



Agape

Early Learning Center

making a difference one child at a time

PARENT HANDBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The heart and purpose of Agape' Early Learning Center is to provide high quality, developmental and spiritual childcare services to all families. We provide constructive educational experience as well as a social development experience through activities such as art, music, literature and physical activities. Every child needs the opportunity to grow, develop, and explore his/her environment through spiritual, social, creative, physical as well as intellectual experiences. Our goal is to provide such experiences for all children enrolled in our center.

Mission Statement

We truly believe the type of experiences a child has in the early years will have a profound effect on his/her growth and development forever. Therefore, we endeavor to support and encourage children's natural curiosity, learning through their senses, play, and everyday hands-on experiences. We want not only a part of your child's education but also leave an impactful mark they carry with them throughout their whole life.

Insurance

Agape Early Learning Center is fully insured by Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company of National Church Group, Insurance Agency Inc.

Capacity and Status

Our center is Religious Exempt and registered with the state under our church (Ambassadors for Jesus Christ). We have a capacity for 76 children ages 6 weeks –age 12. We provide transportation to/from Mary Christian, Bryan, Smith, Moton, and Phillips Elementary schools.

Parent Orientation

Prior to the first day of enrollment, all parents and prospective students are encouraged to attend an orientation session or onsite visit with the director to review operating policies, to

meet the staff and to allow the child an opportunity to observe the center before the first day of attendance.

Parents are **required** to provide the following information prior to the first day of enrollment:

1. A completed application (Including at least 2 emergency contacts)
2. Immunization record
3. Social security card (Parent and child)/ Parent ID
4. Birth Certificate
5. Proof of current health physical (within 6 months of enrollment)

Parents of children with special medical or developmental conditions are required to submit an annual physical report of any updates. If a child develops a condition after enrollment, a report from the child's physician informing the center of the condition and any special instructions that need to be followed to care for the child is required. Students may be enrolled on a trial basis to ensure we have the staffing to accommodate each child's needs.

Parents are to keep the center informed of any changes or updates to these forms.

Our annual Back to School Night is held at the beginning of each school year (**September**) to inform parents of the educational curriculum and to highlight special events and projects. We highly encourage and invite parents to participate.

Location and Description of facilities

The Center is located inside of Ambassadors For Jesus Christ Church. We have three classrooms on the first floor, Infant, Toddlers and Two's. There are two bathrooms for children and two for Adults or children. The second floor has three classrooms as well, Pre-school, Pre-K and Afterschool. The first floor also has a large multi-purpose room where the children have P.E. and rest time. The address is 4 Duncan Drive, Hampton, Virginia 23663. The contact number is (757) 723-5530. Our email address is agapeelc@gmail.com and our web address is <https://directory.legup.care/childcare/agape-early-learning-center-hampton> We encourage you to like and visit our Facebook site (<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100057277456346&mibextid=ZbWKwL>).

Hours of Operation

The facility is open from 6:00 am until 6:00pm, Monday through Friday.

Breakfast is from 8:00-8:30 am- Breakfast is **not** served after 8:30 am .

The instructional day begins no later than 9am. Because of this, parents will be permitted from dropping their children off after 9AM, so there isn't any disruption with the class during the instructional time period. The exceptions to this will be if there is an emergency, doctors' appointment or reasonable accommodations made prior to that day.

Since the center does close promptly at 6:00pm, parents should allow themselves to have adequate time to talk with their child's teacher and/or assistant and gather their child's belongings before closing time. The center must be notified 30 mins before closing if the child's authorized pickup is running behind. Parents arriving after closing time will be charged \$10 for the first minute and \$2 per minute thereafter. **This fee is due when the child is picked up or before the child returns the next day. We try our best to allot our staff and Director the time rightfully deserved to spend with their families after work hours so there is no exemptions or exceptions to this late rule.**

Communication

We will no longer be using the app REMIND as of January 1st,2023. The center uses the ELV app to communicate with parents. Please see information on how to join located next to the kiosk. This will be the main communication between parents and the center. The staff and teachers send out important messages, closures and updates for your child through-out the day. For further communication please see our office staff with any questions or concerns.

Though staff members arrive at the center 15 minutes prior to their schedule, they are responsible for performing housekeeping duties. Parent conferences and Open House are held to provide opportunities for parents to speak with teachers concerning their child. Any urgent situations may be discussed with the Director.

Tuition Policy

The tuition rates are firm and **must be paid** whether your child attends one day a week or five days unless you have enrolled them on a part-time basis. According to the **Licensing Rules for Child Care Centers in the Commonwealth of Virginia**, we are required by law to have only a specific number of students per teacher. Therefore, we must reserve a space for your child to ensure that your child receives proper training.

Tuition is due prior to service and can be **paid on Friday before 6pm or Monday upon arrival.** Tuition paid after 6pm on Monday will incur a **\$15 late fee.** This is charged each week until tuition is paid. **If a child's tuition becomes more than two weeks behind, the child is subject to withdrawal until past due tuition is paid. In addition to this, if tuition is more than two weeks behind your child/children will not be eligible to attend the center until tuition is up to date (this includes the centers right to refuse transportation to and from school during this time.)** Tuition may be paid by cash, check, money order or credit card through the ELV app. When paying by check, please write the child's name and the week the payment is for the memo section of the check. Returned checks will be charged a returned check fee of \$35 and in the event the return occurs twice the use of checks will no longer be accepted as payment.

To assist you financially during times of vacation and sickness, we will charge 50% of your child's normal weekly rate for a complete week absence. You may use this 50% discount two times per school year for vacation and once per school year for sick (must use the entire week at 1 time). We ask that you give us written notification of vacation plans **2 weeks prior** via formal written letter or email. If using the sick week, please relay this message with illness description and accompany with documentation from doctor. Please note, social services **will not** pay for vacation. If you take your child out for vacation, you will be **responsible for half of regular tuition.** In the event you are having trouble reaching the office staff, you may leave a voicemail if the child is sick.

Holidays

The center is closed in observance of the following holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the day after Thanksgiving, and Christmas. Closure for all other holidays will be posted and will be determined by the projected need for childcare.

Staff Qualifications

Staff members are carefully screened during the selection process and receive thorough orientation training before caring for children. They received a Child Abuse Background Check by Virginia State Police and a National Agency Check by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. They receive First Aid for Child Care Providers and Infant and Child CPR. Staff members also receive ongoing training in health screening, developmental assessments, curriculum development, child guidance techniques, and other topics relevant to the childcare industry. Our staff also receives annual medical physicals to make sure they are capable of meeting the requirements for every aspect of their job as a caregiver of young children.

Staff Training

The above procedures will be introduced to staff at the next staff meeting and reviewed with each new hire and volunteer as a part of their orientation. Fire drills are conducted monthly, and the other drills are done at least twice a year. These additional drills will also be documented along with the fire drills. We will review these procedures at least twice a year or whenever new policies are sent out by the state or VDSS. Evacuation maps are being updated to include the "shelter in place and lockdown location and will be posted in each classroom or area where children gather. A chart of all emergency agencies has been created and posted near the office phones visible to all.

Curriculum

The center provides a developmentally appropriate approach to learning as all children learn differently. We currently use **StreamN3 sponsored by VDOE.**

Mealtimes

The center provides a well-balanced nutrition program for all children enrolled. Parents of infants provide breast milk, formula and/baby food. Once a child is old enough for table food the center will provide meals. **Breakfast snack** is from 8:00-8:30am. **Lunch** is served from 11:00 to 11:30am and **afternoon snack** is served at 2:30pm after children get up from nap at 2:00pm. Parents who wish to have their children participate in the meals served at the center should have the children in their classroom by the scheduled mealtime. Any child arriving after the scheduled mealtime will need to be fed by the parent. Parents **must notify** the office if their child will be missing a meal due to an appointment and need a meal held. **If no notification is given the parent will be responsible for providing the meal.**

Breastfeeding and Infant Sleep Policy

We support and encourage breastfeeding in our center. A private space is provided for breastfeeding moms should they care to nurse their infants at any time during the day. We provide literature for parents to take as well as materials to read. Our staff is trained on proper handling of breast milk as well as formula and receives additional training as provided. All infants are placed on their backs for nap until they are old enough to reposition themselves. Additional information is available upon request.

Screen Time

The use of television in our center is limited to educational or biblical DVDs only. Children over the age of 2 are permitted no more than 30 minutes per week. Children are supervised during screen time and discussions are held with the children concerning what they are watching. Television is never used as a reward or withheld as punishment.

Physical Activity

Our center is equipped with a large multi-purpose area to provide lots of opportunity for gross motor activity. The children from walking age through age 12 have designated P.E. time to include running, jumping, hopping, skipping, galloping and music and movement. The children also get outside time of 30-60 minutes a day weather permitting.

Emergencies

In the case of an emergency such as an accident or illness, our center will notify the parent/guardian by preparing an incident report and if deemed necessary will also notify the parent/guardian by phone. In the case of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken immediately to Sentara Care Plex and the parent will be notified to meet the staff member and the child there.

Medication

Medication is only administered by a MAT certified staff member. Parents must provide a written request from the physician or medicine must be prescription. A written form is included in your enrollment packet and additional ones are available as needed.

Weather Alert

Generally, we open and close with Hampton City Schools. However, after the first day of inclement weather if we can **safely** reach the center, we will open. Please provide us your email address and or cell number so that we can contact you with any changes. We also make every effort to have an updated message on the center phone that you may use to check if we're open. We will also notify you through ELV of any emergency or weather event.

Arrival and Departure

Parents are required to sign their child upon arrival and sign their child out upon departure. Upon arrival, parents are responsible for the supervision of their child until the parent turns the child over to the teacher or teacher assistant in the multi-purpose room, classroom, or playground. Upon departure, parents are responsible for supervision of their child after they notify the teacher or teacher assistant that they are there to pick up their child. It is not permissible for children to leave the building or playground without their parent/ guardian or left unsupervised in any area of the building. Staff members may not be asked to supervise children or siblings who are not enrolled in the center or who are not visiting for the purpose of enrollment if it negatively affects the proper teacher/child ratio.

Release of Children to Friends or Relatives

Parents must notify the center **in advance** if someone other than the parent is going to pick up their child. Parents must give written permission on the child's registration form to allow certain named friends or relatives to pick up their child/children. Staff members will release a child only to individuals, other than parents who are at **least 18 years old** and who the child knows and appears comfortable leaving with. Staff members will also **require that the individual verify their identity with a picture identification card.**

Children will be released to either parent unless the center has on file official documentation regarding custody, which specify that a particular parent is not authorized to pick up a child.

The safety of the child while in attendance at the center is the mutual responsibility of both the center and the parents. It is the center's policy to deny parental or guardian access to a child if the parent or guardian appears to be either mentally or physically incapacitated when requesting release of the child. If a parent is determined to be incapable of taking charge of his/her child, the following steps will be taken:

1. The other parent or guardian will be called to pick up the child.
2. If the other parent or guardian cannot be reached, the designated emergency contact will be called to pick up the child.
3. If none of the above efforts are successful, the local police will be called for assistance.

Field trips and Photo release

A field trip and activities as well as a photo release form will be given at time of enrollment. This form will allow your child to participate in the centers sponsored activities and their pictures to be used in our center promoted brochures, newsletters, and web pages. You may also receive individual permission slips during the year with the option of saying yes or no to whether your child will be able to participate.

Withdrawal Procedures

Our center requires **two weeks written notification** from the parents to the center director/assistant director is required prior to the withdrawal of any child. You can also withdraw your child by paying the equivalent amount.

The center director can recommend or require the withdrawal of a child. Parents may be asked to withdraw their child if it is determined that their child is unable to adjust to the program in a

positive manner, that their child's recurring-unmanageable behavior is placing the other children's safety or well-being at risk, or that the program offered at the center is unable to meet the special needs of their child.

We may also require that children be withdrawn if parents fail to comply with the operating policies of the center or fail to honor financial obligations to the center.

Whenever possible, the director will give the parent(s) a two weeks' notice when a child is required to be withdrawn. If a child's presence significantly endangers the safety or well-being of other children in the center, the director may require immediate withdrawal.

Evacuation Process

When the decision is made to evacuate the Center facility, for fire, flood, or other such emergencies, the director will make the announcement in the most expeditious way possible that all persons are to evacuate to their assigned assembly area and await further instructions. (Following the evacuation routes posted in each room). The building is to be evacuated completely. The Director will notify appropriate personnel and communicate what type of emergency is present. The fire department will automatically be notified in case of a fire. If the students need to leave the premises, They will be loaded onto the bus and van to evacuate to Moton Elementary School located at 339 Old Buckroe Rd, Hampton, VA 23663

The **Infant teachers** will gather the infants in the evacuation cribs and exit all the way to the white fence in the back. The **Toddler class teacher** will exit double glass doors and assemble with children at the light pole in the front of the building. The **Preschool** and **Pre-K class teachers** will come down the front stairs and exit through the double glass doors and assemble at the light pole in the front of the building.

In the case the school age children are present the teacher will exit down the back stairs and assemble in the back of the building near the white fence. If children are in the multipurpose room the teacher will exit through the emergency exit and assemble at the white fence.

The director will verify all children are accounted for by matching them with the Attendance sheet located in classroom before the teachers relocate back into the building or in the case of a real fire parents are notified by the ELV app to pick up their children. Parents will sign their children out by usual procedure and if someone other than the parent is picking up the child proper ID must be shown, and they must be listed on the emergency card as authorized pick-up.

Each teacher has a mini first aid kit in their classroom, one is locked up where medicines are kept, and another is in the administrator's office. There is also a first aid kit on the van. The

teachers are responsible for checking their kits monthly and reporting any additional supplies they may need. All necessary supplies required by licensing will be in each kit as a check list.

There is a working battery-operated radio in the nursery and the 2-year-old classroom on the first floor and one in the afterschool classroom on the second floor.

(Each teacher has a battery-operated flashlight in their emergency bag)

We have special needs children in our program that may require special attention.

We also make sure the allergy information is adhered to as it is listed in each teacher's emergency book.

Lockdown Procedures

Lockdown procedures shall take place when notified by the local police or government, when an armed person (gun, weapon) is identified in or around the center, the sound of a discharged firearm is heard, or a child has been identified as missing.

The director or the designated staff member will activate the lockdown. Any life-threatening situation will be reported immediately by calling 911 or any other health official. Parents will be notified using “**ELV App**”. Everyone will assemble in the same area as for shelter in place (the hallway between the nursery and toddler classrooms. Teachers will account for all children by the Attendance sheet.

The center is a secure facility so a notice of **LOCK DOWN** will be posted on main entrance and exit doors.

The director or designated staff member will make sure the emergency bin is brought into the secured area. This bin contains blankets, books, diapers, pull-ups, water, etc. There are coolers for formulas, etc. kept in this area always. We will wait for further instructions and/or until the lockdown is cleared. Parents will then be notified through **ELV app** that their children are safe and when they can pick them up. Children will be released to parents or designated persons upon proper identification and signed out as normal. If there is a need to relocate, parents will be advised of the new location for pick-up through ELV App.

SAMPLE EMERGENCY CHART:

Agency Fire/Rescue # 911

Police -911

Poison Control / 1 800-222-1222

Gas company /1-866-229-3578

Electric company /1-866-366-4357

Water company / 757-926-1000/757-234-4800

Insurance Company Brotherhood Mutual / 1-866-565-4677

Each teacher will exit with an emergency bag with a portable first aid kit, flashlight and emergency cards for each child and the director will be responsible for the emergency bin containing portable radio, books, quiet games, diapers, wipes, water, blankets etc. for possible extended time outside of the center.

The director or designated staff member will be responsible for getting any medications needed as well as the daily attendance book and supplies to the relocation spot.

The center van and authorized vehicles will be used to transport children to the designated relocation if needed. Relocation in case of a flood or fire will be Bryan Elementary School 1021 N. Mallory Street approx. 1/4 mile from the center or the nearest designated shelter for the Phoebus area.

Shelter in Place

When there is a need to Shelter in Place due to an earthquake or similar emergency teachers will gather with all age children in the downstairs hallway between the nursery and the toddler classrooms away from windows, doors or potential falling objects. Teachers will bring their emergency bags which contain first aid kits, flashlights, and emergency contact information. The director or

designated teacher will bring the emergency bin with books, quiet game, blankets, diapers, tissues, wipes, and any medications needed. There are coolers in this area for formulas etc. This area also has a restroom and access to the kitchen.

We will wait for further instructions and/or until the shelter in place is cleared. Parents will then be notified **through ELV APP** that their children are safe and when they can pick them up. Children will be released to parents or designated persons upon proper identification and

signed out as normal. If there is a need to relocate, parents will be advised of the new location for pick-up through ELV App and the following procedures for reuniting children to parents will be followed Parents will be notified through " ELV APP" and children will be reunited with the

parent or designated person after identification upon their arrival and will sign the child out as they would under normal circumstances.

Discipline and Child Guidance

All discipline and child guidance techniques used by staff at the center will be of a positive, nonpunitive nature. The goals of the disciplinary techniques will be:

1. To ensure that the classroom is a safe, secure environment for all the children.
2. To teach children that our society has acceptable and unacceptable social behaviors
3. To teach self-respect and respect for the rights of others.
4. To teach the children to take responsibility for their actions and the consequences of their actions.
5. To teach the children self-control and inner discipline
6. To strengthen the children's self-esteem and feelings of self-worth.

Staff members will use positive techniques of guidance, including redirecting the child to participate in another activity, anticipating and eliminating potential problems, providing reinforcement for appropriate behaviors, talking and providing reflective listening with the child, temporarily removing the child from a stressful situation, and limiting the child's participation in some activities until the child is able to cooperate and follow the rules associated with that particular activity. All techniques used will be age appropriate for the child and will be accompanied by a rational explanation of expectation of the child's level of understanding. When necessary and with the parents' consent, we will solicit outside help to support the child in his/her efforts to develop better social skills.

Management of biting behavior

The center's policy regarding biting is established for the protection and health of all children in the program. A bite is considered dangerous if it leaves a red mark on the other victim's skin or breaks the victim's skin. When a child bites another child or staff member, the child will immediately be removed from the situation. He/She will be firmly told that biting hurts and that he/she cannot be allowed to hurt the other children. Infants will be isolated in a crib or highchair while care is given to the injured child. Toddlers and Preschoolers will be isolated in a chair while the injured child is being cared for. After that time period the child will be allowed to return to the group if they are willing to cooperate and agree to stop biting. Efforts will be made to have the biting child comfort the child that was bitten and mend any hurt feelings

between them. Staff members will provide appropriate medical care to the bitten child and encourage parents to seek medical attention for their child if the skin was broken due to the bite.

Staff members will notify parents of both children of the incident. The parents of the biting child will be informed of the circumstances under which a child can be withdrawn for continued biting behavior. A conference can be arranged with the center director at the parent's request to discuss behavior modification strategies that the staff will be using at the center and ways in which the parents can facilitate the extinction of the behavior at home.

Staff members will diligently supervise children who are exhibiting biting behaviors and will actively discourage the recurrence of the behavior. In order to avoid recurrence of a biting behavior during very busy times of the day, children may be placed in their cribs or high chair for short periods of time. Only if staff is unable to provide close individual supervision of the child.

Children biting more than twice in a day or three times in a week will have parents called and they will have to be removed until some mutual plan can be devised for the safety of the other children.

Safety and Medical Treatment

As employees at a childcare center, one of our greatest concerns is the safety of children. Our goal is to provide a safe and healthy environment for all children. The following guidelines are to help maintain this goal.

1. No child is ever left alone or unsupervised.
2. When arriving at the center, children are to be signed in by parent/guardian and brought to the classroom or teacher. When picking up, the parent/guardian is to sign child out and accompany them to the vehicle. No child should be dropped off or picked up by anyone under 18 years of age.
3. Fieldtrips will require written permission slips on file signed by parent/guardian.
4. Fire drills are conducted monthly. Each room has a posted evacuation plan by their door. We also conduct drills periodically for hurricanes and earthquakes.
5. Law requires car or booster seats for children under 8 or under 4ft.9in. tall.

Management of Communicable Diseases

Children enrolled in the center are observed before entering their group so we can maintain a healthy environment for all children and staff. Our staff shall be responsible to see that each child is checked for the common signs of communicable diseases. The guidelines for recognizing illnesses are as follows:

1. Temperature if **100 degrees Fahrenheit** taken by auxiliary method.
2. Skin rash such as ringworm (must have doctor's note for readmission and must be covered)
3. Diarrhea and/or vomiting **two or more times** in the same day
4. Evidence of lice infestation
5. Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
6. A more comprehensive list is available in the office.

If a child shows any of the above-mentioned complications, a staff member will call the child's parent immediately and place the child in an isolation area to wait for the parent to pick up the child. The child will not be readmitted to the center until symptoms are gone or a doctor's note states the child is no longer contagious. **A minimum of 24 hours is required for readmission if a child is running a fever. This is without medication.**

We try to always maintain at least one MAT certified staff to administer medicines when needed. If no one is certified at any time parents will be notified of this.

Dress Code Policy

The children will play outside twice daily except in extreme heat, cold, or rain. Please be sure to dress your child weather appropriate so that he/she can fully participate in all activities at School. **Crocs can be worn as long as there is a strap on the back of the heel. No flipflops & no play heels are permitted due to safety issues.**

What to Bring from Home

Parents are responsible for furnishing the center with the following items from home on a daily basis:

A. Infant Program

1. Three (3) complete changes of labeled clothes, socks, and bibs
2. At least eight (8) labeled disposable diapers
3. Labeled diapering supplies (wipes, creams, powders etc.)
4. Adequate supply of infant formula in labeled plastic bottles or equivalent formula to be prepared by teacher
5. Special blanket, activity box or mirror, infant crib mobile, crib toy (optional items)

B. Toddler Program

1. Two (2) complete changes of labeled clothes
2. At least six (6) labeled disposable diapers or pull-ups
3. Labeled diapering supplies if child is in diapers or being potty trained (wipes, creams, powders etc.)
4. Nap time blanket and twin sized fitted sheet for cot

C. Preschool Program

1. One (1) complete change of labeled clothes
2. Nap time blanket and twin sized fitted sheet for cot
3. Bookbag

All Children are asked to bring 2 boxes of facial tissues, 2 hand and face wipes and 2 bottles of hand sanitizers per year. If you know your child is prone to colds or allergies, please feel free to

contribute more. Our little ones use a lot since they don't know how to blow their noses just yet. All other school supplies are provided by the center such as glue, crayons, markers, paper, and other items usually requested by schools.

This handbook will be reviewed frequently, and updates or changes may be made. You as the parent will be notified of any changes and a new handbook may be requested.