a thin blanket tucked around the crib mattress, reaching only as far as the infant's chest. Cribs are never shared and are sanitized after each infant's use.

Children older than 12 months of age are placed on sleep mats during nap times. All mats must be covered with a crib sheet and children are permitted to have a separate blanket to cover themselves for comfort. Children are assigned a mat for use during their enrollment and mats are sanitized after use. Mats are placed throughout the classroom so that teachers may have adequate supervision at all times.

Child Hand Washing

Children are encouraged to wash their hands continuously throughout the day. Wish Upon A Star offers touch-less faucets, soap dispensers, and paper towel holders to help prevent cross-contamination. Hand-washing times include before and after meals, before and after using the potty or diaper changing, before and after outdoor play, and before and after art.

"Wash, wash, wash your hands
Wash them well today
Soap and water does the trick
It keeps the germs away!"

Meals

We prepare and serve breakfast, hot lunches, and an afternoon snack that is included in the tuition. Children must be in the center before the cutoff time of the meal being served. Breakfast time stops at 9:00 am. Children who wish to eat breakfast must arrive prior to that time. We do not encourage parents to bring or send food in the center with their children. If your child is allergic to any kind of food, please notify the center in writing as per the Alternate Meal Plan agreement.

Birthdays

Your child's birthday is a special day at WUAS! Parents are welcome to bring a special snack in to share with your child's class to celebrate. Due to allergies, all snacks must be store bought with an ingredients label. Please arrange with your child's teacher ahead of time so they may plan accordingly and update you on how many children are expected that day.

Infant Feeding

Proper nutrition is very important to an infant/toddlers growth and development. Close attention to the general and individual nutrition needs of the children in our care is our goal.

- All bottles with be labeled with child's first and last name.
- Any breast milk provided must be labeled with child's name and dated.
- Infants will be held or fed sitting up. Bottle propping, feeding in cribs, car seats, or swings, or carrying of bottles by children will not be permitted.
- Infants will be fed “on demand” as much as possible, but at least every 4 hours and usually not more than hourly.
- Formula or breast milk will be the only milk product served to children younger than 12 months of age unless medically indicated by the child’s health care provider.
- No medication or cereal will be added to the bottle unless medically indicated by the child’s health care provider.

Food Handling

All employees and volunteers who handle food share the responsibility to maintain acceptable levels of hygiene, health and safety with respect to food.

Employees must:

Maintain a high standard of personal hygiene (wash hands thoroughly and use a clean disposable towel throughout the day)

Refrain from handling food when they or anyone at home are suffering from an infectious disease or have boils, ulcers, cuts or rashes, diarrhea, eye, ear or throat infection or any untoward discharge;

Report shortcomings to the appropriate person, e.g. faulty or damaged storage, preparation and service equipment.

Tie back long hair

Food handler should not display any bad habits (lick finger to open bag, scratching etc.)

Fridge temperatures should not reach more than 5 degrees Celsius and should be checked and recorded daily

Withdrawal/ Termination/ Center Departure

Wish Upon a Star reserves the right to suspend and/or terminate children from the program. The following examples are reasons a child or family may be suspended or terminated, but does not constitute a complete list:

Non-payment of tuition

ALL ELC PARENTS: In order to receive a ZERO BALANCE letter in the event of a transfer, final payments must be made by either cash or money order, Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

ALL PARENTS: will be required to have all payments current and any outstanding balance paid by money order or cash before a tax receipt can be given.

Behavior of a child that threatens the safety of other children or staff

Excessive late pick ups (after 6:00 pm)

Incomplete paperwork or missed deadlines for paperwork

Non-compliance with Health Care Policies

Incomplete Immunization and/or health care records

Interference with Wish Upon a Star's ability to conduct business

Inability of the program to meet the child's needs

If any child is terminated from the program, initiated by the program or the parent, the child shall be prepared for termination from the program in a manner consistent with the child's ability to understand. Whenever possible, a two week notice of termination is given.

Regardless of the reason for a child to leave our program, the child would be well prepared for this transition as is developmentally appropriate. As a staff, the teachers have developed an entire curriculum devoted to creating a seamless transition for any child who leaves our center for any reason. This involves preparing all the children for the change and celebrating the child leaving in a myriad of ways. The child leaves the center secure in the knowledge that he/she was a vital member of the group, will be missed when he/she has left, and moves on with all of our best wishes.

IF YOUR CHILD WITHDRAWS FROM OUR FACILITY FOR ANY REASON: PLEASE GATHER ALL OF YOUR CHILD'S PERSONAL BELONGINGS ON THEIR LAST DAY OF ATTENDANCE.

WISH UPON A STAR IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY MISSING ITEMS AFTER AN EXTENDED TWO DAY PERIOD.

Other Important Notes

At least ONE COMPLETE set of extra clothes is to be left at the center at all times. Please check your child's cubby daily to ensure clothes are available and weather appropriate.

Please send your child/ children in comfortable clothes that they can open/ close themselves and which are appropriate for the program activities. NO OPEN TOED SHOES.

A sheet and blanket is also required for all children. All sheets and blankets are to be brought home once a week for washing.

Due to schedules in the classroom, we ask the parents not to bring the child/ children between 9:30 am – 2:00 pm.

Please do not allow your child to bring toys from home. This eliminates problems with loss, sharing, and breakage.

Please label your child/children's items as they are brought to the facility. This includes all backpacks, extra clothes, etc. so there will be no confusion.

Fire drills are conducted once a month. A complete evacuation plan is posted in each classroom.

All visitors must be checking in at the front desk.

Some classrooms do have pets. Pets are required to be, and have been immunized, as per Florida child care center laws.

TV and video is only used for a limited time. It needs to coincide with the curriculum and will be approved by the owner if acceptable. This is not a recommended practice.

If you have any concerns or questions about the program or the facility please contact the Director

Dima Talas

Exclusion Policy

Your child will not be allowed to attend or cannot remain in class with:

VOMITING

(2 or more times in the past 24 hours)

IMPETIGO

(until 24 hours after treatment is started; must have doctor's note upon return)

QUESTIONABLE RASH

(with fever or behavioral change; must have doctor's note upon return)

UNCONTROLLED DIARRHEA

(3 abnormally loose stools within 24 hours)

HEPATITIS A VIRUS/JAUNDICE

(yellow skin or eyes, excluded until symptoms are gone)

SIGNS OF POSSIBLE SEVERE ILLNESS

(unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, uncontrolled coughing, stiff neck, unusually dark urine, and gray/white stool)

PINK EYE/CONJUNCTIVITIS

(redness of the eye(s) with drainage; may return to school after symptoms are no longer present 24 hours after beginning antibiotics or with a doctor's note)

HEAD LICE/SCABIES

(24 hours after treatment has begun and no live lice or nits are present; scabies requires a doctor's note)

CHICKEN POX

(6-10 days after onset of rash and until all lesions are dried and crusted)

RINGWORM

(must be able to be covered, if on scalp oral medication is needed; may return to school 24 hours after treatment has begun and it must be covered at all times while at school)

FEVER

(oral temperature over 101 degrees; under arm temperature above 100 degrees)

OTHER

(lesions that cannot be covered; child cannot participate in normal activities; child has greater need for care than caregiver can manage without compromise to the care of other children in the group; if child has been hospitalized, child must have a doctor's note to return)

If children are found to have any of the previous ailments, parents will be contacted immediately. Children will be isolated in the front office until they are picked up.