



Parent Handbook

Our Mission:

WE BELIEVE THAT EVERY CHILD DESERVES:

- To be enlightened by both the fundamental curriculum and supplemental learning activities to help them make good decisions.
- To be enriched by learning their unique value in a supportive and loving family environment.
- To engage in community-focused activities for the benefit of others.

The Harvest School is a premier educational institution that focuses on nurturing and nourishing children in a familial environment. Our mission is to encourage the development of educated, conscientious, well-rounded future leaders.

We plant the seeds of intellectual curiosity, essential decision making skills, and outreach to others. We utilize a variety of tools to help accomplish our mission. The Harvest tools are organized around to our philosophy to deliver a structured, results-oriented outcome.

Our Philosophy:

Our philosophy is grounded in an integrated 3-E model:
Enlightening: Enriching: Engaging

The 3-E Model combines all three learning goals into a holistic experience for the child and the entire family. Enlightenment at The Harvest School means a top-notch education built on a leading, age-appropriate curriculum as well as critical enrichment and engagement programming. Some of our tools for enlightening children include the Pinnacle, Macmillan/McGraw-Hill, and Early Reader curricula. We adapt the lesson plans as needed to address each child's unique learning style. Enrichment tools including sensory exploration, Spanish, creative arts, sports, music-&-movement, and others help children comprehend considerably more than the core development milestones. Similarly, our engaging tools like Adopt-A-Grandparent, our Can-a-thon and others are a means of teaching children how to work and play well together while having a positive impact on the community.

Inclusion

The Harvest School believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in child care. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on their individual capabilities and needs.

Non-Discrimination

At the Harvest School, equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

Smoke and Drug Free Environment

Our center is a smoke and drug free environment for the safety and health of our children and staff. There is no smoking or use of tobacco products on the premises. No drugs or alcohol products are permitted.

Confidentiality

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released, except for that required by our regulatory and collaborating agencies. All records concerning children at our program are confidential.

Symptoms that Require Exclusion from the Center

A child shall not be accepted nor allowed to remain at the center if the child has a fever of a one hundred one (101) degrees Fahrenheit or higher oral temperature and another contagious symptom, such as but not limited to, a rash, diarrhea, or a sore throat. The center must follow the Common Infectious Illnesses Chart of recommendations for exclusion of sick children from the center and their readmission, which is posted in the center for parents. Some common illnesses in child care include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temperature- one hundred one (101) degrees Fahrenheit or higher 	Requires exclusion until 24 hours following no fever
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diarrhea- an increased number of stools (2 stools/ day) above the child's normal pattern, that is not, contained by the diaper or toilet use. 	Requires exclusion until 24 hours following no diarrhea.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vomiting- two or more time in the previous 24 hours unless the vomiting is determined not to be due to a non-communicable condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration 	Requires exclusion until 24 hours following no vomiting.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pink Eye- pink or red around the eye, with white or yellow discharge, often with matted eyelids after sleep. 	Requires exclusion until 24 hours of antibiotic treatment and no signs of active infection and physician's note.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ringworm Infection 	Requires exclusion until 24 hours after treatment was begun and the location of the infection must be covered.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Term Injury 	Exclusion as deemed necessary by physician.

Communicable Diseases

The Harvest School must report to the centers licensing agency any serious illness or injury requiring hospitalization or professional medical attention other than first aid. Parents will be notified in writing of the occurrence of any of the contagious illnesses on the Common Infectious Illnesses Chart within twenty-four (24) hours after the center become aware of the illness or the next working day.

Parental Notification

Parents will be notified immediately when professional medical attention is required, or when the child experiences symptoms of moderate discomfort such as elevated temperature, vomiting, or diarrhea. Staff will contact parents to obtain specific instructions until the parents can arrange to pick up the child.

Parents will be notified at the time of pick up when professional medical attention is not required, or when the child experiences symptoms of less than moderate discomfort, or when the child experiences an adverse reaction to prescribed medication, which does not constitute moderate discomfort. Parents will receive written notifications on the Incident Report Form.

Staff Training in Emergency Procedures

Center Staff are trained in emergency first aid procedures and CPR. When minor incidents (bumps, scrapes, and scratches) occur, we will treat the injury. A written incident report form will be sent home on the day of the incident, filed in the incident log, and noted in the child's contact log.

Hazardous Items

Children are not permitted to wear scarves, necklaces, pacifiers, or other items around their neck. In addition, pacifiers may not be attached to clothing. Small beads used for hair adornments must be secured so they do not pose a choking threat if they become loose. Balloons are not allowed in center or classroom activities.

Medical or Other Emergencies

When a medical emergency arises involving a child, the center staff shall seek prompt emergency medical personnel with immediate access to the child. In the case of a SERIOUS accident, the closest staff member with first aid training will render first aid and a member of the Center Management Team will contact the parent. If neither parent nor the family physician can be reached, a member of

the Management Team or designated staff member will transport the child to the designated hospital determined by the center location. The hospital location is posted in the center. Staff will continue to try to reach parents to inform them their child had been transported to a medical facility. Staff will notify the proper authorities and The Harvest School Director as soon as possible.

Fire and Storm Evacuation

Fire and storm evacuation routes are posted in each classroom. Fire and storm drills are conducted monthly and posted on the center bulletin board. In the event the center must be evacuated; the staff will take the children to the designated evacuation site determined by the center location. The evacuation site is posted in the center. Staff will contact parents as soon as possible to alert them of the evacuation and to provide instructions on picking them up from the designated location.

Immunizations

ALL children are required to have a current immunization record from either the Health Department or family physician within 30 days of enrollment. All child care centers are required by law (O.C.G.A. Chapter 20-2-771) to have current immunization records on file for each child. Center staff can be fined or imprisoned for non-compliance.

Ear, Eye, Dental Exam (EED)

All children age four on or before September 1st are required to have an Ear, Eye, and Dental Exam within 30 days of enrollment. If needed, parents are expected to follow-up with further exams or treatment.

Outdoor Play Requirements

Children need fresh air every day. Even in cold weather, children will go outside for short periods of fresh air (not below 40 degrees). Exposure to the cold, when appropriately dressed does not cause illness; it helps kill germs that cause illness. When children return to the center after an illness, staff assumes that they are well enough to go outside and participate in all activities. We also monitor outdoor play based on recommendations from the Clean Air Campaign. In code Orange, we may go outside for short periods but not engage in strenuous play. In code Red, we will not go outside. Please do not ask the teacher to keep a child inside because our staffing pattern requires that the center maintain adequate staff/child ratios at all times. (Staff/child ratios

set by state licensing).

Biting

Infants and preschoolers are often unable to communicate effectively with words and may sometimes bite another child. Staff make every attempt to prevent this from happening. However, at some point your child may be bitten or bite another child. Staff will treat the wound and notify you on the incident report form and on the biting form. Biting incidents are confidential. Parents may decide to have the bite checked by their doctor if the skin was penetrated and bleeding occurred.

Procedure for Medication

The Medication Authorization Form must be filled out completely for ALL medicine- prescription and over-the-counter on a weekly basis. The medications must be:

- In its original container that must be child-proof
- Labeled with the following information
 - Child's first and last name clearly marked.
 - Name of the health professional that prescribed or recommended the medication.
 - Date prescription was filled, if prescription medicine.
 - Expiration date.
 - Specific instructions for giving and storing medications (Instructions for over-the-counter medications may be faxed into the center by the health professional.)
- Authorization for medicine is for one week only. A new form must be submitted every Monday.
- Medication will be administered at 12pm only.
- In case of adverse medical reactions, parents will be notified immediately. If parents cannot be reached, staff will call the emergency numbers listed by parents on the enrollment application. If the situation is critical, we will call 911.

Nutrition

The Harvest School offers an excellent food and nutrition program, which includes breakfast, lunch, and a snack. We provide food that helps to meet over two-thirds of the child's daily nutritional needs.

Mealtime is an important part of the educational day and children and staff eat

together, share the same menu, and engage in conversation that is centered on the children's experiences. Children 2 years and older, are encouraged to serve themselves, as much as possible, providing them with opportunities to make decisions, develop eye-hand coordination, and build self-confidence. Staff serves as role models and encourage but do not force children to eat. Special consideration is given to those children requiring special diet. Food-related activities are used as a means of teaching language, color, texture, science, social skills, and sensory development.

The kitchen posts weekly menus. Menus are constantly improved to include more fresh fruit and vegetables. Children are encouraged to taste each new food. Parents are welcome to have lunch with their child at any time. Please give the center advance notice so the food service manager can prepare enough food!

Please do not allow children to bring food from home to the center, unless it is to enhance the classroom activities. Notify the center director if your child has any known food allergies or special dietary requirements.

Healthy Sexual Development and Toilet Training (Potty Training)

- Staff uses correct names for body parts and bodily functions with children of all ages: penis, vagina, breast, BM, and urine.
- When your child shows signs of readiness for using the toilet, our staff will be happy to assist you. We believe it should be a positive experience for your child. We would like to work in cooperation with you to make this as pleasant and stress free as possible. Remember it is a learning experience, never an issue of punishment.
- We know that children learn about their bodies and sexual differences in the same way they learn other information – in a simple, gradual, natural way. Therefore, children under age three may go to the bathroom together regardless of sex.
- As much as possible we try to complement and support what parents say to their children at home to help them develop healthy attitudes about their bodies that promote positive adult sexuality.
- We gently and clearly redirect typical sexual behavior (playing “doctor”, removing clothing, masturbation) and involve the children in more appropriate activities.
- We never use shame, guilt, or punishment to stop children from exposing sexual behaviors or language.

- We teach children the differences between “good touch” and “bad touch” as appropriate. We give them permission in the classroom to stop or get a teacher to stop anyone from touching them in a way that they do not like, or that is in a place a bathing suit would cover.

Field Trips

Field trips are an important part of our education program for four-year old children. Outings into the community, nature walks, and other such activities help enhance the classroom activities. Parents are encouraged to go with the class whenever possible. Parents will be notified about trips and outings as they are planned.

Rest Time

All children will have the advantage of an afternoon rest period (between 11:30-2:00) depending on the class. Infants nap as needed. Children will be provided with their own cot and blanket. Staff will create a very pleasant atmosphere during this time. Children who do not fall asleep in the first hour will be given a book or quiet toy.

Discipline Policy- Principles of Positive Guidance

Children “learn what they live”. Our example of honest and fair action with all children, loving and calming words, and gentle hugs of encouragement are the most powerful ways we teach children how to live the world!

- Teachers provide a positive environment where the rules are clear and consistent.
- Teachers encourage positive behavior by:
 - Being well prepared with age-appropriate learning activities.
 - Redirecting children whose behavior is inappropriate to another activity.
 - Praising and encouraging specific behavior.
- Teachers use positive guidance techniques to direct children’s behavior. Physical punishment or verbal abuse by any adult, including parents, is not allowed on center property. Our staff never uses threats or derogatory remarks. Withholding food or threatening to withhold food is never a form of discipline.
- Our goal of discipline is to help children learn an inner control over their own behavior. Helping children express emotions using words rather than physical force best does this.

- Conferences may be scheduled with parents to discuss concerns about a child's behavior in order to gain their understanding and support of ways to work better with the child. Our goal is to work in partnership with parents.
- For children with persistent, challenging behavior, parents, teachers, and school administrators meet and devise a plan of action to address the student's behavior. Daily communication between the teacher and parents is essential to maintain consistency in discipline practices. If needed, we refer to a behavioral specialist with Bright from the Start, Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning.

Parents Notification of Center Policies

Each center maintains a Parent Notification Bulletin Board in the hallway or center lobby area that includes:

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|------------------------------------|---|
| ○ Center Child Care License | ○ Review of Evaluation Report |
| ○ Licensing Rules and Regulations | ○ Current Weekly Menu |
| ○ Statement of Parent Access | ○ Communicable Disease Chart |
| ○ Statement Regarding Visitors | ○ Name of Person in Charge |
| ○ Quality and Accreditation Awards | ○ Emergency Plans for Severe Weather and Fire |

Goals for Parent Involvement

Involve

Parents have multiple opportunities for involvement at the center. Monthly health and training focuses, holidays, and curriculum themes create many avenues for parent involvement, such as:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ○ Field Trips | Times |
| ○ Volunteer Opportunities | ○ Play Buddies and Reading Pals |
| ○ Parent-Child Together | |

Inform

Parents have multiple opportunities for receiving information to enhance their parenting skills, improve their family life, and increase their individual capacity as

an adult. Staff plan, along with parents, topics of interest to share through personal and group meetings, newsletters, bulletin boards, lobby displays, and handouts.

Topics include:

- Positive Parenting
- Mental Health
- Family Literacy
- Becoming Your Child's Best and First Teacher
- Ages and Stages of
- Child Development
- Nutrition
- Finding and Maintaining Employment

Inspire

Parents enjoy inspiration and encouragement from staff and peers. The day-to-day relationships that we build, allow us to be a source of daily motivation and comfort to one another. Together we can:

- Set and Achieve Goals
- Make Dream Come True
- Network with Peers
- Strive for Balance between Family and Work

Parents are encouraged to take an active role in their child's education. Parents may visit the center at any time, volunteer to work in the center with their child and other children, and to share special skills or items of interest with the children. Educational home visits and/or parent/ teacher conferences provide parents with information that will enable them to work in cooperation with the staff to provide a learning environment that assures a successful education experience for their child. Parents have access to their child's file at all times and are informed of their rights relating to the confidentiality of the information.

Parents Communication

Messages may be:

- Displayed on the computer during the check in/out procedure when dropping off and picking up children.
- Posted on classroom doors.
- Written in newsletters for parents that may be distributed each week.
- Shared by talking with staff on a daily basis.

Birthdays and Other Special Events

Parents are encouraged to celebrate their child's birthday or other significant days at the center. Please talk with the staff to plan the celebration in such a way that all children are included in fun, learning experiences. Balloons and candles are hazardous to children and according to Child Care Licensing, are not allowed in classroom or at center events.

Holidays and Teacher Work Days- Center Closed

The Harvest School is open Monday through Friday, January through December, between the hours of 6:30am to 7:00 pm. The school will be closed for the following holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, day after Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day.

The School's hours and holiday schedule are set and posted annually, but may change at any time. There is no reduction in tuition as a result of the center's closures.

Inclement Weather

The procedure for notifying families should severe weather or other conditions prevent the center from opening on time or at all will be posted, announced on Channel 11 Alive News and also on our website. If it becomes necessary to close early, it shall be the parent's responsibility to arrange for their child's early pick-up. There will be no tuition credit for any time the school is closed.

Tuition (Fees)

To ensure quality programming and high quality staffing, your tuition is due even when your child is absent. Tuition is paid weekly. Weekly tuition is due Friday of the proceeding week. If your tuition is not paid in a timely manner, a late fee of \$10 on Tuesday will be added. An additional late fee of \$10 will be added on Thursday if tuition payment is not paid by this time. Failure to stay current in your child's tuition fees may result in the loss of your child's space at The Harvest School and will constitute a default which will entitle The Harvest School to all remedies as prescribed by law, including attorney's fees and collection fees.

Fees are due and payable regardless of weather conditions that may not affect the schools' opening and closing. Tuition fees are not subject to pro-ration for illness, holidays, or emergency closure of the center. If a check is returned

unpaid by the bank, a service charge of \$35.00 will be assessed.

Payment from customers with outstanding unredeemed returned checks must be in the form of a money order or cashier's check. The Harvest School will not accept checks from customers who have submitted two or more unredeemed checks in a period of one year.

Tuition – Vacation

After a child has been enrolled for a twelve-month period tuition may be waived for one week for vacation or illness when requested in advance. Tuition may be waived one time in a twelve-month period. Families with more than one child may have their tuition prorated if not all children are out the same week. This week must be taken Monday- Friday and the child may not attend during this week.

Arrival and Departure

Parents or authorized adult (18 years or older) must accompany the child inside the center and to the appropriate classroom and check the child in and out daily. If the child is late arriving, the person bringing the child must also inform the teacher or a member of the management team the reason for late arrival. Parents or authorized adults must make the classroom staff aware of arrival. Parents or authorized adults must make the classroom staff aware of the child's presence before leaving the child.

Child Departure

- Children will only be released to those persons whose name appears on the "Permission to Pick Up" list authorized by parents.
- Photo identification will be required from any authorized person who is unknown to staff when that person requests to pick up a child.
- Parents or other persons must use the checkout system when picking up the child.
- Children may not be left in the center past closing time.
- Parents must notify the staff in advance if someone is picking up their child and is not listed on the "Permission to Pick Up".

Child Security Items

Children may bring that special "security" item, if needed, for a smooth home to center transition, but PLEASE do not allow children to bring toys, games, or other items to the center. The center is not responsible for lost or broken items.

Clothing and Personal Belongings

Please label your child's sweaters and jackets including hats and mittens, with your child's name or initials to prevent loss.

Each child must have an extra change of clothing, including underwear that is kept in his/her cubie for emergencies. Parents should check their child's change of clothes frequently so that appropriate clothing based on the seasons is available as needed. Children who are toilet training must have 2-3 changes of clothes, especially underwear. Please wash and return center clothing as soon as possible.

Children must wear shoes with a heel strap. Rubber soled shoes are best for running and climbing. Flip-flops, wedges, and shoes with high heels or roller may not be worn.

Diapers and Pull-Ups for Infants and Toddlers

Parents of children in diapers are expected to bring eight diapers per day or enough to last several days. During toilet training, a minimum of six pairs of plastic covered training pants or underwear. Be sure the outer pants are large enough for the child to manage.

Infant Formula and Baby Food

Parents are encouraged to provide formula recommended by their pediatrician and to take advantage of the Women, Infant, Children (WIC) program. It must be pre-made in plastic containers, labeled with the child's name and date. Two pullover or snap bibs would be helpful (no bibs with ties). Mothers are encouraged to breast feed at the center or to provide expressed milk for their baby. (We will not serve cereal in bottles. The center will provide pre-made Target Healthy Baby with Iron formula (regular and soy-based) as needed. Parents can provide infant formula if they wish.

Disenrolling

- Delinquent payments- payment is due on Monday, in advance of the service. Payments are delinquent at closing on Friday.
- Late pickup- leaving children in the center after closing hours or after their program day ends. A late fee will be assessed.
- Late arrival- Pre-K children who do not come on time as required by the

Bright from the Start Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL).

- Failure to provide necessary documents- parents who do not provide the required documentation within the proper timelines.
- Parent disruption of the program- abusive language and threatening behavior by adults that are harmful to children, staff, other parents, volunteers, self, or the center.
- Non-compliance- parents who do not comply with the guideline outlined in The Harvest School parent handbook.

Facility Failure

If a loss of power, water, heat, or air conditioning occurs at the center, the Center Director will call the proper personnel to repair the equipment. If the loss of these utilities effects the usual operation of the program, arrangements will be made to send the children home. In the event that the water and/or electricity, or gas are not functioning properly and will not be operational within two hours, staff will begin notifying parents. In case of an emergency due to facility problems such as fire, severe weather, power failure, loss of utilities, bomb threat or structural damage, the staff will transport children by walking or in the center van to the designated site. The designated site is posted in the Center.

Discipline

Discipline means setting and adhering to standards of behavior. Discipline is an essential preparation for the outside world. If an adult cares about a child, guidance and discipline will be provided. It is the policy of The Harvest School to remove a child from a situation in which they are disturbing a group, being hurtful to self or other, damaging or destroying property, or lacking control of emotions. Very basic rules and limits are established for the preschool, making sure that the rules are understood and consistent. Time out will be used only a secondary discipline method to be administered in a firm but neutral tone of voice, and not to exceed the number of minutes corresponding to the age of the child. Under no circumstances will any form of corporal punishment be administered to a child in the preschool. If a problem occurs that cannot be handled by the teacher, assistant teacher, and/or director, the parent will be called to take care of the situation.

Separating from Parents

Going to school, especially for the first time, can be frightening. Many children cry, cling, or balk at entering the classroom. This behavior can continue for

several weeks, or can occur at any time during the year, even after the children have settled in happily. Parents find this experience far more upsetting than the children do. Children usually settle down within five minutes after entering the classroom. Parents who hover at the door or communicate their distress by words or actions only prolong the crying. Your child will mirror your confidence if you give them a quick kiss and a promise of returning soon. The sooner you are on your way, the sooner your child can get involved in an activity. The teachers are accustomed handling this problem and it does not upset them. We will be glad to work you individually. Feel free to call us during the morning if you are concerned about leaving a crying child.

Pickup of Children by Someone “New”

If your child is going to be picked up by someone who is not listed on your registration form, you must give us written notification. If we do not know this person, we will ask for a driver’s license for identification. Children are taught never to go with strangers; please make sure your child knows this “new” person. Please send us a note if you want someone added to your list of regular pickup people.

Newsletters

We publish a weekly newsletter for each class. This will give you an overview of the entire program. A monthly calendar will be included so you will have an up-to-date picture of all school activities.

Birthdays

Your child may celebrate his/her birthday at school if you wish. You may provide a special treat; however, no gifts should be given or received. Balloons are a choking hazard, so please do not bring them for a birthday celebration.

Clothing

We recommend that children wear play clothes that are practical, comfortable, and washable. Athletic shoes that tie or Velcro are best. Jellies, cowboy boots, sandals, or patent leather shoes are not recommended. As the weather gets colder, please dress your child in layers since children may go outside every day, weather permitting. Rain boots and umbrellas are not necessary. Children’s clothing, especially coats, jackets, sweaters, mittens, etc. should be clearly marked with the child’s name.

Parent Involvement

The Harvest School strongly encourages parent involvement in all aspects of our program. We need parent volunteers in many areas. We invite parents to visit our classrooms at any time and to come to share their special hobbies, talents, and interests with us.

Curriculum

Here at the Harvest School we implement Pinnacle Curriculum. Pinnacle is a research-based early childhood curriculum, designed with both teachers and students in mind. Based on the works of Piaget, Gardner, and Erikson, Pinnacle provides teachers with lessons that engage children in developmentally appropriate activities. Of course, our curriculum is enhanced with other programs such as field trips and relationships with our community such as visits with our local fire department and nursing home. We are always looking for innovative ways to enrich our students' learning experience.

Assessments are conducted by our teachers on each student to ensure that our curriculum is meeting the individual needs of each child. Our teachers are trained to observe and document the developmental progress of each student. Assessments are conducted in the fall and spring. Observations, anecdotal notes, a work sampling are all part of each child's assessment. Teachers work with students individually in settings that are most comfortable for the students. It includes five subtests to assess basic concepts related to school readiness:

Colors

Letters

Numbers/Counting

Size/Comparison

Shapes

Our assessments are designed to document the developmental progress of each student. Any concerns regarding a student's development are immediately communicated with the parent or guardian and appropriate referrals are then made to Baby's Can't Wait and local Boards of Education. Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled for children ages two and older. During these conferences our teachers discuss socio-emotional, cognitive, motor skills, language acquisition of the student and more. In addition, during assessment periods and conferences, we can receive feedback on our programming and make changes to meet the needs of our students and families. And tailor our curriculum to incorporate the interests of our students.

Through our weekly newsletter, we communicate the weekly theme so that parents are aware of our programming and any special events. A suggested book list is included so that parents can reinforce our weekly theme. All student information is confidential and only shared with parent or guardian.