

# Piedmont Academy Early Learning Center (ELC)

## MISSION STATEMENT

Piedmont Academy ELC is a unique environment developing extraordinary children who will set the pace of the future.

## VISION

Piedmont Academy ELC exists to provide the community with a program of excellence by:

- Providing a safe, loving and stimulating environment for social, emotional, physical, spiritual, and academic growth.
- Offering a variety of hands-on learning opportunities
- Assisting children on their journey of learning with a balance of teacher directed activities and independent activities.
- Believing Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he/she should go and when they are old they will not depart from it.
- Continually assessing our program and make improvements based on the results.
- Creating a strong sense of community by building relationships with local schools and businesses

## VALUES

Our children and program are anchored in

- Faith: Believing God loves us and sent His son Jesus to die for our sin.
- Love: Happiness, respect and appreciation of others and as well as one's self.
- Learning: Experimenting with the world, learning the rules, and interaction through play.

## WELCOME!

Thank you for enrolling your child in Piedmont Academy's Early Learning Center. The Academy was established in 1969 and the full day Early Learning Center was added in 2016. The two programs were merged in 2022. The Early Learning Center is licensed by the State of Georgia to serve ages 3 months through Kindergarten and elementary age camps. We consider it a privilege to have your child placed in our trust and we recognize the tremendous responsibility that is now ours.

Our commitment to you is to provide a safe and nurturing environment that helps to develop the whole child. We nurture the academic, social, emotional, spiritual, and physical development of each child. Our program offers age appropriate learning experiences that will allow your child to explore, experiment, become independent, and develop individuality.

We want you to consider yourself, as well as your child, a part of our church and its programs. All activities and programs of our church are open to you. Please take advantage of each opportunity and feel free to offer suggestions. Piedmont Academy and Church staff are here to serve you and your family.

This handbook was prepared to answer many of your questions concerning schedules, policies and procedures. Please take the time to read it and let us know if you have any questions.

I look forward to getting to know you and your child as we begin this journey together.

*Dolores D. Bailey*

Executive Director

## **Piedmont Academy Early Learning Center (ELC)**

### **Philosophy**

We are committed to providing age-appropriate experiences to allow each child to grow socially, emotionally, physically, spiritually, and academically at his/ her own level of ability while enjoying feelings of success. The program provides hands-on activities in learning centers and positive Christ like role modeling of the staff.

### **GOALS**

1. To provide a quality early childhood education program built on Developmentally Appropriate practices (DAP) in accordance with Georgia Early Learning Developmental Standards (GELDS), so each child can be challenged to learn according to his/her level of ability.
2. To encourage social development by providing opportunities for sharing, taking turns, making friends, conflict resolution, problem solving, helping others, accepting others, cooperating on projects, and building self-esteem.
3. To encourage emotional development through verbal expressions of thought and feelings; experiencing rules and limits; experiencing kindness, justice, and empathy; recognizing and accepting emotions in others; and to develop a respect for other individuals.
4. To encourage the physical development of large motor skills through outdoor and indoor games and activities, as well as fine motor development through the use of manipulatives, toys, blocks, and puzzles, and other small tools and objects. This will also facilitate the development of visual-motor skills.
5. To encourage creativity by offering many kinds of materials, and frequent experiences, in music, art, dramatics, literature, and oral skills.
6. To encourage interest in language through stories, puppetry, group time, music, games, dramas, problem solving, and other conversations.
7. To develop spiritually through teachers who will build a love and trust relationship. This will help the child develop a solid foundation for spiritual growth. Children will have opportunities to hear Bible Stories and will be taught about Jesus. They will learn about God's love and the world He created for them to enjoy.
8. To facilitate intellectual development by widening the child's experiences and new knowledge. Children will learn basic concepts and skills related to reading and math readiness, science and nature, and social studies.

### **LICENSING INFORMATION**

We are licensed through Bright from the Start Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning.

## PROGRAM OPERATION

Monday - Friday 6:30am-6:00 pm January- December (excluding holidays)  
Late Pick ups will be charged a fee

Classes:

Full day classes or Half-day classes 8:00am-1:00pm

Ages: (must be respected ages by September 1<sup>st</sup>)

Infants, Toddlers, Young 2s

Preschool ages 2-4 years: Child must be the respective age for the class before Sept.1.

Kindergarten

Elementary ages 6-10 years (camps only)

## ENROLLMENT

We admit students of any race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, disability and without regard to a parent's or guardian's race, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, gender, pregnancy, or disability. Enrollment is contingent upon receipt of the completed application, signed parent agreement, registration fee (non-refundable), and Immunization documentation. The Academy ELC reserves the right to dismiss any parent or child at any time with or without cause.

Parents are required to notify the Academy immediately should any of the information collected at the time of enrollment or any time thereafter change. Continued enrollment is contingent upon the parent's emergency contact person's and the child's adherence to the policies and procedures of the program as outlined in the handbook including, but not limited to timely payment of all fees and tuition. Failure to do so may result in a student being withdrawn from the program.

## TUITION

All custodial parents and/or legal guardians are required to sign a parent agreement.

Check or VISA/MC, are accepted. All payments will be handled by the administrative staff. There will be a non-sufficient funds fee of \$25 for declined checks and credit cards. ACH and Debit cards are charged \$3.50 per transaction and credit cards are 3.5%

Tuition does not include fees for enrichment programs such as dance or soccer.

All payments are due each Friday for the following week. Any account carrying a balance on Monday at 10:00am will be assessed a \$10 late fee. The center reserves the right to dismiss a child based on lack of payment.

Tuition and other fees will be paid in full without deduction for absences of any duration or for any cause, and without substitution of other days of attendance as "make up" days. Please understand staffing and other operational costs are incurred on the basis of fixed levels of enrollment and few costs are eliminated when a child is temporarily absent. If you anticipate difficulty with paying on time, please contact the office to see if alternative arrangements would be approved by the Director. All tuition rates are subject rate.

## PROGRAM RATES/WITHDRAW PROCEDURE

\*Rates of each program are subject to change

Enrollment fee (non-refundable)      \$150

Rates:	Full time weekly 5 day/ 3 day	Half- day 8:00-1:00
Infants & Toddlers & Y2yr	\$325/\$250	\$200
Preschool 2yr and 3yr	\$275/\$225	\$175
Pre-K 4yr	\$275/\$225	\$175
Kindergarten	\$275/\$225	\$175
Kid Camp 6-10yr	\$225 (8am-5pm)	

\*Late pick up is \$2 per minute, per child

Withdrawal: two full weeks written notice and complete a withdraw form is required. If proper notice is not given, parents will be charged tuition for two additional weeks. (Weeks are not prorated.)

## CLASSROOM OPERATION

A combination of curriculum is used in the classroom: WEE Learn, Scholastic, and Day by Day. Activities in all age groups are based on the early childhood practices recognized by experts in early childhood education who develop these curriculums. We value your child's experiences and will strive to provide the best care academically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually for your child. We respect each child as an individual and set up their goals accordingly.

Children are assigned to classrooms typically by age with the exception being under age 2 which is more developmentally based placement. When it is time for your child to move to the next classroom, you will be notified with our transition plan.

Classroom ratios based on Georgia guidelines.

	Staff	Children
Infants 3months-12 months	1	6
1 year old	1	8
2 year old	1	10
3 year old	1	15
4 year old	1	18
5 year old	1	20

Babies and Toddlers will be placed on their back for sleeping and must have a sleeping/feeding schedule form for the teacher. Forms should be updated as the child's schedule changes. Older children will have napping mats for the afternoon rest time. Blankets and sheets are provided.

Diaper Stations and Restrooms are located in 2yr old classrooms. We will work with parents to potty train children and all children should be potty trained by age 3yr. The 3yr and 4yr old classes do not have diaper changing stations, so a child must be in a pull up and training by age 3. Hand washing sinks are located in each classroom. Parents are to provide all diapering /potty training supplies and they will be stored in the classroom for daily access. The staff follows safety guidelines when diapering and will keep a diaper log.

## DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES/DISMISSAL

Discipline is established through classroom structure, a routine schedule, and basic classroom guidelines. With a regular routine and redirection, we help children learn to get along and successfully function in a classroom environment. In extreme cases, we will partner with the parent to come to a plan of action for behavior.

A child may be suspended for behavior that has been documented and addressed by the teacher. The behavior may include, but is not limited to physical aggression, uncontrollable, dangerous to others or themselves, or repeatedly takes away from the learning environment of others. Expulsion may occur if a child has been suspended, parent conferences held, and behavior continues to be harmful or takes away from the learning environment of others. We will make every effort to work with families in these situations, but we also must protect the staff and enrolled families of our program.

The school reserves the right to dismiss any child whose behavior takes away from the learning or safety environment of others in the program.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS

We promote early intervention for children who have special needs. If you suspect that your child has some developmental delays, we will assist you with addressing those needs. You should first consult your doctor with your concerns. Cobb County services includes Babies Can't Wait for children up to age two and School Systems offer free screening for children with possible special needs once they are age three. **We do not offer a special education class.**

We reserve the right to not accept/continue enrollment of any child whose needs we can not meet in a safe manner and who requires assistance beyond our ability and training.

Developmental milestones must be comparable to peers: potty training, use of stairs, playground use, ability to feed self, and so forth.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with employees who have a need to know in order to most appropriately and safely care for your child. Confidential and sensitive information about faculty, other parents and children will not be shared with parents as the Academy strives to protect everyone's right of privacy. Parents must provide documents for children who are protected by the court or have custody restrictions.

## MANDATED REPORTING/CHILD ABUSE

Under Georgia Law, the employees of the Academy are considered mandated reporters. The employees are not required to discuss their suspicions with anyone prior to reporting to the Department of Family and Children Services. We take this responsibility seriously and strive to protect the welfare of the children of the Academy.

Staff complete training on proper care of children in regards to SIDs and shaken baby syndrome. Children are handled with care and multiple staff members are available to relieve teachers as needed for any overwhelming care of a child. Children are monitored at all times to prevent falls causing head trauma.

## PARENT CONDUCT

The Academy requires that parents of enrolled children behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect to others on the campus. Swearing, cursing, threatening remarks or actions will not be tolerated. This includes the parking lot and the total campus.

We are a drug free campus including smoking.

## PARENT RIGHT TO IMMEDIATE ACCESS

Parents of a child in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child whenever they are in care at the Academy. In cases where the child is subject of a court order, the

Academy must be provided with a copy of the most recent order and all amendments. In the absence of a court order on file, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child.

## ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Upon arrival, the adult dropping off must check in the child and then walk the child to class. Care begins at 6:30am. When picking up, you will check out your child or provide proper identification. No child should be on campus after 6:00pm. In the event a child is picked up late there will be a \$2.00 charge for each minute, per child.

If a child is going to be absent, please notify the office by 9:00am, so we can maintain proper ratios and notify the teacher for planning purposes. Late arrivals must contact the office by 9:00am to be added to the lunch counts. Children may not arrive after 11:00am to start the day. Appointments must arrive back on campus by 11:00am.

## VISITING THE CAMPUS

**ALL** Visitors on campus must ring the doorbell and report to the Academy office. Everyone is asked not to enter the classroom, but to knock and wait at the door. Children are sometimes upset by the presence of other adults and it interrupts the flow of the planned day. If you are attending a special event, we ask that you do not bring other children into the classroom.

## TRANSPORTATION

Routine transportation will not be provided at this program. The school and its staff will not be responsible for any transportation needs.

## OUTSIDE PLAY

This is a regular part of the daily schedule. The children play outside daily unless the weather is rainy, extremely cold/heat or otherwise disagreeable. Babies and Creepers are taken outside using strollers and other equipment. Tennis shoes are preferred for outside play. If a child is too ill to play outside, he/she should be kept at home.

## CLOTHING AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS

All children need to bring a change of clothes. Infants and toddlers also need to bring bottles, sippy cups, diapers, and wipes. Clothing for outdoor play should be appropriate for the weather (winter will sometimes require hats and mittens). We provide indoor play on inclement weather days. All clothes should be suitable for play and easy for the child to manage. All items, including jackets and extra clothes, cups, backpack, bottles, should be marked with the child's name.

Children should not bring toys or jewelry. No food or medication should be in the backpack of older children.

## SOLICITATION OF EVENTS

The school does not send home invitations of any kind and all flyers for other events must be approved by the Early Learning Center office.

## NUTRITION

Meals will be prepared on campus and offered to children in the 2yr old-Kindergarten classes. If a child misses a mealtime due to arrival or departure to the center, a meal will not be provided at another time as a substitution. Please see the parent board for posted times to notify office of attendance and meal count times.

Elementary Campers bring their own nutritious food, drink, snacks.

Children enrolled in the infant-toddlers-young 2's classes must provide their own meals including milk. Food should be in individual containers labeled and pre-cut. All meals provided from home must abide by state standards and be healthy.

Children less than 1 yrs must have a current feeding/sleeping schedule form for the teachers. The form should be updated when the child's routine changes. All bottles must be labeled breastmilk or formula, child's name and date the bottle was prepared.

Children with disclosed allergies will be posted in the classroom to ensure non cross contamination when eating. Each classroom will provide a environmentally safe eating area according to the allergies in that classroom. Parents may need to provide supplemental meals depending on severity of allergy. ***We are not a peanut- free, gluten- free or dairy- free center.***

SNACKS: A nutritious snack will be offered mid-morning and mid-afternoon to the classes of 2yr-Kindergarten. Children under 2 years must provide their own snacks.

BIRTHDAY SNACKS: Contact the office 48 hrs in advance to schedule a special snack. Store bought cookies are best. Plates and napkins are optional.

## ILLNESS

The school will make every effort possible to protect the health and safety of the children. Cooperation of parents in helping to prevent the spread of communicable diseases is of great importance. For the child's own protection and that of others, parents should keep children home for at least 24hrs when they show symptoms listed below.

1. Fever (must be fever free **without** medication for 24 hours to return)
2. Vomiting or diarrhea (may not attend if within the past 24 hours)
3. Any symptom of childhood diseases: measles, mumps, chicken pox, whooping cough, etc.
4. Any COVID symptoms
5. Sore throat
6. Green runny nose or continuous runny nose, cough, (not allergy related)
7. Croup
8. Any unexplained rash
9. Any skin infection-boils, ringworm, impetigo
10. Pink eye

If a child develops any of the above symptoms at school, including a fever of 100 or higher, a parent will be notified to pick the child up immediately. A child with any communicable disease symptoms as outlined by the State and posted in our facility, will be sent home.

In line with this policy, parents should notify the Office immediately if the child contracts a contagious disease. If necessary, the Director will notify parents of possible exposure. **Please do not send a child to school if he/she is not well enough to play outside.**

Children requiring medication while at the Academy must have a **Medical Authorization form** on

file which includes dosage, type of medication administered, and any adverse reactions. All medication will be stored in a zip-lock bag with a copy of authorization form and log sheet of administration of medication, any adverse reactions, time and person administering. In most cases the medication will be kept in the office depending on usage information. If there is an adverse reaction to medication, the parent will be called immediately.

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

### Medical

**Minor Incidents:** Minor injury and illness will be cared for in classroom or administrative office. Basic first aid including ice packs, band aids, etc are available. Parent and administration will receive a minor incident report.

**Major Incidents:** Major medical and emergency incidents will be evaluated and treated. The Administrative office will notify parents of injury and/or transporting child to closest hospital unless otherwise stated on enrollment form. If needed, the Administration will contact 911 for emergency services and a staff member will remain with the child at all times until a parent arrives. *First Aid kits* are available. All injuries must be reported to the Academy Office. Parents will be notified and asked to come for the child if the student exhibits any of the following: injury requiring further treatment or observation, temperature above normal, nausea or vomiting, severe headache, or evidence of a communicable disease.

In the event of a health emergency the following procedure is followed:

1. The parents are notified. If they are not available, the person listed as an emergency contact on the child's enrollment form is notified.
2. If no emergency contact can be located and the child needs further emergency care, the Cobb County paramedics will be called.
3. The Cobb County Fire Department will be called in the event of a major emergency.
4. Children will be transported to the designated hospital listed on the child's registration form or the closest hospital.

**Pandemic:** We will follow the guidelines set forth by Bright from the Start, the Governor, and the CDC when there is a health crisis. We desire to remain open for working parents and will adjust policies temporarily if needed to accommodate families so long as it is not detrimental to the program.

### Inclement Weather

In case of inclement weather, we will post closings, delays, or early release on the local news stations. Every effort will be made to stay open. If severe weather occurs while at Piedmont Academy, a staff member will contact families with instructions. Tuition will not be refunded for acts of God.

**Tornado:** If the weather conditions are such that immediate action is warranted, your child's teacher will escort children away from windows to the interior hallway and direct them to sit in the "duck and cover" position. The Director/ immediate supervisor will walk through all classrooms and bathrooms to make sure no staff or child is present in those areas and attendance will be taken to account for each person. The Office will have a weather radio to stay informed of alerts.

**Fire:** Fire officials will be called. The staff will calmly and quickly escort the children outside the building, taking with them their Daily Attendance Sheets and the children's information sheet. They will proceed to their designated area facing away from the building. The teachers will take attendance and the immediate supervisor will check with each class for accountability. Parents or emergency contact persons will be notified using the phone numbers listed on their child's information sheet. Fire safety drills will be conducted. The Academy Office will maintain a log,



recording fire drill dates, times and comments.

**Lock Down:** In the event of an intruder or need to secure the campus, classroom doors will be locked at the handle and the slide lock. Children will be moved into a class restroom or location out of view from the door. Authorities will be contacted. The class will remain in the lock down mode until the Director advises otherwise.

**Loss of Child:** Conduct a search of all areas of the facility including closets, cabinets, bathrooms, etc. and the immediate surrounding area. Immediate notification of the police and parents should be made once an initial search of the facility has been made. Continue searching while waiting for police to arrive. The Director/Supervisor is to remain at the Preschool as the point person and to gather information/description of the child to share with authorities.

**Gas leak or a Bomb threat:** The Academy will follow the same evacuation procedures as fire emergencies. No one is to re-enter the building until the appropriate authorities gives the all clear signal.

**Loss of Utilities:** If utilities are disrupted the Academy will make every effort to remain open. The decision to close the school or delay opening will be based on the following factors:

- ☐ The amount of natural light in the Preschool
- ☐ The temperature of the Preschool
- ☐ The ability and necessity of heating/cooling food and formula
- ☐ The usage of restrooms
- ☐ The risk of the health and well being of children and staff

The staff will begin calling and messaging parents / guardians to inform them of the situation once the Academy has assessed the situation and can provide families with accurate information.

**Other:** In the event of a major incident involving a critical system (explosion, building collapse, electrical spark, etc) call 911 and order an evacuation of the Academy. No one is to re-enter the building until the appropriate authorities give the all clear signal.

**CLOSING DATES** (actual closings dates will be updated annually on the website and parent board)

New Year's Day, MLK Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day,  
Labor Day, Thanksgiving Break (2 days), Christmas Break