



PARENT HANDBOOK

SERVING THE MARTIN COUNTY COMMUNITY FOR OVER 20 YEARS

Jensen Beach

880 N.E. Jensen Beach Blvd.

Jensen Beach, FL 34957

(772) 334 - 3281

Email: appletreeacademy2@gmail.com

Palm City

2746 S.W. Feroe Avenue

Palm City, FL 34990

(772) 286 - 1979

Email: appletreeacademy3pc@gmail.com

South Stuart

6491 S.E. Parkwood Drive

Stuart, FL 34997

(772) 219-1180

Email: appletreeacademy4@gmail.com

Central Stuart

2085 S. Kanner Highway

Stuart, FL 34994

(772) 221 - 1775

Email: appletreeacademy5@gmail.com

Welcome to **Apple Tree Academy**, where learning is fun! Our goal is to provide the most nurturing, loving Christian preschool education program to the children and their families in the Martin County community. We strive to help your child learn to think creatively for him or herself, to facilitate intellectual exploration, and to promote physical, social, and emotional development. We are proud of our engaging curriculum, learning tools, and teaching aids that will enhance your child's experience at Apple Tree Academy. Please feel free to ask for clarification on any aspect of your child's educational experience. We are happy to talk with you at your convenience.

The office has an open-door policy for all staff, parents, and children. We encourage and welcome input and ideas from all. As a partner in your child's education, you are always welcome to visit, observe or be involved in any of the day-to-day activities at the center.

Apple Tree Academy enrolls children from infants through 5 years of age. We are licensed by the Department of Children and Families and are accredited by A.P.P.L.E. (Accredited Professional Preschool Learning Environment). Accreditation assures our programs, staff and schools have been through a rigorous quality assurance process that includes developmentally appropriate, health (cleanliness) and safety standards. We meet the highest standards nationally, assuring you are choosing the very best for your child. We serve families in the cities of Stuart, Palm City and Jensen Beach.

All administrators and teachers have been carefully selected for their experience and expertise in caring for, working with, and teaching young children. Staff members undergo a rigorous background screening and have participated in their required training. Many staff members hold their Associates or Bachelor's degree in early childhood education, and /or hold the Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) or the Florida Child Care Professional Credential (FCCPC) Certificate. Our curriculum is carefully designed and implemented to be certain that all activities are age appropriate and help each child reach their developmental milestones. Our staff is dedicated to nurturing the physical, intellectual, spiritual, and social emotional development of each child. We have gathered the very best research, highly trained teachers, and combined a Christ-centered approach with the trends in education that are proven successful in Early Childhood Development.

Non-Discrimination Policy:

Apple Tree Academy does not discriminate against anyone, adult or child, staff or parent/guardian, based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, physical or mental disability, or veteran status. Apple Tree Academy is committed to its non-discrimination practices in the acceptance and treatment of students, as well as the participants of its students in educational and social programs and services provided to parents/guardians. Accommodations are made for children with special needs in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Diversity Policy:

At Apple Tree Academy we believe each child is unique and we strive to nurture children and support in all that we do. We recognize that our students come from a variety of homes with different cultures, religions, family structures and lifestyles. Our goal is to provide structure and routine for our students, while recognizing that home plays an important role in our student's emotional well-being and development.

Table of Contents

Our Mission	6
Our Philosophy	6
Our Spiritual Philosophy	6
Our Statement of Faith	6
Our Program	7
Registration and Enrollment	9
Additional Items for Registration	9
Health Procedures	9
Changes to Contact Information	10
Communication	10
Hours of Operation	10
Holiday Closings.....	10
Illnesses	11
Medications.....	11
Discipline Policy	12
Biting Policy.....	12
Open Door Policy	12
Incidents / Accidents.....	13
Child Abuse	13
Attendance.....	13
Arrivals	13
Departures	14
Sign In / Sign Out Procedures.....	14
Late Pick Up of Students.....	14

Student Placement.....	14
Class to Class Transitions	14
Schedule Changes	15
Student Withdrawals.....	15
Parent Survey	15
Custody Disputes – Family Policy Statement	15
Insurance	15
Financial Responsibilities.....	16
Tuitions:	16
Returned Checks	16
Vacation and Holiday Credits.....	16
Summer Camp Fees	16
Meals / Snacks	17
Personal Items	17
Lost and Found.....	17
School Spirit Days	17
Movie Viewing	17
Cubbies	18
Nap Time / Rest Time.....	18
Birthday Parties	18
Pictures	18
Diapers.....	19
Potty-Training	19
Developmental Assessments	20
Early Intervention	20

Holidays and Celebrations	20
Daily Schedules.....	21
Progress Reports	21
Infants, Toddler and Two Year Old Students.....	21
Three Year Old Students	22
VPK Students	22
Kindergarten Readiness.....	22
Parent-Teacher Conferences.....	22
Enrichment Programs	22
Extra Curricular Activites	22
School Activities	22
School Age Children.....	23
Summer Adventure Camp -- Preschool Ages.....	23
Summer Adventure Camp – VPK & School Age.....	23
Parent Involvement / Volunteer.....	23
Safety	24
Security	24
Emergency Procedures.....	24
Hurricanes and other Weather Related Incidents	25
Thank You	25

Our Mission

Our mission is to provide a high-quality early childhood education program that includes developmentally appropriate learning experiences in a nurturing, Christian environment.

We believe that:

- each child is a unique creation and a gift from God
- children learn best about the world through direct exploration and hands-on discovery
- families are a child's first and most influential teacher

Everything we do is intended to:

- nurture children
- support families

We will use **B.E.S.T.** practices in all areas of our program--**B**elieving in one another, **E**ncouraging one another, **S**haring with one another, and **T**rusting one another. This applies to every relationship we encounter-- Teacher to Teacher, Teacher to Child, Teacher to Parent and Child to Child.

Our Philosophy

Apple Tree Academy has made a commitment to provide high quality education for preschool children. We recognize that each child is an individual with his or her unique qualities and special needs, and we respect each child's right to progress at his/her own pace. Our curriculum is designed to provide developmentally appropriate tasks to stimulate and encourage your child's intellectual, social, spiritual, and physical growth in a creative and fun environment.

Special attention is given to process and understanding as children actively explore, discover, and develop thinking skills and autonomy. A qualified and caring staff facilitates this challenging educational environment through gentle encouragement and positive reinforcement.

Our Spiritual Philosophy

We include God, prayer and all other expressions of faith in our preschool life, and we believe that these things are an important part of a child's development. Emphasis is placed on the common values taught by all faiths as well as basic virtues such as honesty, purity, kindness, and truth. Parents and family are honored. We encourage parents to view this as an opportunity to share the deeper meaning of your personal faith and traditions with your children.

Our Statement of Faith

- We believe in the Bible, the inspired, infallible, authoritative Word of God.
- We believe in one God, externally existent in three persons: the Father, Son & Holy Spirit.
- We believe in the deity of Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, sinless life, atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension, and His return in glory and power.
- We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit which enables us to live a Godly life and perform good works.
- We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Program

At Apple Tree Academy, we recognize the need for a variety of stimulating and engaging learning activities with a focus on the development of early childhood minds. Our curriculum is a comprehensive, research-based program that integrates instruction across developmental domains and early learning disciplines to help each child meet the age-appropriate developmental milestones. Apple Tree Academy introduces your child to several curricula that align with the National Standards of Education in addition to our proprietary materials throughout your child's preschool experience.

- **Our Curriculum** provides accepted and respected teaching strategies according to leading early childhood educators.

The key components of our research-based curriculum include:

- Activities developed around early brain development research
 - Well-rounded scope of activities that address all developmental domains
 - Intentional instruction that optimizes key windows of opportunity for growth and development
 - Social and emotional emphasis featuring Dr. Becky Bailey's Conscious Discipline®
- **WEE Learn Curriculum** is a developmentally appropriate weekday curriculum for Christian settings designed for young children ages birth through VPK. WEE learn is grounded in evidence-based practices. Teachers plan activities and lessons that teach children about the love of God and different biblical characters, stories, and Bible truths. Children are also taught about prayer, learn new prayers, and are given the opportunity to pray.

VPK: Scholars offers learning experiences and materials that integrate instruction across developmental domains. The curriculum is organized around nine themes that include daily lesson plans for whole-group activities, small-group activities, and learning centers. The curriculum incorporates language and literacy, math, science, social studies, creative arts and social emotional development into each unit. Apple Tree Academy is proud to offer the Florida Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program (VPK).

Three Year Old's: Adventurers provides intentional instruction in key areas of development so children ages 36-48 months can effectively continue on the path to kindergarten readiness. The cognitive, physical, and social skills of most rapidly developing three-year-old are significantly different from other ages, according to early childhood brain research. By teaching to the specific developmental stages of our three-year old, we can optimize their learning experiences.

Two Year Old's: Explorers is designed around the latest scientific early brain development research. The program focuses on enhancing the simple joy of childhood while equipping caregivers to nurture curiosity through exploration. Our program for two-year-old incorporates Dr. Becky Bailey's Conscious Discipline® and includes activity choices specifically created for our little explorers.

Toddlers: Little Lambs offers love and care for your toddler with the following:

- Activity choices organized around five developmental domains
- Differentiated instruction options to meet the needs of all learners
- Easy infusion into daily routines, such as diaper changing, transitions and outdoor play
- Designed with intention and purpose to move children forward in their development

Infant Program: *Little Angels* is designed around the latest scientific early brain development research. Our Infant curriculum is designed to build strong foundations for little ones ages 0-12 months.

This child-centered program includes activities that:

- Equip caregivers to nurture the little ones in their care
- Optimize key windows of opportunity for growth and development
- Are designed with intention and purpose and organized around developmental learning domains
- Feature Dr. Becky Bailey's Conscious Discipline® strategies to enhance social and emotional development

We are proud to be accredited by **APPLE (Accredited Professional Preschool Learning Environment)**. APPLE is a national early learning program accreditation and one of the largest accrediting agencies for early learning centers. Studies show the positive effects of high-quality early learning centers on the physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional outcomes of young children. The APPLE Program ensures that we continuously raise our standards to a level of quality that enables us to better serve our children and their families.

Registration and Enrollment

Before a child attends Apple Tree Academy, there are forms that must be completed and signed by the parents or guardians. The following is a list of forms that are required:

1. **Application for Enrollment** – This form contains personal information such as the child's and parents' names, addresses, phone numbers, medical information, and authorization for emergency care in the event that a parent cannot be reached. It contains several important acknowledgments of receipt of certain other documents. *It also includes our **Tuition and Enrollment Agreement**, which clearly defines the financial responsibilities, payment terms and conditions of enrollment.* Every form that requires a signature must be signed and turned in prior to the child's first day of attendance. Please inform the Director in writing of any changes of information on the registration form.
2. **Parent-School Enrollment Contract** – This form outlines parent responsibilities regarding early intervention, sign in/sign out procedures, illnesses, and attendance policy and photo release. In addition, the forms listed below **must** be completed and turned in to complete the enrollment process.
3. **Emergency/Authorization Contacts**
4. **Tuition Express** – A payment processing system form that allows secure, on time tuition payments to be made from either my bank account or my credit card Electronic Funds Transfer or Credit Card
5. **Child Care Food Program Application (excluding Palm City)** - Apple Tree Academy provides nutritious breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack each day through the CCFP. Due to insufficient cooking space at Palm City, children must pack a lunch each day however snacks are provided.
6. **DCF Distracted Adult Brochure** – This pamphlet is published by Department of Children and Families (DCF) and provides information regarding the safety of children.
7. **DCF 175-24 “Know Your Child Care Facility”** - This pamphlet is published by the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) and provides information regarding childcare programs, licensing, childcare givers and the parents' roles in child.
8. **DCF 175-70 “The Flu A Parent’s Guide”** – This pamphlet contains information on preventing the spread of the flu. Parents must sign this form stating that they have received this informational pamphlet.
9. **Expulsion, Suspension, Dismissal Policy** - A policy required by Florida Administrative Code.
10. **KidReports Form** – A parent -school communication tool used through technology.

Additional Items for Registration

The following forms are also required prior to enrollment: Physical Form, HRS #340, and Immunization Record, HRS #680, a current photo of the child, and current family photos for the classroom family tree.

Health Procedures

Physicals and Immunizations: Chapter 77-620 Special Acts Laws of Florida requires that all children have the following on file the day that they begin school:

- An original Physical Form, HRS #340, signed by a licensed Florida physician, which states that a child is healthy and able to attend childcare. Physicals need to be updated every two years.
 - An original, validated Immunization Record, HRS #680, signed by a licensed Florida physician
- Failure to provide a current physical and immunization record will result in your child being unable to attend

school until records are current. Please note that Apple Tree Academy does accept children with medical and religious exemptions for immunizations therefore some children may not be fully immunized.

Changes to Contact Information

Please notify the office in writing of any changes in your contact information, such as your address or phone number, as soon as possible. We must keep our records current in case of an emergency.

Communication

Apple Tree Academy uses a parent communication tool called KidReports. It is our goal at Apple Tree Academy to keep parents involved with the school's activities and your child's progress and daily experiences.

From the KidReports app, teachers can send photos and videos to allow you to see a glimpse into your child's day! We feel confident that you will love KidReports and the level of involvement it allows you to have with your child's daily experiences while at our school. Once enrolled at Apple Tree Academy, you will receive a welcome letter from KidReports. Once you receive the link you will be able to set up a username and password which will allow your ability to view all communication from your child's teacher.

All parent/staff communications shall be conducted on school property. Parents are specifically requested not to contact staff members at their home as this is an invasion of their privacy. Your Director is always available should you have any questions or concerns.

Hours of Operation

Apple Tree Academy is open year-round, Monday-Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The center opens at 7:00 a.m. each morning. Breakfast is served beginning at 8:30 a.m. (excluding Palm City). Please have your child at school by 9:00 a.m. so they may fully participate in the morning activities. Parents are responsible for escorting their child to his or her classroom when they arrive at school and sign them in at the door. If your child has difficulty with separation, please ask for assistance.

Holiday Closings

The campus will be closed for major holidays, including but not limited to the following:

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Day

Day after Thanksgiving

(2) days for Christmas Holidays

(2) days for New Year's Holidays

Martin Luther King's Birthday

President's Day

Good Friday

Memorial Day

July 4th

Last Thursday and Friday of Summer Camp (Professional Development Days for Teachers)

Please review our school year calendar for a complete list of holidays and dates when Apple Tree Academy is closed as well as which days there are no classes for our VPK ONLY students.

Illnesses

For the health and well-being of all our students, when a student becomes ill the child will be isolated in the school office and the school will call the parent or guardian. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to pick up their child within 45 minutes. In the event that a parent cannot be reached, the emergency contacts will be called in the order that they are listed on the *Emergency/Authorization Contact Form*. Upon recommendation of DCF, a child should not be brought to school if any of the following symptoms exists:

- Has a fever of 100 degrees F or high (or has had one during the previous 24 hours)
- Is in the first 24 hours of an antibiotic treatment
- Has vomiting or diarrhea
- Has a cloudy or green runny nose, persistent cough
- Has Head Lice, Ring Worms, Impetigo, or unexplained rash.
- Has any symptoms of childhood diseases, such as Scarlet Fever, Measles, Chicken Pox, Flu, or Strep Throat or any infectious and contagious disease.
- Has two (2) consecutive loose bowel movements during a day.
- Earache, yellow skin or eyes, pink eyes with discharge, rash, headache, or fever

Please do not bring your child to school if he/she exhibits any of the above symptoms. Children can return when they have been symptom free for 48 hours without the aid of medication. According to DCF Illness Policy 65C-22.004: Any child, childcare personnel, or other person in the childcare facility suspected of having a communicable disease shall be removed from the facility or placed in an isolation area until removed. Such person may not return to school without a note from their doctor that states the individual is no longer contagious and able to return to school. Parents should report any of the above conditions to the school immediately. Apple Tree Academy will make every effort to inform parents in the classroom that may be affected by a sick child.

Medications

The Florida Department of Children and Families prohibit any childcare facility from administering medication to children except under the following conditions:

- The medication must have a prescription label which contains the child's name, doctor's name, name of medication, date of prescription and proper dosage and be accompanied by a Physician's Authorization Form. This form can be faxed to us by the doctor's office.
- All prescription medications must be brought to the front office where a "Medication Permission Slip" should be completed and signed by the parent before the medication is administered. For medications continuing longer than one week, a new permission slip must be completed for each week. When leaving medications in the office, please ensure that they are placed in a labeled plastic bag with easy-to-read medication dispensing instructions.
- Any medications left at the school for two weeks past the date listed for administration will be discarded. Medications are kept in a secure location at the school.
- Non-prescription medication such as Motrin, Tylenol, bug spray, sunscreen, and diaper cream can only be dispensed with written authorization from the parent or legal guardian.
- We may not keep fever reducing medications for "as needed" unless indicated by condition such as allergies or febrile seizures.

Discipline Policy

Apple Tree Academy is committed to providing a safe and positive learning environment for all children through the Conscious Discipline approach of classroom management. The school's behavior policy encourages students to develop social skills that reflect many of Apple Tree Academy's values including developing social skills such as self-control, respect for others and a positive self-esteem. Teachers model appropriate behavior and guide positive interactions among children and adults. We strive each day to provide a nurturing, secure environment that is conducive for each child to learn.

Our discipline procedures will consist of the following strategies:

- Encouraging children to use words to resolve a disagreement with another child
- Redirecting behavior when this seems potentially effective
- Making parents aware of behavioral concerns

Disruptive behavior distracts from the full benefit of the preschool program and will need to be addressed cooperatively, both at home and at school, for greatest effectiveness. The following behaviors are considered disruptive:

- Requires constant, one-on-one staff attention
- Inflicts physical or emotional harm on other children, adults, or self
- Consistently disrespects people and materials
- Consistently disobeys the rules of the classroom

If a child has difficulty managing his/her behavior on a reoccurring basis, parents will be asked to meet for a conference with the child's teacher and director to coordinate a plan to help the child control their behavior. If the child's behavior continues to be inappropriate, consistently disruptive, and/or dangerous, it may be necessary for the child to be sent home for a time to be determined, or at the discretion of Apple Tree Academy, removed from the preschool program altogether.

Biting Policy

Biting is a natural behavior for young children, a behavior that is often difficult to control. There are many reasons why children bite: teething, verbal frustration, and lack of social skills. While we strive to prevent and eliminate this behavior, it does occasionally occur. It is our policy to address any biting incident on an individual basis. Every effort will be made to work with both the parents and the child to resolve the biting problem.

It is the policy of Apple Tree Academy and it is recommended by the Department of Children and Families that the name of the child who has bitten not to be revealed. In the event of repeating biting incidents, the child's parents may be asked to remove their child from the school for the remainder of the day or longer. If the biting occurs despite redirection and behavior modification techniques, parents may be asked to withdraw their child from Apple Tree Academy.

Open Door Policy

Apple Tree Academy has an open-door policy for the families of children enrolled in our programs however certain situations may arise that would limit visitors to our campus. We ask that you wait until your child acclimates to their daily routines before you volunteer or visit. Please notify the office in advance of your visit and check in at the office prior to going to the classroom.

Incidents / Accidents

Despite all precautions made at our school, occasional accidents do occur. If a child receives a minor injury, such as a scraped knee, stubbed toe, bumped elbow, etc., the parent will receive an *Accident/Incident Report* at the end of the day. If any child receives a bump on the head of any kind, the parent will be notified by phone and given the details of the injury. Please note that we make every effort to report all injuries. However, minor injuries that occur may not be reported by your child to our staff.

Per DCF: All Accident/Incident Forms must be signed the day of the incident, by the parent or designated pick-up person as well as by the Director. A copy of all *Accident/Incident Reports* will remain on file in the school office.

In the case of a medical emergency, 911 will be called so that the necessary emergency medical measures can be taken. A parent will be notified immediately, and appropriate actions taken to ensure that the child receives professional medical treatment as soon as possible. Emergency Authorization must be complete on your child's enrollment so if serious injury occurs, medical treatment can be given.

Blood-borne Pathogens- All teachers are trained in using universal precautions to protect themselves and children from blood-borne pathogens. Latex gloves are kept throughout the school to be used when encountering children's body fluids.

We require all teachers to be certified in Infant & Child CPR & First Aid which always provides a trained individual on site. We are required to advise you, however, that we are limited by law in the extent of treatment that may be administered.

Child Abuse

Chapter 415 of the Florida Statutes protects children from abuse and/or neglect. Florida Law legally obligates professionals working with children to report suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect. It is our policy at Apple Tree Academy to follow up on every incident which is in any way suspicious in nature for the safety and well-being of the child.

Attendance

Attendance is a key factor in student involvement and achievement. Therefore, students in our preschool classrooms are expected to be present and on time each day school is in session. Should your child be more than ten minutes late 10 times and/or absent 10 days in a school year, Apple Tree Academy will NOT be responsible for your child's achievement relative to the rest of the class.

Since we are preparing children for Kindergarten success, VPK Students who are late ten times or miss ten days of school MAY be dropped from the Apple Tree Academy VPK program.

Arrivals

We recommend that parents drop children off at the gate entrance to a staff member. If necessary, a parent may bring their child to the classroom door but not enter the classroom. The center opens at 7:00am each morning. Breakfast/morning snack is served beginning at 8:30am. We encourage children to arrive by 9:00am so they may fully participate in the morning activities. If your child has difficulty with separation, please ask for assistance. If you are late, we ask that you wait outside the front office with your child until someone is available to walk him / her back to class to avoid disrupting the class when in session.

Departures

Children will be released only to authorized persons listed on the child's registration form who are at least eighteen years of age. Should the need arise for a different person to pick up your child, please let the front office know as soon as possible. You may inform us in writing or by calling the office and giving us the name of the person who will be picking up your child. That person will be asked to come to the office and show a valid picture ID.

Sign In / Sign Out Procedures

Each child **MUST be signed in each morning and signed out when picked up**. The person signing in/out **MUST** be a responsible adult. When signing in/out **full signatures and accurate time** must be used.

Children will only be released to the person(s) whose name(s) appears on the *Emergency/Authorization Contact Form*. If you send someone else to get your child and their name does not appear on the *Emergency/Authorization Contact Form*, we will NOT release your child to that person. Please be sure that your pick-up list is updated and accurate. For your child's safety, we will request a photo ID if we do not recognize the person picking up your child.

Under no circumstances will we release a child to an adult who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. We will request another adult be sent to pick up your child. If the intoxicated individual refuses to leave the premises we will notify the police immediately.

Late Pick Up of Students

Classes end promptly at the designated dismissal time, according to the school's clock. Therefore, any parent that arrives five minutes after the scheduled dismissal will be charged a late fee of \$1.00 per minute. This fee is payable directly to the teacher. Consistent tardiness will be cause for dismissal.

Student Placement

Classroom placement of children will usually be by birth date and potty habits. In most cases, children will remain in their starting classroom throughout the year. Exception: some children's birth dates may allow for a classroom move at semester break (end of December/January).

Our goal is to provide stability and continuity for your child while helping each child reach their maximum potential. Apple Tree Academy reserves the right to place a child in the classroom appropriate to their age and ability.

Class to Class Transitions

If a child is to transition to a new classroom, we have a two-week schedule designed to help your child transition from one class to the next. This schedule is put in place to provide structure for the change but is also intended to be flexible enough to meet the individual needs of the child. Some children will not need this much time, others will need more. We trust that by the end of a two-week visiting schedule, the child will be comfortable and happy in his/her new environment.

Schedule Changes

We understand that due to work schedules and/or other circumstances, you may find it necessary to change your child's attendance schedule. If space is available, we will make every effort to accommodate your needs. When reducing the number of days your child will attend, a two-week written notice is required. In the event of adding additional days, changes will be made based upon availability and at the Director's discretion.

If you have enrolled your child at Apple Tree Academy in a program other than full time, please remember that it is important for you to adhere to that program schedule. Exceptions can be made only if cleared with the Director.

Adjustments in tuition for additional days can be made by the Director on a space available basis only. If a holiday party, special event, or activity is held on a day that your child is not scheduled to attend, you may bring your child to the activity, but must stay with your child. Please ask the Director if you have any questions.

Student Withdrawals

You may withdraw your child from the school at any time with a two-week written notice to the school office. A *Withdrawal Form* is available in the school office. Parents who fail to provide the required two-week notice will be responsible for two weeks of tuition. All accounts must be paid in full prior to the release of any documents from the student file.

Parent Survey

At Apple Tree Academy we value your input and opinions. That is why from time to time we may ask you to fill out a parent satisfaction survey. The information we gather from this survey helps us to identify areas for growth and/or improvement.

Custody Disputes – Family Policy Statement

Apple Tree Academy provides a safe, nurturing, and supportive Christian environment for its children, staff, and families. To that end, we do not engage in activities that might endanger the personal safety of our children, families, and staff. **Marital disputes and custody battles cannot and will not involve Apple Tree Academy.**

Families involving Apple Tree Academy in marital or custodial disputes will be disenrolled after one warning. Furthermore, grounds for immediate disenrollment include the following:

- any parent threatening the school or its owners or employees in any way
- non - custodial parent attempting unauthorized pick up
- non - custodial parent present on Apple Tree Academy property
- any parent disrupting school activities or threatening staff, families

Insurance

Our insurance coverage meets or exceeds the amount of coverage required by local, county and state regulations. The school's insurance carrier is the primary source of insurance coverage in the event of an accident.

Financial Responsibilities

Tuitions: All tuitions are based on the total yearly cost of the school program. For your convenience tuition is broken down into monthly and weekly payments. You may choose the payment frequency that is most convenient for you. Full tuition will be charged each week whether your child is in attendance or whether there are scheduled or non-scheduled school closings.

For your convenience, we have implemented Tuition Express which is an automated processing system for your tuition payment. All families **MUST** have an ACH electronic funds transfer authorization form on file.

Registration Fee: A non-refundable, non-transferable registration fee is due upon enrollment. This fee is an annual fee that applies to each family and is charged upon enrollment and each year thereafter to secure your child's placement.

Payments: All fees are due in advance and are payable weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, or annually by cash, check or credit card. When paying weekly, all fees are due on Friday for the following week. A late fee of \$25.00 will be assessed if payment is not received by the close of business on Monday of the current week. The school reserves the right to refuse a child's attendance if tuition is past due. Further, the school may require past due fees to be paid in cash or with a cashier's check.

VPK Activity Fees: At various times during the school year, there will be special guests, events, activities, or field trips for which we will charge an optional activity fee for the VPK Program. If your child is absent, we are unable to refund activity fees.

Returned Checks

A \$50.00 fee (\$25.00 late fee and \$25.00 returned check fee) is charged for each returned check. After two returned checks are received, payments must be made by cash or money order only

In the event of a second returned check, all future payments must be paid with cash, money order or certified check. The school reserves the right to dismiss a child with an outstanding balance.

Vacation and Holiday Credits

The school year commences in mid-August and ends in late May or early June. Tuition is due and payable during scheduled school holidays, vacation periods or illnesses during the school year. Additionally, tuition is due and payable even in the event the school closes during a hurricane or violent storm. The Martin County School District guides our decisions to close for approaching hurricanes; school re-openings are at the discretion of Apple Tree Academy and the Florida Department of Children & Family.

If your child is enrolled for the 10 weeks of summer camp, your child will be allowed one-week vacation credit per family. When you use a vacation week during the summer months you must notify the office in writing of the week of vacation to receive the credit.

Summer Camp Fees

Prior to the start of Adventure Camp at Apple Tree Academy for VPK graduates and school age children, each parent will be requested to complete a Summer Camp Registration Form and return the paperwork with a registration/activity fee to secure placement for your camper. The summer camp registration/activity fee will cover all costs associated with both on campus activities for your camper.

Meals / Snacks

Apple Tree Academy participates in the Child Care Food Program. **(excluding Palm City due to lack of kitchen space and requirements)** We will provide a nutritious breakfast/morning snack, lunch, **(excluding Palm City)** and afternoon snack each day for your child (ren) which is included in your child's weekly tuition. A menu of the meals and snacks will be placed on bulletin boards throughout the school for your review.

Breakfast is served from 8:30am – 9:30am

Lunch starts at 11:00am

Afternoon snack is served between 2:00pm - 3:30pm

If your child will not be present at the times listed above, it is your responsibility to ensure that your child's nutritional needs have been met. You are required to complete a meal application yearly. Every child qualifies, so please fill them out and return promptly. If your child has food allergies, or qualifies for religious exemption, please bring a doctor's note to keep on file.

Personal Items

All items brought to school should be clearly labeled with your child's first and last name. This includes, but is not limited to, lunch boxes, clothing, bags, diaper bags, blankets, backpacks, and any other personal items. **Items such as toys, electronics, etc. should not be brought to school as these items may be lost, stolen or become a distraction for the class.**

It is the responsibility of the parent to see that nothing dangerous is brought into the center by the child. Apple Tree Academy reserves the right to take away any item that is perceived as potentially harmful to someone in the school. Apple Tree Academy does not assume responsibility for loss or damage of any personal possession brought to school. There are days during the school year when children may bring in a special item for Show and Share or for a special day as determined by each teacher. These items must fit in your child's backpack and be clearly labeled with your child's name.

Lost and Found

All found articles will be placed in our Lost and Found basket, which is kept in the front office. If you have misplaced an item, please feel free to check our Lost and Found basket. Any items left at the school for over thirty days will be donated to Goodwill or a local charity. The school is not responsible for toys, games, jewelry, trinkets, etc. brought in from home.

School Spirit Days

Friday is Spirit Day where all children and staff are encouraged to show their school spirit by wearing our Apple Tree Academy t-shirt. Shirts may be purchased in the school office. There may be additional opportunities for theme days throughout the school year for your child's enjoyment. Students are encouraged to wear clothing in accordance with the announced theme.

Movie Viewing

On occasion, children may have a designated movie / video viewing time. These movies / videos are age appropriate and are used to help reinforce concepts or used as an enhancement to a lesson taught in the classroom. Movie / video viewing is not a regular occurrence and will comply with DCF regulations regarding age group and time limits. If a child becomes restless, he / she will be offered an alternative activity.

Cubbies

Please remember cubby space is small. Small blankets are requested as larger items do not fit in the cubbies for nap time / rest time. Please put your child's name on all items.

Please be sure your child has change clothing including socks and underwear in case of an accident or spill. It may be necessary to update these items as your child grows. All soiled clothing will be placed in a Ziploc style bag, labeled with your child's name, and given to you at pick up.

Please be advised that a parent will be contacted immediately should your child need a change of clothing and does not have a spare set in his/her cubby. Please put your child's name on each item of clothing and place the clothing in a plastic bag labeled with your child's name on the outside. All cubby items (including those hanging on hooks beneath the cubbies) should be taken home and laundered **every Friday**.

Nap Time / Rest Time

Apple Tree Academy provides each child with a nap / rest time. Infants follow their own nap / rest schedule and have a specific supply list to meet their needs.

Please provide the following items for nap/rest time:

- A standard size, fitted crib sheet or toddler bed sheet to cover the nap mat
- A small blanket (baby blanket)
- A small pillow is permitted as well but must fit inside your child's cubby
- If desired, a small comfort item

Please label any personal items with your child's name. We will send home your child's sheet and blanket at the end of each week for laundering; please return them the following week. We will clean the mat your child rests on daily.

Birthday Parties

We ask that parents talk with the child's teacher before bringing in a birthday snack. We can then communicate with the parents of children who have food allergies or food intolerances, so that they can bring a similar snack for their child that is safe to eat.

Birthday snacks must be healthy and a safe choice. In accordance with our food policy we encourage all families to pick healthy alternatives to traditional large cupcakes. For example, small muffins and fruit with yogurt are favorite birthday snacks.

To create a safe environment for children with food allergies, we ask that you NOT send birthday snacks and/or holiday party snacks containing either peanut butter or nuts. Also, please do not send popcorn, which is considered a choking hazard in groups of children.

School Pictures

Each fall and spring a photographer will come to the school to take individual portraits of the children. Class Pictures and VPK graduation photos are scheduled to be taken in the spring as well.

Diapers

Diapers and wipes may be brought in daily or a supply may be left for ongoing use. Your child's teacher will notify you when the supply is low. Should you forget diapers; a fee of \$1.00 per diaper will be assessed to your tuition cost. Please bring in several changes of clothes when your child is in the process of potty-training.

Potty-Training

It is best to start the potty-training process around the time your child displays the ability to recognize that their diaper needs to be changed. At this point, they may be ready to control their bowels and bladder. Beginning the training process too early will simply cause frustration for the child and place unnecessary pressure on them. Training is generally recommended for children between two and three years of age.

We have adopted the following policies and procedures to ensure the safety and health for all those persons present in our two-year-old classroom:

1. Children will have a minimum of four regularly scheduled bathroom times during the day (however, children may use the bathroom at any time necessary).
2. After two or three consecutive "accidents" during the day, the child may be required to return to wearing a diaper for the remainder of the day.
3. Children shall continue to be asked to try to use the bathroom even if they have returned to diapers in any given day.
4. Parents will be informed of progress and of the teacher's desire to proceed with potty-training.
5. No child will be forced to sit on the toilet.
6. No child will be reprimanded for having had an "accident".

All students entering our 3-year-old program must be potty-trained by the first day of school (usually mid-August). We understand that "accidents" can occur and if a potty "accident" does happen, we will, of course, provide appropriate care for the child. However, "accidents" should not be a common occurrence.

To be considered potty- trained, a child must be able to:

- recognize when he/she needs to use the bathroom
- independently pull pants up and down
- independently clean themselves

Our teachers will assist children in potty- training. The responsibilities of the teachers include asking the child if he or she needs to use the bathroom at regular intervals, assisting the child on scheduled visits to the bathroom, frequent verbal reminders to the child throughout the day and communication with the parents regarding the child's potty-training. Children are supervised when using the bathroom, although we do allow older students a measure of privacy by standing near the restroom while they use it.

It is the parent's responsibility to bring in extra clothing. Soiled clothes will be sent home at the end of the day in a sealed plastic bag. Potty-training at Apple Tree Academy shall be a positive experience for your child, and we will do everything possible to assist you in this endeavor.

Developmental Assessments

If requested by a child's parent, a child may be given the Ages & Stages Questionnaire at an appropriate time during the school year. This Developmental Screening is used as an indication of how the child is developing. If there are concerns regarding a child's development, parents may meet with the Director to discuss any concerns or to determine if further evaluations are needed. Evaluations can be scheduled through the local Early Steps (ES) program, Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resource System (FDLRS) or with private certified therapists at our campus.

Children that receive School Readiness funding will have an Ages & Stages Questionnaire within 45 days of enrollment and annually on their birth month as required by the Early Learning Coalition.

The local Early Steps (ES) program provides early intervention services for infants and toddler's birth to age three and their families. The local Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resource System (FDLRS) provides early intervention services for preschoolers to four years of age and their families. Both organizations provide services for children who are developmentally at risk or are demonstrating developmental delays.

Early Intervention

Apple Tree Academy is a strong proponent for early intervention for children birth through five years of age. Children born with any type of developmental delay are at risk for falling behind in their educational potential. The **purpose of early intervention** is to lessen the effects of the disability or delay. Services are designed to identify and meet a child's needs in five developmental areas, including: physical development, cognitive development, communication, social or emotional development, and adaptive development.

The following interventions will be offered for your child:

- Vision Screening & Hearing Screening
- Speech/Language Screening
- Behavior Evaluations

Holidays and Celebrations

Apple Tree Academy celebrated the following holidays with tasty treats, art projects, and fun activities.

- Thanksgiving Holiday
- Christmas Holiday
- Valentine's Day
- St. Patrick's
- Spring /Easter
- Mother's Day
- Father's Day
- Fourth of July

Other holidays and/or special days that may be celebrated include

- New Year's Day,
- Snow Day
- Martin Luther King Day,
- President's Day,
- 100 Day of School Celebration,
- Cinco de Mayo,
- Earth Day
- Dr. Seuss' Birthday

When possible, we welcome parents to share with our students any special traditions or customs they might practice. In addition, we make it a point to be inclusive when learning about different ways of life.

Daily Schedules

We strive to provide your child with a fun filled day of stimulating activities. We follow a daily schedule and routine regularly, except for special guests or special activities. Since the time frame in which activities take place varies by age group, a daily schedule for each classroom is posted in the room. Please check your child's classroom for the schedule that is to be followed in his or her room. Each preschool class consists of the following periods:

Morning Activities, which may include:

- Greeting Activities / Creative Time
- Breakfast
- Circle Time – Language Development
- Center Exploration
- Creative Arts
- Music
- Math
- Outdoor Play
- Social Studies
- Science Enrichment
- Story Time / Literacy
- Lunch

Afternoon Activities, which may include:

- Nap / Rest Time
- Snack
- Circle Time
- Math
- Creative Arts
- Outdoor Play
- Story Time / Literacy
- Center Exploration

Progress Reports

Preschool assessments are a great way to record a child's progress throughout the year to ensure each child is meeting or exceeding developmental milestones. Preschool assessment in an early childhood classroom is important because it drives the teacher's lesson plans. This is a formative assessment. The assessment also provides information for teachers to share with parents periodically throughout the school year. Apple Tree Academy believes in open communication with parents so that we can work together for the best interest of each child.

Infants, Toddlers and Two-Year-Old Students

The parents of our infants, toddlers and two-year-old students will receive daily communication via Kid Reports. Also, if there are any items that need to be replenished (i.e., diapers/wipes/clothes), this will be communicated through the KidReports app. Throughout the year, teachers will monitor each child and assess their growth by referencing the developmental checklist for the age of your child or by utilizing the Ages &

Stages Questionnaire (ASQ). The assessment will ensure that each child is making progress in a variety of age-appropriate developmental areas.

Three-Year-Old Students

The parents of our three-year old will receive a developmental checklist during the school year at Apple Tree Academy. Reviews are performed through observation rather than testing. This report is designed to aid our teachers in assessing each child's strengths and weaknesses so that we can better assist them in the learning process.

VPK Students

During the VPK, there are three formal evaluations performed during the school year at Apple Tree Academy -- one at the beginning of the year, mid-year and at the end of the year. The evaluations cover various skills and concepts in the areas of math skills, phonological awareness, print knowledge, oral language, vocabulary, physical, emotional, social, and academic development. A report of the results will be provided to you. The purpose of these evaluations is to gauge the student's strengths and weaknesses in all areas of development so that we may adequately prepare the child for Kindergarten entry.

Kindergarten Readiness

At Apple Tree Academy we pride ourselves on the readiness of our students to enter and excel in Kindergarten. Our Kindergarten readiness scores are always among the highest in Martin County. To help families with the transition to Kindergarten we provide information about the local elementary schools as well as a list of Kindergarten round up dates and times.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parents are always welcome at Apple Tree Academy. We encourage family participation in the classroom and on campus activities. If you would like a conference with your child's teacher or the Director, please contact the school office to schedule a mutually convenient time when your child's teacher will be available to meet with you. Please refrain from trying to "conference" with the teacher when the teacher is with our students.

Parents are specifically requested not to contact staff members at their home as this is an invasion of their privacy. Your Director is always available should you have any questions or concerns.

Enrichment Programs

In addition to the regular curriculum, students may have the opportunity to participate in enrichment programs throughout the school year. Enrichment activities may include Music, Spanish and Bible for children based on age appropriateness. Each of our enrichment activities are included with your yearly tuition and will be offered during the school day.

Extra-Curricular Activities

There may be opportunities for students (potty-trained and age three and up) to participate in extracurricular activities such as "Happy Feet" soccer, "Fun Bus", Starz Dance Program, and other activities based on family interest. For these activities, the registration payment and monthly fee will be paid directly to the provider of the activity. For more information, please see the school office.

School Age Children

On the days that the Martin County Public School System is closed, we plan special activities for our school age children. Parents who would like their school age child to attend on these scheduled school closings will be charged a daily rate for each day they wish to attend. Children in the School Age Program are provided breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack. Please call ahead for availability.

Summer Adventure Camp -- Preschool Ages

This program is for children enrolled in our Toddler, Two-Year-Old, and Three-Year-Old Programs. Children participate in weekly theme activities to make their summer fun! Each family will be required to complete an Adventure Camp enrollment form for Apple Tree Academy to plan our camp.

During the summer, our campers participate in a variety of activities and on-site field trips, such as magic shows, water / mud play days, puppet shows and more. There will be a minimum registration/activity fee for summer camp which will cover the many fun-filled activities planned for your child's summer fun. Breakfast/morning snack, lunch (excluding Palm City) and afternoon snack will be provided at no cost for each child.

Summer Adventure Camp – VPK & School Age

Adventure Camp at Apple Tree Academy begins in June for the VPK graduates and school age children. During our Summer Camp program, Apple Tree Academy will schedule many fun-filled special activities for the children's enjoyment during the 10 weeks of summer. The children will participate on campus field trips and fun activities. There will be a minimal registration/activity fee for summer camp which will cover all activities planned as well as breakfast/morning snack, lunch (excluding Palm City) and afternoon snack. Each camper will receive a monthly calendar outlining the weekly themes and details of the activities. Please notify the office in writing, if your child will not be attending one of the weeks of summer.

Please note that with the hot Florida sun we ask parents to apply sunscreen to their children in the morning. All campers must bring a water bottle/thermos with your child's name to keep hydrated during the hot summer months.

Parent Involvement / Volunteer

Parents are encouraged to take an active role in our educational programs. We enjoy having parents and family members volunteer at the school. Activities such as picture day, parades and holiday parties are all great ways to be involved with your child's special events and help the school at the same time. There are other volunteer opportunities that may arise throughout the school year. We will request assistance well in advance for these activities.

The following list offers some possible suggestions for parent involvement opportunities:

- volunteering in the classroom
- participating in our Raising Readers Program by visiting a classroom to read to the children
- attending meetings / seminars offered through our school
- sharing knowledge, interests, or talents with the children
- participating in a special art project
- assisting with the Scholastic Book Fair
- coordinating any fundraising activities
- supporting special program activities

Please communicate frequently with your child's teacher so that you may reinforce classroom learning at home. Always remember to check your child's classroom folder for special notes, art projects, and school events. Also remember to check your classroom Parent Board for information relating to your child's curriculum as well as any special activities that may be planned throughout the year.

Safety

Our playgrounds are equipped with state-of-the-art synthetic turf called Perma-Grass. Perma-Grass looks and feels like grass but without the maintenance. Perma-Grass provides a safe outdoor playground surface that is virtually insect free as well as environmentally friendly. Please help us to keep your child safe and protected while he/she is at Apple Tree Academy by dressing him / her in sneakers or other soft-soled, closed shoes. **No flip-flops, sandals, or crocs, without a back strap, or cowboy boots.** Please avoid all jewelry. Only small pierced earrings are acceptable - no hoops.

Please be sure to notify a staff member when dropping off or picking up your child. **Never leave your child in an empty classroom and never drop them off on the playground without notifying a staff member.** Please notify a staff member, **upon arrival**, of any rashes, insect bites, etc., your child may have. This might preclude us calling you during the day for clarification.

Security

Our school entrances have security fences that provide access to authorized families. Each enrolled family will receive a code for daily entrance into the campus. All visitors will ring a doorbell and approval for admittance will have to be permitted for entrance. Please help us keep our campus secure by not holding the gate open and by keeping the interior gate closed at all times.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of emergency evacuations, Apple Tree Academy will call / email / text each parent to inform them of the situation while working with local authorities. We will evacuate all children to the nearest Emergency Location unless otherwise directed by EOC. Alternative evacuation facilities are posted in the office. Please see the Director for more details.

- **Fire Drills** - All students and staff participate in monthly drills in preparation for the unlikely event of a fire. Students will follow the teacher's direction for evacuating the building according to the escape routes posted in the classroom.
- **Lock Down** – In accordance with Florida Department of Children and Family Services we will perform at least one lock down drill per year.
- **Other critical events or emergencies** - Critical incidents are events requiring an immediate response by public safety agencies and are managed by the preschool staff only until public safety officials arrive. Examples include: fire, hazardous material spills, threats involving weapons, explosions, and a fugitive being pursued near the preschool by law enforcement. For any of these possible incidences during preschool hours:
 - Do not drive to the school unless it is safe to do so and you have been directed by Apple Tree Academy to pick up your child.
 - Do not call the school in times of emergency. It is important to keep phone lines open for emergency communications and other calls that need to be made.
 - Apple Tree Academy asks that you listen to local TV and radio for updates.

Hurricanes and other Weather-Related Incidents

Apple Tree Academy serves many families throughout our county. Communication is critical during times of a hurricane and/or weather-related incident. Because we serve so many children, we have found it necessary to align ourselves with the public-school closings in Martin County. If Martin County Schools close for inclement weather, hurricanes, etc., Apple Tree Academy will close as well. Please tune to your local TV and/or radio stations for school closing information.

If it becomes necessary for your child to be picked up, you will be notified by phone. With the increased activity of the Hurricane Season, we are aware that parents will be concerned about getting their child (ren) from school should the need arise. Times such as these create anxieties. To minimize frustrations, please remember to update your emergency pick-up list. Children may only be checked out by the person(s) whose name appears on the *Emergency Authorization Form* student enrollment form. If you send someone else to get your child and their name does not appear on the enrollment form, we will **NOT** release the child to that person. Please think ahead and be certain your emergency pick-up list is complete and accurate at all times.

Please note that we will dismiss students and close the school based on the Martin County School District guidance. Every effort is made to keep our children safe at Apple Tree Academy. We apologize in advance if our closings cause any inconvenience. The school re-openings are at the discretion of Apple Tree Academy and the Florida Department of Children and Family (DCF). Please check Apple Tree Academy's website, KidReports, Facebook Page, local TV and radio for re-opening dates. Reopening dates are **NOT** dependent on county schools. Full tuition is due as Apple Tree Academy will pay our teachers for disaster days.

Thank You

Apple Tree Academy would like to thank you for entrusting us with the care and education of your child (ren). We consider it our privilege to work with you in introducing your child to the wonderful world of learning. Each child is encouraged to progress in a nurturing Christian environment designed to foster cognitive, physical, social, spiritual, and emotional growth with a love for Jesus.

Outdoor activities, music, arts and crafts, games and language and literacy will be daily activities in your child's life while growing at Apple Tree Academy. With each new activity, your child is learning how to respectfully interact with others, to cooperate and communicate with greater skill, and to feel good about themselves through increased confidence and self-esteem. Our goal is to create lifelong memories.

Our teachers are excited to guide and stimulate your child's imagination and desire to learn. Our individualized attention and low student to teacher ratio presents an opportunity for a gently structured learning environment conducive to learning and school readiness. Our graduates successfully transition to the Kindergarten classroom at our local elementary schools. We are blessed to have this opportunity to impact your child and your family at Apple Tree Academy!

Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.