AristoCat Children's Academy

Employee Handbook

Mission Statement:

AristoCat Children's Academy exists to provide an affordable, safe, developmentally appropriate gateway to a bright future. We are committed to strengthening the bridge between your work and family life by creating a special place to support them. We aim to provide a stimulating learning experience that promotes each child's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. Our goal is to support children's desire to be lifelong learners.

Introduction:

At AristoCat Children's Academy, we are committed to fair, respectful employment practices and a professional workplace. Every role supports our licensing compliance, child safety, and educational quality. Employees are expected to model professionalism, integrity, and respectful teamwork at all times as outlined in this handbook.

About this handbook:

This handbook is designed to provide employees with a general understanding of the personnel policies at AristoCat Children's Academy. We encourage you to read and become familiar with its contents, as it will answer many of the common questions regarding your employment and daily responsibilities.

While this handbook serves as a valuable resource, it cannot cover every situation or address every possible question that may arise during your employment.

To maintain flexibility in managing our operations, the leadership of AristoCat Children's Academy reserves the right to change, revise, or eliminate any policy, practice, or benefit described in this handbook at any time, with or without notice.

Please note that the contents of this handbook do not constitute, nor should they be interpreted as, a contract of employment. Employment with AristoCat Children's Academy is **at will**, meaning that either the employee or the Academy may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause or notice, and for any reason not prohibited by law. Any oral or written representations that conflict with this at-will policy are invalid and should not be relied upon by any current or prospective employee.

Part I:

Employment & Workplace Policies

Background Screening and Live Scan Fingerprints:

All prospective employees must be found eligible through a Child Care Licensing (CCL) background check.
Background checks are submitted directly through dlbc.utah.gov. Once the individual is associated with a program, a Livescan fingerprint form is generated. This form must be printed and taken to the fingerprinting appointment.
The initial hiring cost for required background checks and fingerprinting is $62. This fee may be paid in cash or via Venmo directly to the administration, or by credit card in the office. Payment must be received before the background check can be authorized, and the Livescan form is generated.
The cost is reimbursable with proof of payment on the first paycheck.

Background checks completed for other organizations do not meet the requirements of this rule. For Child Care Licensing, an approved background check includes reviewing an individual's history through eight sources:

- Three in-state checks
- Two national checks
- Three interstate checks

CCL also checks the Utah Sex Offender Registry to identify any registered sex offenders who reside near the childcare facility.

Qualifications for Employment:

To ensure a fair and consistent approach in hiring, transfers, and promotions, AristoCat Children's Academy follows the guidelines established by the Utah Civil Rights Commission's Guide to Lawful and Unlawful Pre-Employment Inquiries and complies with the United States and Utah Civil Rights Acts, as amended.
When evaluating candidates, we consider the following criteria:

1. **Background Check** – Passing an OBP background check through childcare licensing.
2. **Commitment and Enthusiasm** – A demonstrated willingness and enthusiasm to contribute to AristoCat Children's Academy and to support our mission, goals, and values.
3. **Professional Attitude and Teamwork** – A positive, cooperative attitude that fosters collaboration with the Academy's leadership, staff, and director on duty.
4. **Qualifications and Compliance** – Fulfillment of any additional qualifications or requirements specified by the **Utah Administrative Code**, **Department of Health and Human Services – Child Care Licensing**, or any other applicable laws or regulations that may replace or supplement these standards.

By applying these criteria, we strive to maintain a fair, transparent, and legally compliant selection process that supports the success and integrity of our organization.

Policy for Hiring Competent Team Members:

All applicants will participate in an interview conducted by a member of the management team to ensure they meet the Academy's professional standards and align with our educational philosophy.
All employees are required to complete the New Teacher Training program as well as the Ongoing Training outlined below. These training programs supplement each team member's educational background and prior experience, strengthening their ability to effectively support the developmental, cultural, and individual needs of the children we serve.

Core Employee Guidelines:

ACA caregivers provide care in a manner that maximizes students' enjoyment and personal development while preventing harm to themselves, others, or property.

1. **Commitment to Parents**: ACA caregivers recognize that the parents of enrolled children deserve the highest quality childcare. Each employee takes personal responsibility for every child's care and experience, striving to meet or exceed each parent's expectations. Caregivers willingly and patiently answer parents' questions, listen attentively to concerns, and reassure parents that their children will be cared for as if they were their own.
2. **Respect for Children**: ACA caregivers acknowledge that children have valid concerns, fears, and desires. Staff strive to honor children's requests and answer questions, even when every question cannot be fully resolved, or every wish cannot be granted. All interactions with children should be conducted respectfully, with caregivers discussing issues thoughtfully and kindly.

Probationary Period & Performance Evaluation Policy:

1. **Initial 90-Day Probationary Period:** All newly hired employees will complete a 90-day probationary period. This period provides time for training, acclimation to job responsibilities, and evaluation of the employee's ability to meet AristoCat Children's Academy's expectations for performance and conduct. At the end of the probationary period, the employee and the Director on duty will review progress and determine continued employment based on factors such as attendance, punctuality, professionalism, and quality of work.
2. **Performance Evaluation During Probation:** Throughout the probationary period, employee performance will be assessed both formally and informally by the Director on duty and any supervising staff. Feedback and performance discussions will be provided, and all evaluation documents will be placed in the employee's permanent personnel file.
3. **Eligibility for Benefits:** Employees become eligible for employment benefits only after completing the probationary period.
4. **Ongoing Evaluations:** Following the probationary period, employees will receive annual performance evaluations. Additional evaluations may be conducted at the Director on duty's discretion.
5. Evaluations will consider work habits, job performance, efficiency, dependability, and other relevant criteria.

Promotions:

AristoCat Children's Academy is committed to promoting staff from within whenever possible. All promotion decisions are based on an employee's abilities, efficiency, conduct, readiness to assume new responsibilities, and loyalty to the Academy.

Employees are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the qualifications and expectations of higher-level positions so they can prepare for future advancement opportunities.

Each employee is responsible for informing the Director of their interest in pursuing a new or open position.

Performance evaluations serve as an ideal time to communicate career goals, professional interests, and desire for advancement.

Training, Meetings, and In-Service Days:

Monthly staff meetings, all training, and quarterly in-service days are mandatory.

Absences may be excused by a director on duty with cause and a plan to make up the missed training.

Children are not permitted to attend these meetings or training days.

Employees are responsible for arranging alternate care for their own children during these times.

New Teacher Training:

All team members must meet the following minimum training requirements within 30 days of their hire date:

1. **Childcare licensing: Pre-service training.** Child care training | Division of Licensing and Background Checks
2. **Provider Code of Conduct Review.** DLBC rules | Division of Licensing and Background Checks

3. **Sexual Awareness Training** is required for our Liability Insurance. **Abuse Prevention Systems**
4. **Certification in American Red Cross or American Heart Association infant, child, and adult cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).** This course is offered every month. To register, please get in touch with the Park City Fire Service, Summit County District, at (435)649-6706. Pre-registration is required.
5. **Certification in infant, child, and adult first aid with AED.** This course is offered every month. To register, please get in touch with the Park City Fire Service, Summit County District, at (435) 649 - 6706.
6. **Food handlers training and certification**. This class can be taken online at www.utahfoodsafety.com and by sending the certificate to acacademy@ymail.com. Ask the director on duty for further instructions if needed.

Annual Training Requirements:

During and following your first year of employment, all team members shall be personally responsible for:

1. At least 20 hours of training per licensing year (June 1–May 31) in one or more of the following areas: child development, guidance and discipline, developmentally appropriate practices, nutrition, health and safety, communication skills, professionalism, and business practices. (New teacher orientation and orientation videos are counted as part of your training.)
2. Maintaining current certification for infant, child, and adult CPR (required every 2 years).

Training resource links are available on the ACA website under Resources.
To receive reimbursement or compensation for completed training, certificates and receipts must be submitted to the office.
Payment will appear in the next payroll period.

Personnel Records:

All personnel records are securely stored in AristoCat Children's Academy's main office and are accessible only to administrative staff and available to staff upon request.
Reviews must take place in the presence of the director on duty, and documents may not be removed from the file.

Updating Personal Files:

To ensure your personnel file remains accurate and complete, please:

1. Submit any changes to your name, address, or phone number.
2. Provide a copy—while keeping the original—of all training records, including certificates and payment receipts.

Work Schedule Policy:

You must follow the posted schedule to ensure that we continually meet the state regulations for ratios and supervision. You are responsible for being here on time and at your post at your scheduled time.

1. Changes may be made to ensure compliance with ratios. Check the schedule daily.
2. There will be no make-up hours for days missed. This does not apply to approved PTO.
3. A team member becomes a visitor when they are at the academy but not on the schedule. This can be before the start of a shift or after being released by the director on duty.
4. Employees are paid on posted/ approved schedules only.

Payroll and Pay Period:

Employee compensation is determined by various factors, including but not limited to job classification, education, experience, evaluation outcomes, job performance, and staffing needs within the Academy.
All paychecks will be directly deposited from Paychex biweekly (every other Friday). All payroll deductions will be made according to the law, employment agreement, or upon the employee's request. Deductions may include, but may not be limited to the following:

1. Federal and State income tax
2. Social Security tax

3. Training or classes
4. Garnishments
5. Childcare
6. Summer Camps/ Activities for children
7. Photography

Paystubs and payroll information will be posted and can be accessed through Paychex.
An account must be set up and established before the end of the first pay period.

Bonus':

Bonuses, if given, are based on performance and yearly staff evaluations.
All bonuses are given at the discretion of the owner.

Gifts or Kickbacks:

Employees may accept nominal, customary gifts from current or former clients that are given as a general expression of appreciation. However, employees must not accept cash, loans, personal payments, or gifts that could reasonably be perceived as influencing professional judgment, creating favoritism, or establishing an expectation of special treatment. Any gift of significant value or that raises a potential conflict of interest must be disclosed to the Director on duty for guidance.

Timekeeping and Timecard Alterations:

Employees must clock in and out within five (5) minutes of their scheduled shift using the approved timekeeping procedure. Any timekeeping errors must be reported in writing before the end of the pay period. Intentional failure to clock in or out correctly, or falsification of time records, may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.
All caregivers must notify the director on duty as soon as possible after symptoms begin, and no later than one (1) hour before the scheduled start time when reasonably possible.
If the absence is foreseeable (appointments/procedures), the absence should be pre-arranged by requesting it off, or trading shifts with another staff member.

- If the employee is unable to secure a substitute, they must notify the director on duty immediately and report their inability to find coverage.

Definition of "Officially Ill - An employee is considered officially ill if they experience an illness that:

- Impairs normal bodily functions,
- Causes extreme pain, and/or
- Causes a loss of judgment.

All reported illnesses are documented. Any illness lasting two days or longer requires verification via a doctor's note. Failure to provide a doctor's note when required may result in disciplinary action.
The Director on duty retains final authority over shift coverage and staffing decisions.

Absence Types:

1. Vacation- Requested and arranged at least two weeks prior, the employee is responsible for finding another staff member to take their shifts.
2. Unexcused absences- Calling out less than one (1) hour before a scheduled shift (when reasonably avoidable), failure to follow the call-in procedure (including contacting someone who is not the on-duty Director on duty), failure to secure coverage when required, or a no-call/no-show.
3. Pre-arranged, temporary leave such as extended illness, pregnancy, or conditions covered under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), when the employee meets all legal eligibility requirements.

Absence and Late Policy:
You are allotted three (3) late arrivals in a thirty (30) scheduled shift timeframe. After the third, you will be disqualified from Holiday Pay.
A doctor's note may excuse absence if the director on duty deems it applicable.
Please schedule all appointments on your day off.

Bereavement Policy:
Our bereavement policy aims to offer support and understanding to our employees during the challenging time following the loss of a loved one. We want to ensure that our employees have the necessary time and resources to grieve, attend to personal matters, and find solace during this period.
Eligibility: All employees, regardless of their employment type, are eligible for paid bereavement leave.
Length of Leave: Upon the death of an immediate family member (spouse, child, parent, or sibling), employees are entitled to up to 5 days of paid bereavement leave. Employees are granted up to 3 days of unpaid bereavement leave for the loss of other family members or close friends.
This time off allows employees to handle funeral arrangements, seek emotional support, and cope with their loss.
Notification and Documentation: Employees should promptly notify the director on duty about the need for bereavement leave. Please provide the deceased's name and the leave's expected duration. In some cases, employees may be required to provide appropriate documentation, such as an obituary notice or funeral program, to support their request for bereavement leave.
Return to Work: Employees are requested to notify their director on duty when they are ready to return to work following their bereavement leave. We understand that the transition back to work can be challenging, and we are committed to providing support during this time. Reasonable accommodation will be made to facilitate a smooth return and help employees readjust to their work responsibilities.
Paid bereavement leave is paid at the employee's regular scheduled hours.

Workers Compensation:
In the event of a job-related injury, immediate notice should be given to the director on duty and relayed to the AristoCat Children's Academy Director on duty and leadership team. An incident report should be filled out and should include the nature of the injury, how it happened, the time of day, witnesses, pictures, if possible, etc. AristoCat Children's Academy maintains workers' compensation insurance for job-related accidents.

Staff Children Policy:
Team members are welcome and encouraged to enroll their children in the Academy. Children who are 4 years and older DO NOT count against the group size ratio when the team member is actively on the clock.
Staff children under the age of 4 years will be charged a discounted tuition rate of $625 per month, regardless of attendance.
Tuition rate does NOT apply to Summer Camp or any other fees.
Tuition costs will be deducted from payroll unless otherwise discussed with the administration.
All children are to be treated and cared for equally. No favors may be shown to employees' children, or otherwise. Favoring any child (including your own) while on the clock will result in disciplinary action.

Nursing Staff Member:
Nursing mothers are permitted two nursing breaks per day in addition to their regular lunch break. Nursing breaks are a total of 15 minutes each, and the lunch break is 30 minutes. This accommodation will be provided until the child reaches one year of age.
Team members are strongly encouraged to pump to help maintain a consistent supply of milk for times when they may be unable to reach their child before the child becomes hungry.

Working from Home:
Work from home is not permitted unless pre-approved in writing by administration.

Employee Benefits:
AristoCat Children's Academy offers employee benefits to all eligible employees to support work-life balance, rest, and personal well-being. PTO may be used for vacation, personal time, or illness.

Paid Time Off (PTO) Policy – Use It or Lose It:
Eligibility and Accrual:

- PTO begins to accrue to full-time employees after 90 days of continuous employment.
- PTO will be available for employee redemption after their 1st anniversary date.
- PTO requests are subject to approval based on staffing and operational needs.

Employees are encouraged to take their PTO to rest and recharge—unused time will be lost at year's end.
The amount of PTO earned is based on the employee's longevity of employment, as outlined in the policy as written by Paychex.
Usage:

- PTO is intended to replace regularly scheduled work hours when an employee is not working.
- PTO can be used for unplanned absences (e.g., illness) must be communicated as soon as possible.
- PTO cannot be used to maintain income during times of lesser working hours for any reason.
- PTO may only be used to replace scheduled work hours the employee would otherwise have worked.

Roll Over:

- 50% of total PTO accrual will roll over into a new fiscal year on December 31st.
- 50% of the total PTO accrual will be forfeited if not used before December 31st.

Separation from Employment
PTO is not paid out upon resignation or termination of employment.

Holiday Pay:
AristoCat Children's Academy offers paid holidays under the following circumstances:

1. An employee who works a full-time schedule consisting of 25 hours or more per week during the pay period that includes the holiday.
2. Employees worked their scheduled shifts before and after the holiday.
3. Employees have not had any unexcused absences from shifts, or required trainings/meetings (see Training & Meetings) during the current quarter.
4. Employees have followed their assigned schedules. In reference to clocking in when scheduled, clocking out promptly when work is completed, and the employee has been excused by the director on duty. In addition, taking a full 30-minute designated lunch break each workday.
5. Employees are current on their annual licensing training hours, 5 hours per quarter.
6. Employees are past their 90-day probationary period.
7. Employees have not had more than three (3) late arrivals in a thirty (30) scheduled shift timeframe.

Holiday pay for Thanksgiving and Christmas breaks will be issued according to the above qualifications, based on an 8-hour day, aligned with each employee's regular weekly work schedule.

Sexual and Other Forms of Harassment:
AristoCat Children's Academy is committed to maintaining a work environment that is free from unlawful harassment. Harassment in any form—whether through actions, words, jokes, gestures, or comments—based on an individual's sex, race, ethnicity, age, religion, disability, or any other legally protected characteristic is strictly prohibited.

Any employee who believes they have been subjected to sexual harassment or any other form of unlawful harassment by an employee, parent, visitor, vendor, or other non-employee during the course of their workday must promptly report the incident to their immediate director on duty or directly to the AristoCat Children's Academy Director on duty. All reports will be taken seriously, handled promptly, and addressed in accordance with applicable laws and ACA policy. Retaliation against any individual who makes a good-faith report of harassment or participates in an investigation is strictly prohibited.

Cause for Discharge:

Each of the following items may constitute cause for disciplinary action or the dismissal of an employee:

1. Neglect or abuse of a child and/or failure to report such an offense to the director on duty for the day such offense was witnessed in compliance with the state health department.
2. Theft, misuse, or unauthorized use of AristoCat Children's Academy property, including timecard falsification.
3. Insubordination.
4. Absence without authorized leave.
5. three (3) late arrivals in a thirty (30) scheduled shift timeframe
6. Unexcused absenteeism or continued tardiness.
7. Unprofessionalism- professionalism will be expected from each staff member. Inappropriate or indiscreet conversations with parents, children, or staff can be grounds for dismissal. Substance use, misuse, and/or abuse.
8. Not adhering to company or licensing policy or procedure.

Nothing in this policy alters the at-will nature of employment or limits rights protected by law.

Conflict of Interest, Outside Employment, Gifts, and Confidentiality Policy:

All employees are required to sign a Conflict-of-Interest Agreement. The agreement provides as follows:

All employees of AristoCat Children's Academy owe a duty of fidelity to the Academy. Employees must not place themselves in any situation in which their personal interests conflict, or could reasonably be perceived to conflict, with this duty.

All provisions of this agreement remain in full force and effect for a period of thirty-six (36) months following the employee's termination date.

Any employee who violates this agreement may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Expectation of Disclosure:

Employees must avoid any situation, relationship, or activity that creates—or has the potential to create conflict between their personal interests and the interests of AristoCat Children's Academy. Employees must not engage in any conduct that compromises, or appears to compromise, their professional judgment or their ability to act in the best interests of the Academy.

Employees must promptly disclose to the company any material information regarding relationships, ownership, or business interests directly or indirectly that they or an immediate family member have with any person or business that:

- Competes with the company or provides similar services.
- This includes caring for currently enrolled children or children previously enrolled at any time during regular business hours within the past 36 months.
- Maintains any client or employee relationship with the company.

Outside Employment or Business Activity:

During business hours, employees are prohibited from providing similar services to previous/current client(s) and/or employees.

Confidential Information:

Confidential information (printed, electronic, or otherwise) relating to the Company's past, present, future, and contemplated assets, operations, products or services, industrial designs, inventions, production methods, and marketing procedures must never be disclosed to anyone outside the Company's organization without the Company's express written authorization.

Harm to Business or Reputation:

Employees must refrain from engaging in conduct that could adversely affect the Company's business or reputation. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Publicly criticizing the Company, its management, employees, or students in any form.
- Engaging in criminal conduct or other behavior that could harm the Company's business or reputation.

Nothing in this policy is intended to limit rights protected by law.

Personal Vehicle Policy:

During employment, using a personal vehicle to transport any enrolled student is prohibited.
CDL Certification will be required for using AristoCat Children's Academy buses. This policy applies regardless of parental permission.

Grievance Procedures and Appeal:

Any employee who feels unfairly treated, reprimanded, discriminated against, or unjustly dismissed may appeal to the director or owner in written format within three days of the occurrence. If the director on duty cannot resolve the issue, a written statement must be sent to the AristoCat Children's Academy leadership team. A consultation time will be established for all involved in the matter. The decision of the AristoCat Children's Academy leadership team will be final.

Appearance & Demeanor:

ACA operates within a highly professional environment. As such, all its employees are required to present themselves respectably. In addition, caregivers are expected to be highly respectful to all parents, children, and visitors.

Dress Code Policy:

- Leadership team and office personnel - must wear a professional shirt, business casual attire—slacks, khakis, knee-length skirt, button-up shirt, collared shirt, or nice blouse.
- General teaching team: Must wear a clean uniform shirt, which is provided at the beginning of employment.
- Uniform Shirts are to be seen at all times.
- Bottoms must be black, khaki, or grey. Shorts, slacks, capris, and leggings are all acceptable styles of bottoms, as long as they do not have holes or tears. Shorts must be within 3 inches of the knee. Skirts must be below the knee or longer. Blue jeans may be worn on Fridays only. Sweatpants and pajama-style bottoms may not be worn.
- Undershirts must be black, grey, or white—no holes or frays on any of the clothing.
- Shoes must be appropriate for the weather conditions.
- No employee is to be barefoot in the school at any time during the hours of operation. Basic flip-flops are not allowed.

- Tattoos and piercings are allowed, as long as they are covered and/or do not prove to be offensive to any student, client, or other staff member.

Cell Phones and Personal Items:

Cell phones, bags, purses, and all other personal belongings are not permitted in the classroom while employees are providing direct care to children or while on the clock.

If an employee must place or receive a phone call, they must notify their coworkers and take an official break away from the classroom.

Employees should advise their family members that, in the event of an emergency, they must contact the employee through the ACA business phone line. An ACA Director on duty will relay the message and provide further directions as appropriate.

Coats, bags, purses, and other personal belongings must be stored in designated areas outside of the classroom or secured in the employee's vehicle during the workday.

Social Media, Texting & Electronic Communication Policy:

Employees must represent AristoCat Children's Academy (ACA) professionally in all electronic communication, including social media, texting, and email.

Employees may not use personal devices to communicate with clients about Academy business or children in care, share or discuss client information, or post images or content involving children or families. Employees may not post, direct, encourage, or allow friends or family members to post content on their behalf that violates confidentiality, child privacy, or reasonably harms the Academy, its staff, students, or operations.

Employees are accountable for the online content they create or influence. Failure to promptly remove prohibited content when requested may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Nothing in this policy limits rights protected by law.

Code of Integrity & Zero-Tolerance Policy:

To maintain a safe, professional, and child-focused environment, the use, possession, or influence of tobacco products, alcohol, illegal substances, or sexually explicit materials is strictly prohibited on AristoCat Children's Academy premises and in Center vehicles at all times. This policy applies to all employees and violations may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Provider Code of Conduct:

1) The provider shall ensure that staff and volunteers are supervised, qualified, and trained to:
   (a) meet the needs of the clients as required by rule; and
   (b) follow any applicable laws, policies, procedures, and rules.
2) Each provider shall accurately represent services offered, policies, and procedures to clients, guardians, prospective clients, and the public.
3) Each provider shall create, maintain, and comply with applicable written policies and safe practices that address the appropriate treatment of clients.
4) (4) Each provider shall protect clients from abuse, neglect, harm, exploitation, mistreatment, fraud, and any action that may compromise the health and safety of clients through acts or omissions and shall instruct and encourage others to do the same.
5) Each provider shall refrain from using or permitting the use of corporal punishment and shall only utilize restraint as an intervention to protect individuals from self-harm, from harming others, or from damaging property.
6) Each provider serving clients under the Division of Services for People with Disabilities shall comply with the rules on restraint as described in Rule R539-4.

7) Each provider shall maintain the health and safety of clients.
8) Each provider may not be under the influence or use alcoholic beverages or controlled substances without medical prescription while serving clients.
9) Each provider serving people with disabilities shall only use aversive procedures after review and approval of the provider human rights committee or the Human Rights Committee as defined in Section R539-3-4.
10) Each provider shall provide services and supervision that is commensurate with the skills, abilities, behaviors, and needs of each client.
11) Each provider shall give each staff a copy of this rule, Provider Code of Conduct and Client Rights as part of their initial employment.
12) Each provider shall sign and ensure each staff signs off on reading, understanding, and agreeing to follow this rule, Provider Code of Conduct and Client Rights before working with clients.
13) Each provider shall inform clients of each right listed in Section R380-80-6.
14) Each provider shall maintain a copy of the client's rights, signed by each client or client's guardian in each client record.
15) Each provider shall prominently display a poster in each facility that notifies clients of their rights.

Client Rights:

1) The provider shall ensure that each client has the right to:
   (a) be informed of their rights;
   (b) be treated with dignity, respect, and fairness;
   (c) be free from potential harm or acts of violence;
   (d) be free from discrimination;
   (e) be free from abuse, neglect, mistreatment, exploitation, and fraud;
   (f) have equal access to food, shelter, and health services;
   (g) be free from retaliation for reporting any violation to their rights;
   (h) privacy of current and closed records; and
   (i) communicate and visit with family, attorney, clergy, physician, counselor, or case manager or worker assigned to client, unless therapeutically contraindicated or court restricted.
2) The provider shall inform each client of policies and procedures that affect client or guardian's ability to make informed decisions regarding client care including:
   1) program expectations, requirements, mandatory or voluntary aspects of the program;
   2) consequences for non-compliance;
   3) reasons for involuntary termination from the program and criteria for re-admission;
   4) program service fees and billing; and
   5) safety and characteristics of the physical environment where services will be provided.

Part II:

Childcare Operations & Safety

The following policies govern daily classroom operations, child safety, licensing compliance, and program implementation.

Daily Operations & Child Release/Safety Procedures:

Greeting Children and Parents:

All children must be signed in upon arrival by a parent or an authorized, parent-approved adult. ACA caregivers are required to greet both children and parents warmly and professionally during the sign-in process.
If a child and/or parent appears anxious during drop-off, caregivers should provide calm reassurance, explain that such feelings are common, and affirm that the child will be well cared for. Caregivers may further ease anxiety by briefly explaining the activities and experiences planned for the child that day.

Classroom Schedules and Curriculum Implementation:

A daily classroom schedule is posted in each classroom. All team members are expected to know the location of the schedule, understand how to read it, and follow it within thirty (30) minutes of the posted activity times.
Caregivers must also be familiar with the location of curriculum materials and classroom supplies, and are expected to review and implement lesson plans daily in an age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate manner.

Check-out Procedures:

Children will not be released to anyone not pre-authorized on the emergency list.
Anyone listed on the student's enrollment paperwork is authorized to drop off and/or pick up the child using their personal access code.
Additional Contacts for all students are listed in the profile section of the classroom app.
For emergency pick-ups, written notification must be sent in advance via the classroom app or by email.
The designated person must present a valid Photo ID before the child is released.

Intoxicated Parent Procedure:

If a parent or pre-approved, authorized adult arrives to pick up a child and appears to be visibly intoxicated or impaired, ACA employees must immediately notify a director on duty before releasing the child.
If the ACA Director on duty determines that the individual is impaired to a degree that could endanger the child's safety or well-being, the child will not be released to that individual. The director on duty will follow ACA's established safety procedures, which may include contacting the child's alternate authorized pick-up person and, if necessary, appropriate authorities, in accordance with Center policy and applicable law.

Supervision & Child Safety:

Children are never left unattended at any time within the Center.
This is strictly enforced during diaper changes and during all meal and snack times.
All cabinets and cupboards accessible to children are equipped with safety locks.
ACA caregivers are responsible for ensuring these locks are properly re-secured immediately after each use.
In addition, all employees must ensure that the Center's security doors remain closed and secured at all times to maintain a safe and controlled environment.

Sunscreen Policy:
For your child's safety and health, we apply sunscreen each time we go outside and at two-hour intervals if outside time is prolonged between March and November.
We provide sunscreen; if your child has an allergy to our sunscreen, you can provide an alternative sunscreen accompanied by our sunscreen waiver.

Preparing for Departure:

1. At pick-up, caregivers must ensure that each child is clean and presentable. Caregivers are required to ask parents or guardians whether they would like their child to receive a fresh diaper when applicable.
2. A fresh diaper change is **mandatory** if the last documented diaper change occurred more than thirty (30) minutes before pick-up.
3. Caregivers must also offer assistance with dressing the child before departure, as needed.
4. All personal belongings for children scheduled to go home—including clothing, shoes, coats, artwork, notes, and other items—must be organized and ready for pick-up at all times, and no later than 5:00 p.m. or before the caregiver's shift ends, whichever occurs first.
5. Any incident reports of children in your care are to be handed off with detail and explanation to the closing staff before the exit of your shift.

Age Specific Care:
—In addition to the "Child Care" guidelines, ACA caregivers should utilize the following methods to enhance the quality of care for all infants using the Center:

- Caregivers should ensure that every piece of equipment is wiped clean before placing an infant therein and shall ensure that each child is securely buckled into every highchair, bouncy chair, or stroller that is in use.
- Infants are allowed to utilize swings, bouncy chairs, and/or highchairs for a maximum of 20 minutes at a time.
- When putting them down for a nap, infants shall always be placed on their backs into a crib. Only children over age 1 may be placed on a cot for napping.
- Infants do not have blankets in class. Only swaddle wraps with fasteners (Velcro, buttons, zipper, etc.) are permitted.
- A child over the age of 3 months or a child who can roll over on their own is not to be swaddled with their arms inside the swaddle wrap.
- Children are never allowed to have a propped bottle/sippy cup while in care, as this is an extreme choking hazard.
- Infants who have just been put down to sleep shall be checked on by a caregiver every 5 minutes until they fall asleep. Thereafter, sleeping infants shall be checked on by a caregiver at least every 20 minutes.
- Daily app documentation must be completed per the *Daily Documentation Requirements*, including lesson descriptions, pictures, diapering, sleep, and meal logs.
- All babies' bottles shall be labeled with a baby's name in the first few moments after their arrival. All baby formulas that remain unused or undrunk after two hours from the time of making (even if refrigerated) shall be discarded.

Children under two years of age never watch TV or videos or use computers.
Children over the age of two get screen time on a limited basis.
It must be approved and must fit the current lesson plan, except for Classroom Holiday parties.

Diapering Procedure and Toilet Training Procedures:

- Children in diapers must have their diapers checked or changed at **least every two hours**.
- If a diaper is documented as dry and unsoiled during a check, it should be re-checked within **15 minutes** to ensure maximum comfort.
- Diapers must be checked or changed **promptly upon waking** and **immediately after any wetting or soiling**.
- Diaper changes may only be performed on a **designated diapering surface**.
- **Gloves must be worn at all times** during diaper changes to protect against cytomegalovirus (CMV) and other pathogens. Pregnant employees are at particular risk, as CMV exposure commonly occurs through contact with the urine or saliva of infected young children.
- **Hands-free, plastic-lined, leakproof waste containers** must be used for diaper disposal. These containers must be **inaccessible to children**, prevent contact with body fluids, and control odors.

****ONE HAND IS TO BE KEPT ON THE CHILD AT ALL TIMES**** (including when turned away from the changing table)

Toilet Training:

- Children in toilet training will be assisted in the restroom at **40-minute intervals**.
- Children under three (3) years old **must never be left alone or unsupervised** in the restroom.
- Caregivers must ensure that the child is **clean, fully dressed, and that both the child's and caregiver's hands have been properly washed** before resuming classroom activities.
- Children who are not fully potty trained must continue to have **diaper checks or changes according to the guidelines above** until they are reliably trained.
- These procedures are required to maintain sanitary conditions, minimize the spread of germs, and protect the health of staff, children, families, and the greater community.

Definition of Fully Potty Trained:

Fully potty trained refers to a child who can independently recognize the need and manage the process with minimal to no assistance. The key components for us to consider a child 'fully potty trained' are:

- Can communicate the need to use the toilet before having an accident.
- Uses the toilet for both urination and bowel movements regularly.
- Child has had 3 or fewer accidents per week.
- Wears underwear throughout the entire day
- The child can independently pull clothing up and down, wipe, flush, and wash hands.
- Wears a pull-up for rest times; however, it is consistently dry upon waking up.

ALL CHILDREN MUST WEAR A DIAPER, PULL-UP, OR UNDERWEAR AT ALL TIMES

Cloth Diaper Policy:

AristoCat Children's Academy accommodates parents who wish to use cloth diapers for their children.
Parents choosing this option **must provide a hands-free Diaper Genie and the appropriate bag inserts**.
This requirement is intended to reduce the risk of spreading germs and other disease-causing agents. All cloth diaper waste must be placed in a separate, plastic-lined, hands-free container that is **inaccessible to children**. This method helps contain odors and prevents children from coming into contact with body fluids.
All cloth diapers must be sent home at the end of each day.

Diapering, handwashing, and same-sink sanitization procedure signage is to be posted at all applicable areas in accordance with Child Care Licensing rules and regulations.

Handwashing:

At ACA, caregivers wash their own hands thoroughly (with soap) for at least 20 seconds at the following times:

- Upon arrival or entry into the building.
- At entry to any classroom.
- Before and after any meal service.
- Before and after making bottles.
- After each occurrence of toileting or diapering.
- Upon re-entry from recess or lunch breaks.
- Before and after sensory or art activities.
- After completing ANY cleaning task, including wiping down tables or taking out the trash.
- After coming into contact with ANY bodily fluid, including saliva or mucus.
- Before and after administering medication.
- Before and after performing any first aid procedure.
- After coming into contact with ANY animal.
- Before exiting the building.

Licensing Infractions and Gross Violation Policy:

Compliance with Utah Child Care Licensing rules and AristoCat Children's Academy (ACA) policies is a condition of employment. Employees are responsible for following all licensing requirements and Academy procedures applicable to their role.

When a violation occurs within an employee's control, ACA may take corrective action, including coaching, retraining, written warnings, probation, suspension, or termination, based on the severity, risk to child safety, frequency, and prior history. No discipline will be issued if a citation is overturned or determined not to be the employee's responsibility.

Post-Check-In Illness Procedures:

If a child becomes ill after arrival and check-in at ACA, caregivers must follow these procedures:

1. The child is **comforted and temporarily separated** from contact with other children to prevent the spread of illness.
2. Parents or guardians are **notified immediately** of the child's condition.
3. Parents or authorized pick-up people are requested to **come and collect the child** as soon as possible.
4. While awaiting pick-up, the child remains **under the supervision and care of ACA staff**, receiving comfort and attention until they are safely released to their parent or guardian.

These procedures ensure the well-being of the sick child while protecting the health and safety of all children in the Center.

Immunization Verification Procedures:

To ensure the health and safety of all children at AristoCat Children's Academy (ACA), caregivers must follow these procedures to verify that children are properly immunized:

1. **Submission of Immunization Records -** In compliance with state and federal regulations, parents of all regular attendees must provide a copy of their child(ren)'s immunization records. These records are filed in the ACA main office.
2. **Pre-Registration Requirement -** Parents registering their children for ACA services in advance are required to submit immunization records as a condition of enrollment.
3. **Attestation of Immunization -** Parents of children who do not provide immunization records, as well as parents of "drop-in" children, must complete and sign an **Attestation of Immunization** form at the time of enrollment, confirming that their child(ren) have received all required immunizations.

4. **Exemption Policy -** Children whose parents choose to "opt out" of immunizations **will not be admitted** to ACA without an official, written exemption released by the **County Health Department**, regardless of the reason for opting out.

Note: Of the fourteen (14) reportable communicable diseases, nine (9) have available immunizations: Diphtheria, Hepatitis, Influenza, Measles, Mumps, Pertussis, Poliomyelitis, Rubella, and Tuberculosis.

Child Safety & Protection Policy:

AristoCat Children's Academy (ACA) is committed to providing a safe, secure, and nurturing environment for all children. Protecting children from harm is a core responsibility of every staff member and volunteer and a condition of employment.

Prohibited Conduct:

Any form of grooming behavior, abuse, neglect, exploitation, or inappropriate interaction with a child is strictly prohibited. Grooming includes behaviors intended to gain a child's trust (or a parent's trust), manipulate boundaries, or prevent disclosure of abuse.

Staff must maintain professional, observable interactions with children at all times. One-on-one interactions should occur only in visible, accessible areas whenever possible.

The following behaviors are prohibited:

- Sexual, intimate, or inappropriate physical contact
- Inappropriate remarks, jokes, or conversations
- Coercive, manipulative, or emotionally harmful behavior
- Favoritism or special treatment toward individual children.
-

Reporting & Response:

All ACA staff are mandated reporters under Utah law and must immediately report any suspected child abuse, neglect, grooming behavior, or unsafe condition to a director on duty and to the appropriate authorities, in accordance with state law.

Upon suspicion or disclosure of abuse:

- Immediate steps will be taken to ensure the child's safety
- Required authorities will be notified without delay
- ACA will cooperate fully with investigations

Failure to report concerns may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Training & Awareness:

All staff receive ongoing training to recognize signs of abuse, neglect, and grooming behaviors and to follow proper reporting procedures. Training reinforces vigilance, professional boundaries, and child-centered safety practices.

Support:

ACA is committed to supporting affected children and families by providing information regarding appropriate resources and assistance when needed.

Signs of Abuse or Neglect:

Staff are trained to recognize and take seriously indicators that may include, but are not limited to:

- **Physical abuse:** unexplained bruises, burns, cuts, or injuries
- **Shaken baby syndrome:** breathing difficulty, loss of consciousness, or changes in responsiveness
- **Sexual abuse:** genital discomfort, bloody or stained clothing, or extreme behavioral changes
- **Emotional abuse:** severe withdrawal, fearfulness, or extreme mood changes
- **Neglect:** poor hygiene, lack of supervision, unmet medical needs, or inadequate nutrition.

Part III:

Health and Safety Guide

Employee Safety:

AristoCat Children's Academy (ACA) establishes clear **safety rules and regulations** to protect employees from work-related injuries. These rules are provided to every employee and reviewed during **initial orientation**.

ACA is committed to ensuring that caregivers have access to:

- All necessary **safety equipment**, and
- Ongoing **training** to perform their duties effectively and safely.

This policy reinforces ACA's dedication to maintaining a safe working environment for all staff members while supporting high-quality care for the children.

Facility Maintenance and Work Environment:

AristoCat Children's Academy (ACA) is responsible for maintaining a safe, functional, and high-quality working environment for both staff and children. This includes:

- Ensuring that all doors and windows are in proper working order
- Maintaining kitchen appliances and lighting so they function safely and efficiently
- Keeping all floor surfaces clean and well-maintained
- Ensuring that heating and cooling units in each room operate effectively

Regular inspections and maintenance are conducted to support the safety, comfort, and productivity of the Center's environment.

Equipment and Materials:

In addition to maintaining a safe and functional environment, AristoCat Children's Academy (ACA) provides caregivers with all necessary materials to effectively perform their duties. These materials include, but are not limited to:

- Age-appropriate toys, books, DVDs, and music CDs
- Food and drink, along with dishware
- Latex gloves and first aid kits
- An Employee Policies and Procedures Manual (one copy located in each classroom)
- Emergency and Disaster Plans
- Cleaning supplies and Bodily Fluids Kits
- Emergency Backpacks for field trips or disaster situations
- Administrative forms and general clerical supplies
- 2 Emergency Suitcases:
- A first aid kit with disposable latex gloves, cold pack, assorted band-aids, gauze pads, adhesive tape, topical antiseptic/antibiotic ointment, tweezers, scissors, and a first-aid reference guide
- Topical sting relief
- Sunscreen (SPF 15 or higher)
- Fresh Water
- Various non-perishable snacks
- An emergency space blanket

These materials are provided to ensure that caregivers have the resources needed to maintain a safe, healthy, and supportive environment for all children.

Blood-Borne Pathogens:

AristoCat Children's Academy (ACA) requires all employees to follow strict procedures to prevent exposure to blood-borne pathogens:

1. **Glove Use** - Employees **must wear latex gloves** whenever coming into contact with another person's bodily fluids (e.g., during diaper changes, cleaning wounds, or handling contaminated materials).
2. **Immediate Action After Contact -** If bodily fluids come into contact with the employee's skin, the area must be **immediately and thoroughly washed** with soap and water.
3. **Surface and Object Decontamination -** Any surface or object contaminated with bodily fluids must be **sterilized using an HB-Quat solution**.
4. **Disposal of Contaminated Gloves -** Used gloves must be disposed of in a **portable "Blood and Bodily Fluids Clean-Up Kit"** to prevent contamination of other areas.

These procedures are mandatory to protect the health and safety of both employees and children and to maintain compliance with health and safety regulations.

Part IIII:

Behavior and Relations Guide

Positive Guidance & Behavior Support Philosophy:

AristoCat Children's Academy is committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and respectful environment where children can develop self-regulation, social skills, and positive relationships.

In accordance with **Utah Administrative Code R381-100-12**, children's behavior is guided using developmentally appropriate, positive strategies that emphasize teaching and support rather than punishment.

Behavior is viewed as a form of communication. Caregivers model appropriate behavior, provide clear expectations, and use positive reinforcement, redirection, and consistent guidance to support each child's social and emotional development while maintaining the safety and well-being of all children.

Age Group	Developmentally Appropriate Behavioral Expectations	Positive Guidance Practices Employed
Infants	• Sleep and rest according to individual needs • Engage in quiet play and sensory exploration • Explore their environment through rolling, crawling, and reaching	Infants are not subject to discipline. In accordance with **R381-100-12**, caregivers provide a calm, responsive, and nurturing environment that supports exploration and emotional security. Staff respond promptly and consistently to infants' cues to meet physical and emotional needs and promote trust and safety.
Toddlers	• Begin learning to interact with peers • Practice emerging communication skills • Develop early self-regulation and independence	Caregivers use redirection, modeling, and gentle guidance, as permitted under **R381-100-12(4)**. When conflicts occur, children may be briefly separated and guided toward appropriate alternatives. Toddlers are supported in identifying emotions and understanding expectations while being reassured of their value and worth.
Preschoolers	• Use respectful and positive communication • Participate in cooperative play • Demonstrate developing problem-solving and empathy skills	Caregivers provide clear expectations, positive reinforcement, and consistent follow-through in compliance with **R381-100-12(3)**. Children are guided to resolve conflicts, make appropriate choices, and understand natural and logical consequences in a respectful and supportive manner.

Prohibited Guidance Practices:

In accordance with Utah Child Care Licensing Rules, the following practices are **strictly prohibited**:

- Corporal punishment or physical discipline of any kind
- Emotional abuse, humiliation, or intimidation
- Shouting or yelling at children
- Withholding food, rest, toileting, or basic needs
- Confinement in closets, locked rooms, or enclosed spaces
- Use of restraints, except for brief, gentle restraint necessary to protect a child or others from immediate harm.
- Children are always treated with dignity, respect, and compassion.

Self-Safety / Calming Periods:

When necessary to support a child in regaining self-control, a brief **self-safety or calming period** may be used in compliance with R381 requirements. These periods:

- Are developmentally appropriate
- Do not exceed **one minute per year of the child's age**
- They are used to help a child calm and regain control, **not as punishment**
- Include reassurance that the child is cared for and supported
- Are supervised and conducted in a safe, appropriate area

Children's Mental & Emotional Health:

AristoCat Children's Academy (ACA) is committed to supporting the mental health and emotional stability of all children in its care. This commitment is achieved through the following methods:

5. **Use of Video Equipment**

- Video games of any kind are **not permitted** in the Center.
- All movies shown to children must be rated **"G"** by the Motion Picture Association (MPA).
- Each film will also be independently reviewed by an ACA Director on duty to ensure that its content is appropriate for the children who will be watching it.

6. **Positive Reinforcement**

- ACA caregivers are instructed to actively observe and recognize positive behaviors, acts of kindness, and selfless actions exhibited by children each day.
- This reinforcement encourages a harmonious classroom environment and supports the emotional stability and self-esteem of the children recognized.
- **Positive Discipline**
  See the *Behavior & Relations Guide.*

Communication With Families:

Behavioral expectations and guidance practices are communicated to parents upon enrollment and reviewed as needed. Families are encouraged to partner with caregivers to support consistency between home and school.

Employee Relations – Interactions with Co-Workers:

To maintain a high standard of childcare services, ACA requires respectful, professional, and effective communication among all employees. Every ACA employee is expected to treat coworkers with courtesy and professionalism at all times.

This expectation includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. **Professional Communication -** Employees must use courteous and respectful language when speaking with or about coworkers. This applies to all forms of communication, including but not limited to verbal, written, email, text messages, social media, body language, and communication that occurs both inside and outside of the workplace.

2. **Prohibition of Gossip and Accusations -** Employees may not make accusations, engage in gossip, or spread rumors about coworkers, director on duty, families, or the business.
3. **Prompt and Professional Conflict Resolution -** Any workplace issues or concerns must be addressed promptly and handled in a civil, respectful, and professional manner.
4. **Teamwork and Shared Responsibility -** ACA caregivers are expected to work collaboratively as a team to ensure excellent care for all students. Employees who are not actively assigned to a task and are not on an official break are expected to seek out productive duties that support the overall operation of the Center. Examples include, but are not limited to, tidying classrooms, sanitizing surfaces, organizing materials, and assisting other caregivers as needed.

To ensure superior care and efficient operations, employees must consistently demonstrate high productivity, professionalism, and a team-focused mindset.

ACA Directors on duty are committed to providing active support and assistance to caregivers throughout each workday.

The Director on duty maintains an **Open Door Policy** and encourages employees to bring forward any concerns, questions, or suggestions related to workplace issues or the effective operation of ACA.

Primary Client Relations – Interactions with Parents:

Helping parents feel confident and at ease when dropping off and picking up their children is a critical responsibility of all ACA staff members. Each parent must be greeted warmly upon arrival and assured that their child(ren) will receive attentive, high-quality care throughout the day.

To support positive parent relationships, ACA employees are expected to:

- Make direct eye contact when speaking with parents and communicate in a respectful, professional manner.
- Listen attentively to parental questions, comments, and concerns, and respond with genuine care and professionalism.
- Demonstrate sincere concern for the well-being, safety, and development of all children in the Center.
- All Caregivers must be familiar with and able to explain the basic operations and policies of ACA. This includes reviewing enrollment documentation with families at the time of registration and maintaining clear, appropriate communication with parents during daily drop-off and pick-up.
- At sign-out, caregivers are expected to provide parents with a summary of their child's day, including the child's mood, activities, and overall experience.

Daily Documentation Requirements:

ACA caregivers are required to log and track daily activities for all children under three (3) years of age using the designated classroom device and parent application. Required documentation includes:

1. The child's general mood and behavior.
2. Food and beverages that are consumed, as well as the amounts served in regard to milk, breastmilk and formula.
3. Rest times and durations.
4. Activities and learning experiences.
5. Diapering or toileting information, as applicable.

In addition, caregivers are expected to note at least one meaningful or noteworthy aspect of each child's daily experience in order to share personalized feedback with parents at pick-up.

At least one photograph of each child must be shared with the parent through the approved application each day.

Secondary Client Relations – Interactions with Students:

Employee–student relationships are fundamental to the success of AristoCat Children's Academy. Meeting each child's basic needs and providing a safe, engaging, and joyful learning environment is the responsibility of every ACA caregiver. To ensure consistently high-quality care, caregivers are required to adhere to the following child-interaction standards:

1. **Positive Guidance and Language -** ACA caregivers use positive language and positive reinforcement with all children. Caregivers avoid negative absolutes, such as repeatedly saying "no," and instead redirect inappropriate behavior toward acceptable alternatives while verbally reinforcing positive behaviors.
2. **Safety and Redirection -** Caregivers must immediately redirect children who place themselves or others in unsafe situations, including but not limited to jumping from furniture or leaving designated play areas.
3. **Knowledge of Individual Child Needs -** Caregivers must be familiar with each child's individual needs, including allergies, dietary restrictions, medical considerations, and developmental abilities.
4. **Individual Attention and Emotional Support -** Caregivers are expected to spend meaningful one-on-one time with each child each day and to provide consistent emotional support and encouragement.
5. **Clear, Consistent Discipline -** Caregivers must clearly communicate behavioral expectations and the specific consequences of inappropriate behavior in an age-appropriate manner. If a behavior is repeated after expectations have been explained, the previously stated consequence will be implemented calmly and consistently. Disciplinary actions must be carried out without anger, reaffirming the child's inherent value while explaining why the behavior resulted in the consequence.
6. **Equitable Treatment and Developmental Awareness -** Caregivers must treat all children fairly and equitably, without favoritism or undue harshness. Through training and director on duty guidance, staff will develop an understanding of early childhood developmental stages, age-appropriate behaviors, and effective, compassionate interaction strategies.
7. **Prohibition of Abuse and Seeking Support -** ACA caregivers must never engage in verbal, emotional, or physical abuse of any child. When a caregiver feels overwhelmed or frustrated, they are required to seek assistance from a coworker or director on duty immediately.
8. **Accident and Injury Documentation and Response -** Any accident or injury witnessed by a caregiver must be documented on an official ACA Accident Report Form. The caregiver must complete and sign the report and ensure it is signed by the Center Director on duty and the child's parent or authorized adult at pick-up.

- If an injury appears serious but not life-threatening, the caregiver must immediately notify the director on duty, who will promptly contact the child's parent(s).
- If an injury is life-threatening or potentially life-endangering, the caregiver must immediately notify the director on duty. The director on duty will contact emergency personnel without delay and then notify the child's parent(s) or designated emergency contact.

Part IV:

Activity Transitions Guide

Transitioning Through Activities:

Smooth transitions between activities are essential to maintaining a positive, organized classroom environment. ACA caregivers are expected to use consistent, developmentally appropriate strategies to help children transition successfully throughout the day.

- **Use of Timers -** Caregivers will use an egg timer or a watch/alarm timer and will show the children that the timer is being set. Children should be told that when the timer sounds, it will be time to transition to the next activity. Using an external signal (such as a "ping") removes pressure from the caregiver and, when used consistently, helps children move between activities with reduced frustration.
- **Verbal Cueing -** Verbal cues are a required component of all transitions. Cueing must occur before, during, and after each transition.

Examples include:

- **Before:** "After you finish this tower, we will put the blocks away so we can have lunch."
- **During:** "It's time to put the blocks away so we can have lunch."
- **After:** "Nice job putting the blocks away. Now it's time for lunch."

Supporting Successful Transitions -

Recognizing that transitions are often challenging for young children, ACA uses the following strategies to support smoother transitions:

- Verbal cues are **always** used before, during, and after transitions.
- Caregivers use language children can understand. Young children do not grasp abstract time concepts such as "five minutes." Instead, caregivers use concrete references (e.g., "three more turns down the slide") and assist children in counting and tracking remaining turns.
- Picture schedules and visual cue cards are used for children who struggle to follow verbal directions alone. Caregivers may point to the next activity on the schedule or allow the child to carry the visual cue to the next activity.
- Consistent daily schedules and routines are maintained so children know what to expect and can anticipate upcoming transitions.
- Children are provided adequate time to engage in preferred activities whenever possible to minimize frustration during transitions.

Developmental Considerations:

Transitions are developmentally challenging for young children, as they are not naturally equipped to stop an enjoyable activity and move to a less preferred one. Caregivers should remain patient and supportive, recognizing that difficulties with transitions may be intensified by factors such as fatigue, hunger, or illness.

This acknowledgment applies to both Part I – IV of the AristoCat Children's Academy Employee Handbook.

I_____, acknowledge receipt of and agree to comply with the
(printed name)
AristoCat Children's Academy Policies and Procedures guidebook.

Signed: _____Dated:_____