



# Parent Handbook

**School Year 2023**

MT & ND

## Contents

General Information	4
Discrimination Policy	4
History and Organization	4
Philosophy	5
Financial Information	5
Tuition	5
Sibling Discount	5
Tuition Deposits	5
Returned Check Policy	5
Materials Fee	5
Enrollment Cancellation	5
Schedule Change Request	5
Parent Participation – Classroom & Committees	6
Fundraising	6
General Policies and Procedures	7
Admission	7
Arrival and Departure	7
Aftercare Program	7
Authorized Pick Up	7
Releasing a Child	7
Visiting the Classroom	7
Playground and Playground Safety	7
Toys	8

Parent Conferences	8
Parent Education	8
Newsletters	8
Gifts	8
Behavior Guidance	9
Dismissal Policy	9
Medication and Safety	9
Prevention First and Foremost	9
Medication Policy	9
Illness	9
Emergencies	9
Tobacco, Drugs and Alcohol	10
Special Toddler Information	10
Arrivals and Departures	10
Separation	11
Primary Caregivers	11
The Toddler Environment	12
Daily Schedule	12
Communication with Parents	12
Naps	13
Lunch and Snacks	13
Clothing	13
Potty Training	13
Special Primary Information	14
Arrival and Departure	14
Clothing	14
Lunches and Snacks	15
Curriculum	15
Birthdays	15
Show and Share	15
Parent Nights	16
Toys from Home	16
Naps	16

This handbook was prepared by the administration of our school. It is designed to be a convenient and centralized reference for the parents and legal guardians of all students at ABCDino Academy. We welcome any suggestions you may have to improve or clarify the content of this booklet. Please send your suggestions in writing to Kylee at [grahamkylee3@gmail.com](mailto:grahamkylee3@gmail.com). We welcome and appreciate your assistance throughout the year, particularly in any area you feel gifted or otherwise.

We are honored that you have chosen ABCDino Academy and look forward to a great year together! Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns, or if I can help in any way.

Kylee Sullivan, Owner

## **General Information**

### **Discrimination Policy**

ABCDino Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin in hiring, promotion, or training of employees, nor in the admissions, rights, privileges, programs or activities of its students.

### **History and Organization**

The school was originally developed as a privately-owned business in 2022.

### **Philosophy and the Prepared Environment**

The basic idea in the Play-based philosophy of education is that all children carry within themselves the person they will become. To develop physically, intellectually, and spiritually to the fullest, children must have the freedom to move, explore and discover— a freedom to be achieved through order and self-discipline. Dr. Montessori often spoke of the importance of the “prepared environment” and here at ABCDino Academy, we have taken this to heart. We have created an environment for the developing child that includes everything from detailed architectural elements, natural surroundings, and scientifically designed learning materials, along with love, respect, and warm smiles from the faculty and staff.

Independence and passion for learning are supported by high-quality learning materials. The materials are specifically designed to teach basic reading, writing, and math skills, as well as fundamental neurological organizational processes important for all types of learning. The joyful hum of the classroom during the day is proof that children are happy when engaging in purposeful work and play.

## **Financial Information**

### **Tuition**

Tuition is due on the 25th of the previous month and will be considered late after the 1st of the month unless prior arrangements have been made. You may mail your payment to the school or drop your payment in the box located in the entryway of the center. Since operating expenses are ongoing, credit cannot be given for absences, school holidays, or vacations.

No refunds for scheduled attendance are available for illness-related absences including quarantines or center closures due to quarantine.

It is uncomfortable and costly for us to have to remind parents to pay their tuition on time, and so to avoid continual late payments, we charge a late fee of \$50 after the 1st of the month.

### **Sibling Discount**

For families with more than one child attending ABCDino Academy, the youngest child is billed at normal rates. Older siblings are billed at a 5% tuition discount.

### **Returned Check Policy**

A \$30.00 charge will be applied to all returned checks. Person(s) are responsible for the amount the check was written for. If payments are not made in a sufficient amount of time determined by the Director and ABCDino Academy Administration, disciplinary actions may take place such as turning the person(s) into a Collections Agency.

### **Materials Fee**

A yearly materials fee of \$100 per student is required. Annual Fees are used to pay for school supplies and new classroom materials. This fee is billed in the month of August prior to the school year beginning and due by September 1.

### **Enrollment Cancellation**

Enrollment commitment is for the entire academic year. In the case of unforeseen circumstances, a 30-day written notice is required prior to the first of the month of withdrawal, or tuition will still be due. If notice is given less than 30 days from the first day of the month of withdrawal, parents are responsible for that month's tuition.

### **Schedule Change Request**

If a parent wishes to increase or decrease the number of days his or her child(ren) attends school, the parent must make a schedule change request in writing. If the schedule change request is made prior to the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, and the request is granted, the current month invoice will be adjusted.

If the schedule request is made on or after the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, and the request is granted, the current month invoice will NOT be adjusted. The adjustment will be reflected on the following month's invoice.

## **Planned Center Closures**

HOLIDAYS: School closes for Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and the Friday following Thanksgiving. Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Memorial Day, and Fourth of July. In addition to these holidays our center will be closed 10 more days throughout the year providing personal and professional days for our staff.

## **Snow Days & Weather Related Delays**

If the West Fargo Public Schools have called a school start delay or closure due to weather/snow our center will automatically go on a three-hour delay. In the event we close our center for the day or extend the opening we will reach out to our families and notify them.

## **Parent Participation – Classroom & Committees**

We try very hard to keep tuition as low as possible at ABCDino Academy and to make quality care and education available to a broad spectrum of family incomes. Therefore, we strongly encourage every parent to contribute time to the School in various classroom or committee activities. We need help with classroom materials, general repairs, building maintenance, classroom special projects, and other things as the teachers, ABCDino Academy Administrators, or the Director may deem necessary. Your time donations are part of your commitment to the school and not in exchange for tuition payment. Please see the Director if you would like to volunteer in the classroom.

## **General Policies and Procedures**

### **Admission**

ABCDino Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in hiring, promotion, or training of employees, nor in the admissions, rights, privileges, programs, and activities of the students.

However, for licensing purposes, the following requirements must be met prior to admission:

1. Prospective students must be at least 6 weeks old.
2. All forms and contracts relating to admission must be completed and signed in full before the student begins the class.
3. A deposit must be retained to save the student's place.
4. A \$50 application fee is due in order to place the student on the waiting list to be considered for enrollment.

### **Arrival and Departure**

Students may be dropped off at 8:30 am. The full-day program ends at 3:30. An optional before and after school programs are available for a limited number of students.

If you would like your child to attend our before or after-school program, please sign up in advance so that we

may plan our staffing. We greatly appreciate your punctuality, good communication, and cooperation.

All drivers must slow down to 5 mph in the school parking lot. To ensure everyone's safety, parents are asked to keep their children close to them in the parking lots. Please do not leave your car idling while you are dropping off your child.

### **After School Program**

The after-school program begins at 3:30 p.m. and ends at 5:30 p.m. Please be sure to register in advance if you will ever be using the ABCDino Academy after-school program.

### **Authorized Pick Up**

**We need written authorization to release a child to anyone other than a parent.** Forms are available at the sign-in desk if you would like to add a new person to your authorized list. We will check the Photo ID of anyone we do not recognize.

### **Releasing a Child**

ABCDino Academy has a duty to protect the health, welfare, or safety of a child and the department of DSHS may revoke the license if ABCDino Academy fails to reasonably foresee serious hazards to the health, safety, or welfare of a child. Therefore, ABCDino Academy reserves the right not to release a child to a parent or guardian who is suspected to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

### **Playground and Playground Safety**

At our school, the playground is an extension of the classroom designed to bring various ages together to experience the outdoors and learn fundamental lessons about life at the same time.

Faculty who are supervising the children on the playground will be alert to and aware of any situations that may be potentially dangerous or cause any harm or injury to children. The faculty is actively involved with the children and will refrain from any activity that would not allow them to supervise the children properly. Teachers are strategically positioned around the playground so as to be able to view all areas where children may be playing. Please understand that faculty will not be able to engage in a lengthy conversation with parents while on playground duty. We invite you to schedule a time to speak to a teacher when they are not with the children.

### **Toys**

Please do not allow your child to bring personal toys to school. Unless it is Show-n-Tell Day in the classroom.

### **Parent Education**

The school offers lectures and parent workshops throughout the school year. We encourage all parents to attend these events, if possible. New parents are required to attend a parent orientation class with the Director at the school beginning.

## **Newsletters**

ABCDino Academy sends out a monthly newsletter to inform parents of the current topics of study, pertinent notices, current news at the school, etc. This enables parents to follow up on school studies at home through books, trips, and general discussions.

## **Behavior Guidance**

In our class we help the children learn to be loving and kind to each other and the classroom. Children are encouraged to use kind words and gentle hands. We never use punishment or shame to belittle a child in any way. When discipline is necessary, we keep it positive and follow these steps:

1. We state in positive terms what we want the child to know or do (i.e. "sand stays in the sandbox" or "we use our words not our hands".)
2. If the child continues the inappropriate behavior, we repeat what we stated the first time and give the child a choice, telling him what will happen if he continues the inappropriate behavior - usually removed from the activity for a period of time (i.e. "Sand stays in the sandbox. If you throw sand, then you will need to leave the sandbox and play on the grass instead").
3. If the inappropriate behavior continues, we follow through with the warning.
4. If the behavior becomes a repeated concern, we ask the child to sit with a teacher for a while watching the other children play or do lessons quietly. We document the behavior, report it to the Head of School and notify or meet with parents when necessary.

**Under no circumstances are weapons, toy weapons, or violent play allowed at school.**

## **Dismissal Policy**

We will work with you in giving your child every opportunity to have a successful and enjoyable school year. However, if a child does not seem to benefit from our program, if the parents are delinquent in payments for tuition or fees, or if we feel that for any other reason, our school is not able to meet your child's needs, we reserve the right to dismiss a student from school.

Children may be dismissed from the center if their behavior endangers another student or teacher, and/or if they are adversely affecting the positive learning environment in the classroom. A suspension of at least one full school day, and possible dismissal from the center, will be given for any act of physical violence.

We look deeply into every child's personal situation and try many strategies to meet their needs. It is only after we determine that it is not in the best interest of the student, or other students or faculty are adversely affected, that dismissal becomes a necessary course of action. We will address each child's circumstances with the parents and treat each child's personal situation with respect and confidentiality.

## **Student Achievement**

The pace of development cannot be rushed or regulated. We permit children to progress at their own pace, free from pressure. Some students will advance rapidly far beyond age level; others will progress at a more moderate pace. Each child is different and accomplishments will not be the same for everyone. This is one of the benefits of the Play-based approach that leads to the development of each child's self-esteem and love of learning.

We encourage you to speak to one of the teachers or the Director if you have any questions or concerns about your child's learning style and progress.

Thank you for sharing the joy and responsibility of your child's education with us!

## **Medication and Safety**

### **Prevention First and Foremost**

The safety and well-being of each child are of utmost importance at ABCDino Academy. This includes the prevention of accidents, injuries, and incidents. ABCDino Academy strives to prevent such happenings by examining all programs carefully, hiring qualified faculty, and staff, and requiring ongoing training in safety, prevention, and first aid. The development of child protection and safety policies is a strategy to prevent accidents and/or incidents and to be prepared in case of emergency. The process of development and ongoing review of these policies promotes awareness of the need for prevention.

### **Medication Policy**

We must have written authorization from a parent and/or doctor to administer prescription medication to a child at school. Medication must be in the original container with specific instructions and dosage information from a doctor. Asthmatic students who carry inhalers must have their inhalers with them at all times. Similarly, students who carry an Ana kit or epi-pen for allergic reactions must have it available at all times. Be sure to give medication directly to a teacher for safe storage and administration. We can apply sunscreen and administer over-the-counter medications, with a signed consent form from the parents.

### **Illness**

As a parent, you accept the inherent risk of communicable disease by entering a childcare facility including, ABCDino Academy. Our policies are in place to ensure we keep this risk to a minimum.

If your child will not be attending school, please inform us via Brightwheel. The medical form and medical release must be filled out and returned before the first day of school.

If your child becomes ill while at school, we will notify you to pick him or her up right away. We are not equipped to care for children that are ill. They will wait in the school office until you arrive.

Children who have been at home because of an illness should not return to school until after they are **24 hours free of a fever, diarrhea, or vomiting**. Children with conjunctivitis, impetigo, excessive cough, runny nose, or any other contagious illness may not come to school. Please consult your physician if you have any questions. We appreciate your cooperation to help reduce the spread of illness.

According to NAEYC's Healthy Young Children Manual, "children should be excluded if their illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in the program's activities." As you review the policy above, please keep this guideline in mind.

No refunds are available for illness-related absences including quarantines or center closures due to quarantine.



**Emergencies**

In the event of an accident or sudden onset of an illness, the school will not hesitate to seek proper care for the student. The student's individual emergency instructions on file in the school will be consulted immediately and the parents will be called. If necessary, the child will be taken to a local Emergency room. The consent statement that the parent's sign will accompany the child so that treatment can be given immediately in the absence of a parent. It is imperative that you keep the emergency contact information up to date.

**Tobacco, Drugs, and Alcohol**

ABCDino Academy is a tobacco, drug, and alcohol-free establishment. These substances are not allowed on the premises at any time.

## **Arrivals and Departures**

The goal is to provide each child the maximum opportunity to develop his or her potential through independence in a nurturing environment. We appreciate your cooperation and not providing any unneeded assistance for your child as they develop self care skills such as carrying them, hanging up their coat, putting away their lunch box, changing their shoes, etc.

## **Separation**

After saying good-bye, it is best to keep your exit short and sweet —just go out the door and don't look back. Although some children may be upset at first, we want to reassure you that this passes quickly. Having a positive reassuring attitude is important. Do not be tempted to sneak out when your child is happily occupied. It is very important to say good-bye and let them know when you'll be back to pick them up.

We will call to notify you if your child is upset and cannot be consoled after a reasonable amount of time. Children may bring a pacifier or other comfort item at the beginning of the year to ease the transition, if necessary.

In the event that your child is unable to successfully separate from you and integrate into the program, we suggest offering him/her a period of time when you will stay in the classroom for a while each day. If you suspect that your child may have a difficult time separating from you, feel free to talk to the teachers about it and we will help work out a smooth transition.

## **Primary Caregivers**

To facilitate emotional acceptance and bonding with the teachers and ensure high quality care of each child, we have assigned each child to a Lead Teacher. The teacher who is the Lead is responsible to ensure that the children in her care are well fed and have water to drink, have their diapers changed or use the bathroom on a regular basis, and are safe, happy and learning during the time they are at school. They are also responsible to report this information to the parents either in writing or verbally on a daily basis. The Lead Teacher records which lessons the children are learning and using in the classroom, so it can be conveyed to the parents as needed.

## **The Toddler Environment**

The Infant area is designed to be peaceful, calm, and engaging. We practice physical milestones as we nurture each child's development. Teachers will narrate daily activities, read, sing, and play on the floor. Simple toys are introduced as our youngest explorers prepare to move into toddlerhood.

The Toddler area is the first introduction to group schedule, circle time, and work time. Beginning Preschool Lessons are selected to fit perfectly with the children's developmental needs and rotated often. Self help skills are introduced and practiced daily.. It consists of an entryway where each child has a hook or cubby for personal belongings, an activity area, fine motor lesson room, a bathroom with a child-sized toilet, accessible sink and diaper changing area. There is also an activity room for indoor play and gross motor movement. An outdoor fenced-in playground.

Experience has shown that young children enjoy and are capable of successfully participating in a large variety of play-based lessons that are developmentally appropriate for their age and ability level. The toddler environment provides a combination of lessons that have a defined purpose (puzzles, counting materials, vocabulary lessons, practical life lessons such as pouring water or using a baster) as well as creative play

materials (a doll house or farm, play telephone), art materials (paint, crayons, glue, paper), and familiar toys or activities such as blocks, cars and trucks, dolls and doll clothes that do not have structure or a defined purpose.

With practice and gentle reminders, toddler-age children can be taught and expected to choose and carry a lesson to a table or work rug, work on one lesson at a time, and return a lesson to its place when finished. They can successfully understand the concepts of waiting for someone else to finish their turn, watching but not touching someone else's work, and sharing with friends. They are capable of working on a lesson with focused concentration for long periods of time. They love to imitate and repeat lessons as shown and will often repeat a lesson many times before being finished with it.

### **Schedule**

Following the lesson time, the teacher turns on a music box that signals to the children that it is time to put their work away, clean up the classroom and get ready for "Circle Time".

"Circle time" is a group experience that usually consists of singing songs, playing musical instruments, movement (marching, jumping, spinning around), finger plays, use of puppets or props, counting activities, repeating the sounds of the phonetic alphabet, showing pictures or flashcards and giving their vocabulary, and a story. Children are invited to get a mat to sit on and join in the circle, but are not required to attend. Circle time lasts between 10 and 20 minutes, depending upon the needs and interest of the children.

### **Communication with Parents**

The ABCDino Academy Attendance software, Brightwheel, will log every day to inform you of your child's eating, bathroom and sleeping routines. You can access this via the parent app at any time.

Incident reports are completed for any minor injury that requires teacher attention or leaves a mark. Bumps are common in young children and we do our best to document so all caregivers are aware.

We will call parents if, for any reason, your child is distressed, and cannot be consoled, becomes injured or ill, or requires medical attention. We will occasionally have to call a parent if a child is overly aggressive or having a difficult time adjusting to the program.

### **Naps**

Children who nap need to bring bedding which includes a fitted crib sheet to cover the sleep mat and a small blanket or quilt for a top cover. We send them home every other week to be laundered.

### **Lunch and Snacks**

Please send a nutritious lunch to school every day. At lunch, we will encourage the children to eat nutritious high-protein food first before eating sweets. We request that you not send treats such as candy, cakes with frosting or soda pop to school.

A morning and afternoon snack will be provided.

## **Clothing**

Please keep your child's cubby stocked with the following items **clearly labeled** and appropriate for the seasons:

- 1 pair of indoor shoes or simple slippers with rubber bottoms
- 2 extra sets of clothes
- 6-10 diapers (depending on age-you may bring larger amounts but no more than a single pack)
- Sunscreen
- Sweater/jacket

Please make sure your child's clothes are designed to be easy for him to dress and undress himself, for example, pants with elastic waist, Velcro shoes, and pant legs without snaps. We will encourage the children to dress themselves as much as they can.

Clothing that is easy for a child to put on and take off by himself is especially important for successful potty training (no onesies please!).

## **Potty Training**

Using the potty is a gradual and gentle process that begins when the child enters the 2-3 year old classroom and is invited to sit on the potty every time he or she has a diaper change. We encourage parents to continue this process at home to provide continuity and success. When a child is successful using the potty both at home and school, they may begin to wear thick cotton underwear to school. We ask that children wear underpants at home for one week with success before beginning to wear them to school. We will remind children who are wearing underpants to use the potty at frequent intervals until they are independent.

Children need to be fully potty trained and three years old before they may enter our Preschool program. Children who are not yet potty trained but have turned three may stay in the toddler classroom longer, or may be asked to continue working on potty training at home before entering the Preschool classroom.

## **Dismissal Policy**

We will work with you in giving your child every opportunity to have a successful and enjoyable school year. However, if a child does not seem to benefit from our program, if the parents are delinquent in payments for tuition or fees, or if we feel that for any other reason, our school is not able to meet your child's needs, we reserve the right to dismiss a student from school. Children may be dismissed from school if their behavior endangers another student or teacher, and/or if they are adversely affecting the positive learning environment in the classroom. A suspension of at least one full school day, and possible dismissal from school, will be given for any act of physical violence.

We look deeply into every child's personal situation and try many strategies to meet their needs. It is only after we determine that it is not in the best interest of the student, or other students or faculty are adversely affected, that dismissal becomes a necessary course of action. We will address each child's circumstances with the parents and treat each child's personal situation with respect and confidentiality.

**Curriculum**

Our Preschool Curriculum, designed for children ages 3 – 6 years, is a unique three-year systematic program, where each year's activities are logical and consistent extensions of what has come before. The core curriculum areas include language, math, sensory play, practical life. Other areas included in the classroom include cultural studies, science and nature, arts and crafts, gardening, music, and physical education.

**Birthdays**

If you would like to bring a treat, we ask that all treats be store bought with the ingredients clearly labeled. Fruit is preferred so that all the children with allergies or dietary concerns may be included. . If you are planning a home birthday party for your child, *please do not pass out birthday invitations at school or in cubbies*. Those not invited have hurt feelings.

**Show and Tell**

Show and Tell is not a scheduled routine in the Preschool Classroom. If your child has something special they would like to show from a recent trip, please notify the teachers to schedule an appropriate time to bring them in.

**Toys from Home**

Please do not allow your child to bring personal toys to school.