McGregor

Early Learning Academy

Parent Handbook

McGregor Early Learning Center
3750 Colonial Boulevard
Fort Myers, FL 33966

2009-2010

Mission Statement

McGregor Baptist Church McGregor Early Learning Academy's mission is to spiritually uplift our children and teachers in a Godly, loving and secure environment. This is accomplished by providing quality care, Christian education, developmentally-appropriate activities and by modeling God's love through our actions, words, and lifestyle.

Philosophy

McGregor Early Learning Academy is a learning center committed to enriching children through center-based education with a Christ-focused foundation. We believe education is a relationship between parents and educators. McGregor Early Learning Academy invites our parents to partner with us in order to provide the highest quality education that reaches all learning styles. McGregor Early Learning Academy strives to allow all children to be ministered to in a caring atmosphere while developing emotionally, spiritually, cognitively, physically, and socially. Our goal is to provide a secure and loving environment that is unique to each child's needs. We are committed to honoring Christ while instilling character that mirrors the example set by Him. (Luke 2:25)

Statement of Faith

We believe God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. He has eternally existed in three personalities: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (the Trinity). These three are coequals and are one God.

(Genesis 1:1, 26–27, 3:22; Psalm 90:2; Matthew 28:19; I Peter 1:2; II Corinthians 13:14)

We believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is coequal with the Father. Jesus lived a sinless human life and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people by dying on a cross. He arose from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death. He ascended to Heaven's glory and will return again some day to earth to reign as King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

(Matthew 1:22–23; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1–5, 14:10–30; Hebrews 4:14–15; I Corinthians 15:3–4; Romans 1:3–4; I Timothy 6:14–15; Titus 2:13)

We believe the Holy Spirit is coequal with the Father and the Son of God. He is present in the world to make men aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. He gives every believer a spiritual gift when they are saved. As Christians, we seek to live under His control daily.

(II Corinthians 3:17; John 14:16–17, 16:7–13; Acts 1:8; I Corinthians 2:12, 3:16; Ephesians 1:13; Galatians 5:25; Ephesians 5:18)

We believe the Bible is God's Word to us. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. Because it is inspired by God, it is the truth without any mixture of error.

(II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:20–21; II Timothy 1:13; Psalm 12:6, 119:105, 160; Proverbs 30:5)

We believe people are made in the spiritual image of God, to be like Him in character. People are the supreme object of God's creation. Although every person has tremendous potential for good, all of us are marred by an attitude of disobedience toward God called "sin." This attitude separates people from God and causes many problems in life.

(Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8:3–6; Isaiah 53:6a; Romans 3:23; Isaiah 59:1–2)

We believe salvation is God's free gift to us, but we must accept it. We can never make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ as God's offer of forgiveness can anyone be saved from sin's penalty. When we turn from our self-ruled life and turn to Jesus in faith, we are saved. Eternal life begins the moment one receives Jesus Christ into his life by faith.

(Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8–9; John 1:12, 14:6; Titus 3:5; Galatians 3:26; Romans 5:1)

We believe, because God gives us eternal life through Jesus Christ, the true believer is secure in that salvation

for eternity. If you have been genuinely saved, you cannot "lose" it. Salvation is maintained by the grace and power of God, not by the self-effort of the Christian. It is the grace and keeping power of God that gives us this security.

(John 10:29; II Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 7:25, 10:10–14; I Peter 1:3–5)

We believe people were created to exist forever. We will either exist eternally separated from God by sin, or eternally with God through forgiveness and salvation. To be eternally separated from God is Hell. To be eternally in union with Him is eternal life in Heaven. Heaven and Hell are real places of eternal existence.

(John 3:16, 14:17; Romans 6:23, 8:17–18; Revelation 20:15; I Corinthians 2:7–9)

Family Lifestyle Statement

A Christian family comprises Christian parents, one male and one female who are married, who believe the Bible is the written Word of God and abide by its principles in their daily lives. They teach the Bible to their children through example and as commanded in Deuteronomy 6:7, "Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." They share Jesus with their children and establish and maintain a Biblical lifestyle and home atmosphere.

The Christian role model believes in the Bible, follows Biblical principles, and lives as an example of Christ through worship, fellowship, discipleship, evangelism, and ministry.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

The operation of the preschool will, at all times, comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as was amended in 1972. "… No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity…" It is the policy of the Agency to provide equal opportunity in employment to all employees and applicants for employment. Consistent with the rights and obligations under applicable Federal and State law, no qualified person is to be discriminated against in employment because of race, religion, color, gender, marital status, age, national origin, or individuals with disabilities.

Accreditation with Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI)

McGregor Early Learning Academy is fully accredited by the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). This accreditation is received by Florida as a gold seal in quality education. We consider this a prestigious achievement, as there are 425 schools that are members, 375 preschools that are members, and only 30 of those are fully accredited. Excellence in early education clearly depends on a quality Christian preschool. Laying foundations for physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual development is fundamental to the development of young children. Developing a love for learning in the preschool years is essential for success in the elementary level.

Contact Us

8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
(239) 936-5015
Before and after hours back line
(239) 936-4880, ext 1248

If you reach our voicemail, please leave a message and your call will be returned promptly.

Support Staff Contact Information

Avé Smith, Director
Extension - 1243 Email - ave.smith@mcgregor.net

Liz Maik Youngblood, Assistant Director
Extension - 1044 Email - liz.maik@mcgregor.net

Cherie Gaither, Administrative Secretary
Extension - 1244 Email - cherie.gaither@mcgregor.net

Leslie Earp, Curriculum Coordinator
Extension - 1247 Email - leslie.earp@mcgregor.net

Beth Facella, Accounting
Extension - 1399 Email - beth.facella@mcgregor.net

Mona Cossairt, Receptionist
Extension - 1248 Email - mona.cossairt@mcgregor.net

Registration for Both New and Current Students

Upon acceptance to the preschool, the following elements are required to secure your child's position:
1. Non-refundable registration fee and first month's tuition
2. Completed registration packet
3. 680 immunization original record (blue)
4. 3040 physical original record (yellow) Form 681 is not accepted at MELA.
5. Copy of your child's birth certificate
6. Bank reference for debit payments
7. Appropriate forms notarized (notary available at front desk)

Registration Fee 2009-2010 School Year

1st Child: $250
2nd Child: $225
Registration Fee
January 2010 - May 2010: $112.50
June 2010– end of school year- $56.25

Hours of Operation

Monday – Friday:
7:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.

Tuition 2009-2010

	Monthly	Annually
Infants:	$755	$9000
Toddlers:	$625	$7500
2-Years:	$600	$7200
3-5 Years:	$575	$6900

*Tuition is calculated on a yearly basis, with holidays and school closures included in the annual tuition rate. For your convenience, we offer a 12-month payment plan. Therefore, credits are not issued for holidays and/or special preplanned/emergency closures as listed in the Parent Handbook.

Re-enrollment Fees

(Currently registered students only)

January 15, 2010 - February 28, 2010:	$150
March 1, 2010 - March 31, 2010:	$200
April 1, 2010 - :	$250

Classroom Ratios

Infants	4:1
Toddlers	6:1
Twos	8:1
Threes	13:1
Fours	14:1

Payment Plan

ACH Direct Debit is the only method of payment accepted. Payments will be deducted on the 1st of the month from an account of your choice.

It is never the desire that any McGregor Early Learning Academy child be kept from attending the program due to financial situations; however, Non-Sufficient Funds are not tolerated. A $25.00 service fee will be charged (in addition to any service fee your bank may have) Your child will be dismissed due to the parent's negligence concerning multiple NSF's. For further questions, please contact the Administrative Secretary at (239) 936-4880, ext 1244.

Tax statements will be issued upon request beginning in February. Please contact Accounting at (239) 936-4880, ext 1399.

Discounts and Refunds

We offer a 10% discount for the 2nd child and 3rd child enrolled in the preschool. Discount will be applied to the oldest child. A 4% discount will be given if the year is paid in full by the first day of school, along with the five-step registration process (pg.1). No discount is given for six month tuition payments.

Each student is offered a one-week vacation credit per six-month period enrolled. A formal Vacation Request Form must be obtained and returned no less than one week in advance. A student must not be in attendance in order to receive a vacation credit. Vacation credits may not be applied towards a Two-Week Withdraw Notice.

Parent Visitation

You are welcome to visit your child at any time. If you intend to visit your child for longer than one hour, please receive approval from a director, except for special events. You may telephone anytime throughout the day to check on the well-being of your child.

The process by which questions or concerns are to be addressed may include scheduling an appointment with a director through the McGregor Early Learning Academy Administrative Secretary at 936-4880, ext 1244, or submitting your concern via email.

Communication

The deposit box will be available for you to place your prayer requests, payments for extracurricular activities, and suggestions. No cash will be accepted on the premises.

Friday folders will be sent home with children every week with important updated information about our preschool, academics, parent newsletter, and classroom activities.

Located in every classroom will be a Parent Information Board. This board will list your child's daily schedule, lunch and snack menus, as well as upcoming events.

McGregor Early Learning Academy offers our parents a weekly informational parent newsletter. You will receive a copy of this in your child's Friday folder each week. In addition to this newsletter, you will receive updates on the curriculum concentrations, bi-weekly.

Signage is provided outside of each classroom to inform parents of the location of your child's class should they be outside of the classroom.

Withdrawal Policy

Removing your child from the program requires the following in its entirety two weeks prior to your child's last day:
1. Complete a Formal Two-Week Withdrawal Notice. This can be obtained at the front desk.
2. Hand in all your proximity cards.

We will not recognize a verbal notice or email notice.

Full enrollment papers and current registration fees will be necessary upon the return of your child. Vacation

time may not be applied toward a Two-Week Withdrawal Notice.

Arrival and Departure

Sign-in/out sheets are always located outside of the classroom in the clear bin.
Your child will not be accepted into the preschool or released to you without signing in or signing out your child. When dropping off or picking up your child, please indicate on the sign-in/out sheet the time you brought your child and the time you picked up your child. We will only release your child to the persons listed on the Permission to Pick-Up Form in your registration packet or a one day only Substitute Pick-Up Form.

We recommend that you have an emergency substitute pick-up in place. All substitute pick-ups will need a photo ID. Drop-off (7:00–8:00 a.m.) and pick-up (5:00–6:00 p.m.) rooms may be provided for various age groups at the Director's discretion. Substitute teachers may be placed in drop-off and pick-up rooms and may also be placed in the room on any given day that your child's teacher is absent. Our preschool closes promptly at 6:00 p.m. Late pick-ups are not tolerated. Repeated occurrences will result in dismissal.

Express Drop-Off

MELA offers express drop-off from the hours of 8:00-8:30 a.m. Express drop-off is located at east entrance pick-up circle. Any parents desiring to participate can pull their car up to the curb and their child will be escorted to their classroom by a staff member or assistant.

Friday Pick-up

It is imperative that you return the "Friday folders" every Monday in good condition.
The following items will go home every Friday to be laundered in order for them to return on Monday:
• nap mat covers
• blankets
• pillows
• jackets/sweaters
• soiled clothing
• security object/stuffed toys, etc.
Book bags and all cubby belongings must go home each Friday as well. Items left in the classroom over the weekend are not the responsibility of MELA. These items will not be permitted back into the preschool until laundered. Any items left in the classroom will be donated to the McGregor Baptist Clothes Closet. McGregor Early Learning Academy will not be responsible for any/all misplaced/lost items. *If your child will not be attending on any given Friday, you are required to take the above items listed home on the day of return and bring it back on the following day laundered.

CURRICULUM

Wee Learn Curriculum

WEE Learn curriculum is a center-based curriculum that stimulates each part of the brain and reaches every learning style. The purpose of WEE Learn equipment is to provide a frame-work on which teachers can build an early childhood program that allows children to grow and develop as Jesus did - in "wisdom and stature" and in "favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52). A child's growth and development is viewed as a process, not an event. This curriculum is developed around themes which provide opportunities for children to learn about God's Word and how to live in it. Activities which embrace physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual development are included under each theme topic. The themes are designed to help lay a foundation for understanding God, Jesus, the Bible, the church, self, others, and the natural world. Teachers are encouraged to use the activities to plan individual small-group and large-group activities which will meet the specific needs and interests of each child.

Handwriting Without Tears

Handwriting Without Tears is a multisensory, hands-on program designed to meet the developmental needs of children learning school readiness and handwriting skills. The HWT program is unique in providing a line of hands-on instructional materials that can be used effectively for a number of years

to provide an engaging learning experience that has been proven to deliver outstanding results. Our three-year-old program begins to use this curriculum, while our four-year-old program incorporates HWT more fully into the classroom. The children use items ranging from chalkboards to play dough to magnetic stamping screens and wooden pieces used to shape the letters until they are ready to write the letters themselves. Once they begin writing the letters, they will still use the multisensory approach to reinforce what they have learned.

Camp for Christ

Our summer curriculum consists of a review of the WEE Learn curriculum, weekly themes, water day, and special monthly events. Campers who attend only for summer months will be offered 3 days of vacation time. Please refer to the Vacation Policy for submitting procedures.

Chapel

MELA is a Christ-centered environment and our goal is to develop fully devoted followers of Christ. Chapel is a special time for our children to worship Jesus through music, skits, puppets, and games. Chapel will be held each Thursday at 10:00 a.m. in the Joy Chapel Room, for ages 2-5 years old. You and any family members are more than welcome to join us. Chapel consists of praise and worship, Bible stories, student of the week, announcements, pledges, and prayer.

Assessments

MELA uses a *WEE Learn Curriculum-based assessment*, as well as Work Sampling, to assess the student's development. The assessment process will inform us and the parents how your child is learning and prospering. It enables us to plan activities and strategies that meet the children's learning needs. We will assess all children throughout the year, and look for any areas of concern or developmental delay.

We will conference with both parents if required. We will look at such areas as Social/Emotional Development, Physical Development, Cognitive Development, and Language Development. Assessment is a way of ensuring that your child is making progress. Along with the assessment, our teachers will keep a portfolio on each child as a means of reference to progress made. An annual formal parent conference will be scheduled to provide feedback on your child's growth and development. A copy of your child's assessment may be requested from our Curriculum Coordinator by phone or email after the completion of each assessment. You may reach her at (239) 936-4880, ext 1247, or via email.

Preschool Closings

McGregor Early Learning Academy will be closed on the following days, which have already been accounted in the tuition:

September 7 - Labor Day

November 26-27 - Thanksgiving Break

December 24–January 1 - Christmas Break

January 18 – Martin Luther King Day

April 2 - Good Friday

May 31 - Memorial Day

July 5 - Fourth of July

Closed one week prior to the first day of school. First day of school to be announced. ACSI required teacher training.

Inclement weather closings—3 days will be included in tuition.

Holidays and Special Events

Fall Season. Every year MELA celebrates fall and harvest season with class parties, a hay ride, hay day and a fall parade. We invite you and your children to dress up for this special celebration with biblical, non-frightening costumes. We also encourage you and your family to participate in the McGregor Baptist Church Fall Festival, which includes pony rides, bounce houses, games, candy, puppet shows and lots more! This offers the children a safe place to have fun.

Thanksgiving. Every year we celebrate Thanksgiving with a feast in every classroom. We invite family and friends to participate and join us for this special event.

Christmas. We celebrate the birth of Christ with a Christmas Celebration.
Valentine's Day. We celebrate this day with special crafts and small class parties.

Easter. We celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We also celebrate springtime and new birth with an Easter egg hunt.

Mother's Day. Every year we host "Muffins with Mom" at drop-off to celebrate this special day.

Father's Day. Every year we host "Donuts with Dad," a Father's Day celebration at drop-off time.

Art Festival. For this special event, we display your child's art work and fellowship together during the month of April.

Grandparents' Day. At McGregor Early Learning Academy, we recognize the unique, important, and endearing relationship that Grandparents have with our students. We celebrate all Grandparents this day - please fill out the Grandparents Contact Form so we will be able to send them invitations.

K-4 Graduation. Graduation is held in May.

TumbleTime & Kinderdance. These programs will be available in addition to our regular curriculum. Please see the fall calendar and newsletter for more information. Both of these programs will be available for sign-up and questions at Open House.

Monthly Special Events. These events may include visits from the police department, fire department, doctors, dentists, local science and pet establishments. Seasonal themes and activities are also a part of each month.

Open House. This event is held the week before the new school year begins. It is a time to meet your child's teachers, review sample curriculum, and visit his/her new classroom.

Picture Days. Professional photographs will be taken of your child at least twice a year, in addition to class pictures taken in the spring.

Parent Involvement Plan

McGregor Early Learning Academy offers many ways for our parents to be involved in our preschool. If you are interested in volunteering for any of the events listed above, please contact a member of the support staff.

Sunshine Club. Two volunteers are needed to send out cards for various life events within our school.

Summer Camp. Volunteers are needed to assist with special events.

Parent Fellowship Meeting

McGregor Early Learning Academy organizes these meetings from 5:30 - 6:00 p.m. during the months of October, January and April. This is a time of fellowship between parents and the administrative staff. We update parents on upcoming events, any new policies, and give a review of accomplishments for each age group. We encourage our parents to be open with questions at this time.

Lunches and Snacks

Healthy snacks are included in the tuition and will be provided twice a day, along with purified water. Snacks consist of a variety of foods that are healthy and geared towards kids. Please stop by the front receptionist desk to receive a copy of the monthly snack calendar.

If you wish to bring a special snack or lunch for holidays, birthdays, etc., for your child's class, it must be approved by an administrator. All treats must be store-bought, due to Health Department regulations.

Parents of children with severe allergies will be asked to provide their own morning and evening snacks and lunch. Please refrain from packing candy or excessive junk food in your child's lunch. These items may not be served to your child.

Microwaves are not provided to heat your child's boxed lunch. If you would like for your child to have a hot lunch, please heat it at home and place it in a thermos to keep it warm until lunch time. We are not permitted by the Health Department to heat up your child's food. Refrigerators are only provided for the Infants and Toddlers. Please pack your child's lunch accordingly.

Provide food for your child at the right temperature. We are not permitted to test your child's food to insure the correct temperature.

Hot Lunch Program

The McGregor Baptist Church Food Ministry offers a hot lunch program to McGregor Early Learning Academy students. Hot lunches are $3.25 per meal and are paid for in $65 increments only. To activate your child's lunch account, simply sign up for lunch at the front desk daily. Once a lunch is ordered for your child, a notice will automatically be sent to our Accounting Department to charge $65 to your child's lunch account. You can expect to see this charge on the following month's debit along with your child's monthly tuition charges. Once your child's lunch account balance falls to $15 or less, an additional $65 will be charged to your child's account. Please note that ordering a lunch for your child after 9:30 a.m. is not sufficient and a lunch from the MELA Mini Mart will be provided for your child if this occurs. Mini Mart lunches will be debited from your child's monthly tuition, and the cost is $3 per meal. The MBC lunch program is a convenience to MELA parents and all policies are adhered to for all families. If you have any questions regarding your child's lunch account, please contact Accounting at (239)936-4880, ext 1399.

Absences

If your child will be out for 3 or more days, please call our receptionist to inform us.

Toys and Accessories

Toys and other items from home are not permitted in the classroom. "Show and Tell" items must be brought in a shopping bag and placed in your child's cubby in their classroom and will be incorporated during show and tell time only.

Nap Time

Kinder mats must be at least 1" thick (ACSI guidelines) and should be labeled with your child's name. These mats are available from our Mini Mart located at the front desk. All children are required to rest for two hours. If your child's mat becomes torn, which would cause the foam to show, it must be replaced for sanitary reasons. Upon enrollment, a mesh bag will be provided to store your child's nap mat and linens.

Dress Code

Our dress code is in effect for safety reasons and reads as follows:

- closed-toed shoes ONLY
- shorts/bloomers to be worn under dresses and skirts
- skirts and dresses must be an appropriate length (knee length)

*Please dress your child appropriately for the weather.

You will be contacted by a staff member to provide proper attire to meet our dress code if your child is not in

compliance.

Behavior Guidance and Discipline in the Preschool

First, it is imperative to understand that "discipline" at any age level is NOT "punishment for unacceptable behavior." Instead, the very word discipline means "teaching" - the very kind of teaching Jesus did with His disciples! Discipline is a door of opportunity to teach children appropriate ways to meet their needs. First, we will immediately stop inappropriate behavior (behavior that might hurt a child, destroy materials, or disrupt the group), then help the child find another more acceptable way to behave.

Discipline for any student of any age will NEVER include any sort of negative physical touching, which includes, but is not limited to, spanking, slapping, tapping, shaking, pulling, ridicule, sarcasm, threats, or withholding any sort of care or food from them.

Meeting Our Preschoolers' Needs: Our program promotes a positive approach to managing the behavior of all children. Discipline in the program has two primary goals. First, we strive to find a solution to the current situation. Second, we attempt to help the child process feelings, recognize consequences, explore alternative solutions and outcomes, and develop internal self-control. To accomplish these goals, we use the following techniques on a daily basis:

Prevention: A well-designed and well-equipped classroom tailored to ACSI guidelines prevents frustration, interruption, and hazards. It offers privacy, independence and easy adult supervision. In addition, the daily routine provides enough time for play, a sense of security, little waiting, and few transitions.

Positive Redirection: The basic procedure used in all classrooms is positive redirection, which is redirecting unacceptable behavior to an acceptable alternative. This may be enhanced by verbal praise and other reward systems. We praise children for their appropriate behavior and successes by describing what we see and how we feel.

Limit Setting: We have a few clear, simple rules that vary according to the development level of the children. In establishing rules, each teacher follows these guidelines:

1. Tell children what they are to do in a positive tone.
2. Specify the benefits of following rules.
3. Explain rules to students and apply rules consistently.

Problem Solving: We appeal to the preschooler's growing intellectual and moral reasoning by using natural and logical consequences and asking questions to encourage problem solving. Teachers help children identify their needs, feelings, causes, alternatives, and choices. We provide cues such as the statement, "Use your words."

Managing Behavior: "Time Out" will be used only as a last resort when a child is unable to break a pattern of negative or attention-getting behavior. This is not a punishment, but rather a time of reflection for the child. When the child has regained control, he/she will be allowed to join the group. In any event, the time out will not exceed the number of minutes corresponding to the age of the child (for example: three (3) minutes for a three-year-old).

Prayer: All teachers pray with the child and also pray when in the process of disciplining and redirecting.

A conference will be scheduled by a director if your child has displayed a pattern of disruptive, inappropriate behavior communicated to the directors by the teachers. A behavioral screening may start prior to this conference if your child's behavior warrants this documentation, or the behavioral screening will automatically be put into effect following the conference. This behavioral screening will be completed by your child's teacher and will be signed by you upon picking up your child. You will then receive a carbon copy. After this grace period, it will be at the Director's discretion to continue the screenings or suspend or dismiss the child from the program if his/her behavior continues to harm the safety and well-being of the other children in the program.

Discipline Procedures

Behavioral Screenings: A behavioral screening will be implemented when a director or teacher notices a pattern of disruptive physical and/or verbal inappropriate behavior. At pick-up you will be asked to sign this report and a copy will be issued to you. The teachers will then continue the behavioral screening process for one week, and at that time the Director will determine if a pattern has formed and a conference is needed. If a conference is

decided upon, an appointment will be scheduled.

Conferences will be held periodically to follow up on your child's behavior. Behavior screenings will continue until your child's behavior improves.

1st attempt: Behavioral screening procedure

2nd attempt: In-school suspension/moved to a different room in same age group

3rd attempt: One-week at home suspension

*If the child's behavior persists and is detrimental to the well-being of other classmates, teachers or directors, the child will be expelled from the program.

Daily Discipline Procedure:

1st offense: Redirect unacceptable behavior

2nd offense: Redirect this behavior and give the child a verbal warning

3rd offense: Remove the child from the activity

4th offense: Send to Director's office with an incident report

5th offense: If the safety and welfare of the other children in the classroom are diminished due to your child's behavior, the parent will be called to pick up the child for the day and a conference will be scheduled with the Director.

Language Policy:

The following is a new MELA policy that will be effective as of May 29, 2008:

Level I Repetitive Bullying
Level II Repeated use of explicit language
Level III Extreme us of explicit language and vulgar gestures

First offense of any level the child will be sent home for the day

Second offense of any level, the child will go home for the day and will also be placed on a one day out of school suspension

Third offense of any level, the child will be expelled from the school for the current school year

The above offenses do not reset until the following school year. A support staff member will contact you the day of the offense to schedule a conference.

*The Directors have the authority to send any child home immediately if the physical aggression or foul language is directed at classmates or adults.

Accident/Incident/Biting Report: When an accident, an incident, or a bite occurs at school, a report form will be filled out documenting this event. This report will be signed by a director, and then upon pick-up, you will be asked to sign before taking a copy.

Ice bags are available to the children for injuries and accidents. Each room is provided with a first-aid bag, which accompanies the teacher each time she leaves her room.

If the child receives an injury from the neck up, a director will notify you of this accident.

Biting Reports: Young children have trouble taking another person's point of view and communicating theirs. They may not realize that biting will hurt. Biting can occur for a variety of reasons. Here are some reasons to

consider:

- Anger
- Fear
- Frustration
- Too much stimulation or activity
- Not enough adult/child interaction
- Imitation of behavior
- Confusion
- Reaction
- Avoidance of a task
- To gain access to something denied
- Sadness
- Not enough activity
- Attention seeking
- Noisy environment
- Curiosity
- Difficulty waiting for a turn
- Teething

Parent and caregiver must cooperate to prevent children from biting. If children are permitted to demonstrate such behavior at home, there will be no chance of eliminating it in the preschool setting. Working as a team, educator and parents may identify possible reasons for a child biting and respond accordingly. While early childhood professionals may be more familiar with positive discipline techniques, parents are experts on their own children's behavior. McGregor Early Learning Academy teachers and staff will take the time to look for a pattern in the biter's environment and emotional state at each episode. Does the child always bite the same individual? Is the biter simply exhausted? Or hungry? MELA staff will be ready to intervene immediately, but carefully. Teaching children age-appropriate ways to control themselves encourages the development of confidence and self-esteem. We will guide children toward self-control and away from biting. The key is understanding for adults and children alike.

The staff will separate the child who bit from the child who was bitten. The child's wound will be cleaned with soap and water. We will then suggest to the parent that a pediatrician should be consulted if the bite breaks the skin. We never identify the biter to the parents of the child who was bitten, in an effort to protect all children. Our top priority is to protect all children and create a safe learning environment for all students to thrive.

Biting Policy

Biting Day #1-3	Parental Notification
One day out of school suspension after third biting day	
Biting Day #4-6	Parental Notification
One week out of school suspension after sixth biting day	
Biting Day #7-9	Parental Notification
One month out of school suspension ninth biting day	
Biting Day #10-12	Parental Notification
Expulsion after twelfth biting day	

A biting day consists of a maximum of two bites in the same day. If a child bites a second time in a given day, they will be sent home for the day, in an effort to protect the other children in the classroom. All bites must show a pattern, a pattern is defined as a 30 day period. If a child places their finger in another child's mouth and the child bites down the bite will not be counted.

All offenses must show a pattern of continued biting to warrant a suspension of any kind. A pattern is defined as

a 30-day period. A “biting day” consists of up to 2 bites. Upon the second bite, the biter will be sent home for the rest of the day.

Every offense is documented on a report form by the teacher who witnessed the bite. After the parent signs the form upon pick-up, the parent will receive one copy and the original will be filed in the MELA biting file for monitoring.

It is at the Director’s discretion to dismiss a child due to repeated biting, at any time.

Forms

Special Request Form:
This form is available to our parents to help inform our teachers of your child’s needs that will change from day to day. This pad of forms will be located outside your child’s room in the clear plastic bin.

Daily Report Form:
A daily report will be sent home with your child. This report explains how your child behaved in school with their mood, toilet training, diapering, snacks, nap, lunch, etc.

Incident Report Form:
This form will notify the parent of any injury or incident that your child was involved in that day. On the bottom portion of the form, there will be a section for the teacher to document observations of your child throughout the week. This section will be used only if we have seen a pattern of unacceptable behavior. We will require your signature upon picking up your child. A copy will then be given to you.

Vacation Request Form:
This form is required to be filled out and submitted one week prior to your child’s first day absent.

Substitute Pick-Up Form:
If a friend or family member will be picking up your child for one day only and you do not want him or her to be added to the list permanently, please fill out this form for the particular day he or she will be picking up.

Two-Week Notice Form:
If you will be leaving the program at any time, you must fill this form out two weeks in advance to avoid additional fees.

Health Guidelines

You will be notified to pick your child up within 30 minutes if any of the following occurs:
Vomiting (one bout for any reason)
Two bouts of diarrhea
Fever (over 100.1 degrees)
Questionable rash or markings
Head lice * (no nit’s remaining)
Excessive coughing
Conjunctivitis
Sudden allergic reactions
Excessive crying

If any of the above occurs, the child may not return for 24 hours after symptoms cease or without a doctor’s note. The doctor’s note must state that the child is not contagious and may return to school. If this is due to allergies or a permanent physical condition of a child, a doctor’s letter will be required for admittance and kept in the child’s permanent file. Doctor’s notes that do not specify the length of time a child is clear to come back without being contagious will only be active for one week.

At any time the Director may request a doctor’s note in order to return to school instead of waiting 24 hours for the child to return. This note must state that the child is not contagious and may return to school.

*If a child is diagnosed with head lice they may return when there is no lice or nits. Head check is required by a support staff member in order to return to school.

Please be prepared for such emergency situations and make arrangements for occurrences ahead of time. Keep

your work number and emergency phone numbers current in your child's file. In the event of an emergency, we will call the numbers on our student records. After 30 minutes, we will begin to call individuals that you have approved in your child's file to pick up your child.

If you have taken your child to the doctor, a note from the doctor stating the diagnosis, stating the child is not contagious and the return date will be required for the child to return to school. If your child has any of the above symptoms at home, we do trust that you will follow our strict medical policies for the well-being of your child, other students, and teachers in the program. Regardless of medical policies stated in this handbook, the Director is to determine whether a child may attend school on any given day.

No medication (prescription or non-prescription) of any kind will be administered by McGregor Early Learning Academy associates. Medication may not be stored on campus.

Communicable Disease Policy

HRS County Public Health Unit Director /Administrator reserves the authority to invoke quarantine powers under 232.032 Florida Statutes, which could lead to the removal of your child if proper immunization documentation or medical exemptions are not provided.

Medical Information

In the event of a medical emergency and the parents cannot be reached, Program Directors will first attempt to reach the emergency contacts listed in the registration packet. If we are unable to reach an emergency contact and the accident warrants, we will call 911.

If your child's injury results in an open wound, we will clean the area with soap and water, hydrogen peroxide or an antiseptic solution. If necessary we will apply an antibiotic ointment.

Most of the MELA staff members are certified in First Aid and CPR.

Parental Custody

In the event of a "family dissolution," McGregor Early Learning Academy is bound by law to enforce the rulings of the court. A copy of any restrictions, injunctions, restraining orders, or visitation schedules must be presented to the preschool. It is necessary that we have a copy of an official document with valid dates. We will not be responsible, nor can we enforce anything outside the court's decision.

Videos and Television Viewing

Movies are only viewed as a special event and must be approved by an administrator. No movies may be brought in from home. Television programs are only viewed if in direct relation to the curriculum or a learning activity.

Toilet Training

Children who are toilet training should have 2-3 changes of clothing, including an extra pair of shoes. Our desire is to work as a team when your child is undergoing toilet training. If a child has an accident and he/she does not have a change of clothes, the parent will be notified to bring in a change of clothes immediately. MELA does not keep extra clothing on campus, so it is required that all students have an extra set of clean clothing. We strictly enforce that those children having multiple training accidents must be in a pull-up or have plastic pants on over underwear. This is a health issue, as other children sit and play on the floor with MELA equipment.

Please supply pull-ups for emergencies.

McGregor Early Learning Academy does not begin to train the children to use the toilet until the final stage of the toddler classroom.

All students entering the three-year-old classroom must be fully trained without accidents.

Infant Requirements

The following information will help you prepare for bringing your infant, toddler, or super toddler to our facility and will also help our staff provide better care for your child:

- Correct supply of prepared bottles for the day with lids, labeled
- Cereal, labeled
- Food, labeled
- Change of clothing (socks and shoes) (2), labeled
- Wipes, labeled
- Diapers, labeled
- Diaper cream, labeled
- Pacifier, if needed – Must have a clip, labeled
- Sippie cup, if needed, labeled
- Security blanket or toy, if needed, labeled
- Schedule of feeding, napping, etc., for your infant, labeled with your child's name
- When infant is ready to transition to the Toddler Room, a mat will be required.

Refrigerators are available in all infant rooms to keep bottles, food, etc., cold.

Parents of infants are welcome to come into the room when picking up, dropping off or visiting.

We require all who enter the infant room to remove shoes or wear disposable shoe covers provided for you.

We strive to keep our rooms clean and sanitary.

The following lines up with the advice of local pediatricians and the Health Department to insure the highest level of safety and health for your infant:

Infants will be placed on their back while sleeping. This is continued until we feel confident that they can roll over to their tummy on their own.

All infants 6 weeks to 12 months will be held while consuming their bottle.

All meals and bottles must be prepared prior to dropping off your child and will be sent home daily. This includes: cereal, jar foods, and snacks. No food will be stored in the classrooms.

Toddler 1 Requirements

- Bottles in the Toddler Room are permitted for a transition time only, labeled
- Lunch must be in a thermos, labeled, if a hot lunch is desirable to your child.
  There are no microwaves in the rooms.
- Refrigerator will be provided for lunches.
- Diaper cream, labeled
- Diapers, labeled
- Pacifier will be permitted at nap time and in the crib only, labeled.
- Nap mat must be 1" thick, labeled.
- Blanket, pillow, sheet, and security blanket or toy, labeled
- Sippie cup, labeled
- Change of clothes, socks and shoes, labeled
- Mesh bag for nap mat and bedding (provided by MELA), labeled
- Lunches and snacks must be finger foods.

All meals must be prepared prior to dropping off your child and will be sent home daily. No food will be stored in the classrooms.

Toddler 2 &3 Requirements

- Sippie cups are only permitted for a transition period, labeled
- Lunch must contain a cold pack or a thermos, labeled
- Change of clothes, socks and shoes, labeled
- Diaper/pull-ups, labeled

- Diaper cream, labeled
- Pacifier to be used only at nap time for a transition period, labeled
- Nap mat must be 1" thick, labeled
- Blanket, pillow, sheet, and security blanket or toy, labeled.
- Backpack, labeled.
- Mesh bag for nap mat and bedding, labeled

All meals must be prepared prior to dropping off your child and will be sent home daily. No food will be stored in the classrooms.

Two, Three & Four Year Old Requirements

- Change of clothes, socks and shoes, labeled
- Lunch packed with an ice pack or in a thermos, labeled
- Nap mat must be 1" thick, labeled
- Blanket, sheet, pillow, labeled
- Backpack, labeled.
- Mesh bag for nap mat and bedding, labeled.
- No sippie cups, please

*Every item brought into our facility MUST be labeled with the child's name in permanent marker.

Indoor Playground

An indoor facility is available for our students when the weather is inclement. Children must be walking, 12 months or older, and be registered as a current student at MELA to use the playground.

Outdoor Playground

Your children will go outside either to the playground or on a buggy ride two times per day depending on their age.

MELA onsite, age appropriate playgrounds contain state of the art equipment. Children must be walking, 12 months or older, and must be enrolled as a current student at MELA to use the playground. MELA has two playgrounds. One is designed for our Toddlers and Super Toddlers, and the other is designed specifically for our two, three, and four-year-olds.

Please make sure that you dress them appropriately for the weather. If you would like your child's teacher to apply sunscreen or bug spray before going outdoors, provide the above products and make the request.

Heat Index

MELA observes the heat index twice daily over the summer months. If the heat index is between 90-95 the children will play outdoors for a maximum of 20 minutes. If the heat index is above 95, children are not permitted to play on the outdoor playground and will instead use one of our indoor activity rooms.

Hope Building Play Pods & Upstairs Play Pods

At times, our teachers may decide to use the activity rooms, which are located on the second floor of the Hope Building. These rooms resemble a small gymnasium. If your child's playground time is being spent at the rooms, we will escort them down to our office if you arrive for pick-up during that time. We will also have access to use the activity pods for toddlers and super toddlers. These pods are located in the Preschool Ministry on the 1st floor of the Hope Building. The same pick-up procedures will apply.

Bye-bye Buggies

Bye-bye buggies will be used to take toddlers and infants outdoors to enjoy the fresh air and a change of scenery. Our toddlers and infants enjoy a buggy ride once in the morning and once in the afternoon.

All of our children 6-weeks - 4 years are taken outside for fresh air twice a day, whether on a stroller ride or on

the playground.

Teachers and Volunteers

No one is permitted to work until local and state background checks are completed. Paid associates are required to have local law enforcement checks, drug tests, and fingerprints through the FBI. No one under 16 will be employed by the department. Associates under age 18 will be accompanied by an associate over the age of 18.

Security

McGregor Baptist Church provides a Security Team, as well as the security measures taken to provide each child with a safe environment. A member of the Security Department is on campus at all times and is available to respond to the needs of our program if necessary. We continue to raise the bar to attain high standards at McGregor Early Learning Academy.

Two Fobs will be issued per family, which is included in your initial registration fee. Beyond these two Fobs, you may purchase additional Fobs, if permission has been granted by a director. Additional Fobs are $15. Every parent who has been given a Fob must always have the Fob to access the MELA Campus. If you have misplaced, lost, or damaged your Fob, you will be charged for a replacement.

Located at every MELA entranceway is a proximity reader. This system was installed to provide protection and security for our children. Parents will be able to scan their Fob to enter the department. No one will be permitted to enter without a Fob unless approved by one of the MELA support staff members. If your Fob is lost or stolen, please report this information to the MELA Receptionist so the Fob can be deactivated. For your child's safety, please use the east entrance to drop off and pick up your child. The west entrance of the Joy Building will be used for rainy days only. We ask that you never hold or prop any doors open and allow each parent to access the building with his or her own fob.

Pacifier Policy

If a pacifier falls onto the floor or if another child places it in his/her mouth, it will be washed with soap and water. A disinfectant steamer is available for disinfecting purposes on an as needed basis. Please provide a pacifier clip to help reduce the risk of this occurrence.

Pacifiers are permitted in the Toddler and Super Toddler rooms for nap time only.

Sanitizing Policy

All toys and items in the classrooms will be sanitized daily.

Our teachers strive and attempt to sanitize all hard-surfaced toys in between the use of each child. Cloth toys, and linens are laundered daily.

Cloth seat covers, nap mats, and straps are laundered/sanitized every Friday.

Carpets will be sanitized quarterly via professional steam cleaning.

It is standard practice at MELA that every child has their own crib and uses the same one each day.

Hand washing Policy

Our teachers wash their hands with soap and water before the children arrive, before feeding each child, and after changing diapers or toileting a child. Hand sanitizer gel is used as often as possible throughout the day.

Any MELA employee or infant parent entering the Infant and Toddler rooms is required to use the hand sanitizing gel and wear socks or disposable foot covers. Disposable foot covers are provided if you do not have socks on a particular day.

Children's hands and faces are washed after snack/lunch time, playground time, and before the child goes home.

NOTES

Fire Drills & Emergency Evacuation Procedures

Fire and emergency evacuation routes are posted in each room. Every Infant and Toddler Room has at least one crib with evacuation casters. In the event of a fire drill or emergency, the infants and the toddlers are placed into these cribs at six per crib and wheeled outside to the designated area. Super Toddlers, two, three, and four-year-olds, will have a long, knotted rope for each child to hold onto and will proceed with the fire drill in this orderly manner. All rooms are to evacuate to the designated meeting area on their evacuation plan, and wait there until the Director has given you the information that the building is clear to re-enter. The teacher will take the sign-in sheet with her and will count the children as they evacuate and again when they get to their designated meeting area. At no time can a parent pick up their child during a fire drill. They must wait until the children are back in their classroom. At that time, another head count will be taken and then reported to the Director, and then the teacher can release your child to you.

McGregor Early Learning Academy will have monthly fire drills. The teachers are trained to quickly evacuate in an orderly manner to the designated area. The directors and support staff will assist in these drills.

Hurricane Procedures

For Media/Hurricane Advisory Information, www.mcgregor.net or call to listen for updates at 936-1754 or contact the local news station for updated information.