

ISTABA PEACE ACADEMY



Parent Handbook

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome

Assalamu alaikum!

Thank you for choosing I.S.T.A.B.A. Peace Academy as your child care provider. We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and your family to our center. Our goal is to provide a safe and productive environment for your child.

In order for us to be successful in caring for your child, we will need to be a team with you. Please keep us informed of any special events, illnesses and any other changes that may affect your child's stay at our center. In exchange, we will communicate with you about your child's successes, needs and growth, as well as classroom events. Please feel free to speak with your child's teacher about any questions or concerns.

It is our hope that this Parent Handbook gives you a clear understanding of the policies and procedures of I.S.T.A.B.A Peace Academy. Again, if you have any questions, please let us know.

Sincerely,

Director

Mission:

Our mission is to provide a safe, loving, and caring, Islamic environment which will guide our students through the stepping stones of life to a successful future.

Goals:

- To instill the fundamentals of Islam in our children, based on the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) and the Holy Qur'an
- To provide a safe, fun and loving environment based upon your child's needs, interests and abilities
- To provide developmentally appropriate experiences that will contribute to the individual needs of the child, in addition to preparing them for success later in school
- To encourage each child to respect the rights of others, to develop independence and to build self-confidence and self-esteem
- To teach children that learning is fun

Philosophy:

At I.S.T.A.B.A. Peace Academy, we believe that it is our duty to facilitate in the development of our future leaders. Further, we believe that children learn best in an environment rich in age-appropriate activities as well as through a variety of discovery experiences. As such, our classrooms are filled with interactive play areas that are safe, interesting and inviting. Children are encouraged to learn in their own ways, and are given support every step of the way. We utilize School Readiness-approved curriculums in every classroom, from our infant rooms to our VPK classes. Through consistent routines, clear and simple rules, Islamic guidance and teacher

and parental support, our students are given all the necessary tools to succeed in their classrooms and beyond.

Expectations:

Our Students:

- Learn to learn and have fun in an Islamic fashion
- Learn Islamic manners
- Respect themselves, their teachers and classmates and their surroundings
- Continue to grow in academic achievements

Our Parents and Families:

- Are team players in the child's growth and development
- Are welcome to volunteer in the classroom
- Are encouraged to share ideas, comments and concerns

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES:

Program Options:

Infants: Our infant classroom provides developmentally appropriate lesson plans and learning activities that are both educational and engaging. Children typically learn to sit up independently, scoot, crawl and babble during the first year of their life. Our teachers make every effort to keep parents and families abreast of all developmental milestones your child accomplishes.

Toddlers – Ones: In the one year old classroom, we provide sensory learning activities designed to allow our students to explore the world around them in a safe yet interesting environment. Children are encouraged to expand their vocabulary and growing motor skills at every opportunity.

Toddlers- Twos: In the two year old classroom, we introduce potty training and we emphasize appropriate social and emotional expression. Children are encouraged to explore their surroundings, expand their ever-growing vocabulary and assert their independence in a suitable manner.

Preschool- Threes: In the preschool classroom, children build upon what they already know, and are introduced to colors, numbers, letters and shapes. The learning activities are designed to allow the child more control, which in turn supports their cognitive, social, and emotional growth. Both the 3 and 4 year old classrooms use the I-Care Cat social/emotional growth tool.

VPK- Fours: The focus in the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten classroom is on literacy, but emphasis is also placed on discovery, math and social studies. Further, both the 3 and 4 year old classrooms use the I-Care Cat social/emotional growth tool.

Enrollment Requirements:

- Enrollment Form
- Tuition Policy Agreement Form
- Immunization Record
- Physical Exam
- Flu brochure
- VPK Students ONLY: VPK certificate required prior to admission

Age Requirements:

Students will be placed in classrooms according to age and developmental ability. All students should be of the same age of their peers before Sept. 1, unless otherwise noted by the Director.

VPK students must be 4 years old before September 1.

Emergency Information:

In the event of an emergency, we will contact you, the parent by phone. If you cannot be reached, we will contact the emergency contacts listed on the enrollment form. Any changes should be made in writing, so that the child's file can be kept updated.

Accident Reports:

Although we at I.S.T.A.B.A. Peace Academy make every effort to protect your child from harm, accidents do occasionally happen. If the accident is minor, parents will receive a completed accident report when the child is picked up. If the incident is more severe, parents will be contacted by phone for further instructions.

Special Permissions:**Photographs and Videos:**

I.S.T.A.B.A Peace Academy occasionally records special events by video or photograph to share with our parents and families. These may be sent home individually or placed in the school yearbook for purchase at the end of the school year (late May – early June), or placed on the school website. Please complete the “Parental Consent Form” indicating whether or not you’d like your child to participate in this service; this form will remain in the child’s student file.

Developmental Screening:

I.S.T.A.B.A Peace Academy uses the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) to screen School Readiness children for developmental progress; we may also screen any children if the parent and/or teacher have concerns; parent permission is required. Parent input is involved in this screening process. We may ask questions about your child’s abilities or activities at home, as well as your family medical history. School readiness children are typically screened within the first 30 days of enrollment and a minimum of every six months thereafter. Several of our teachers have been trained to use/administer the ASQ tool. Children are screened by a trained teacher in the class setting with which they are familiar. If developmental concerns arise parents will be notified and referred to professional agencies such as School Readiness for further screening.

Teachers will use learning assessment tools that come with their respective curriculums for documenting children’s progress in the classroom. These assessments along with screening information, classroom observations, samples of students work and anecdotal records will be used to determine children’s progress during the school year. Teachers will use screening and

assessment results to guide curriculum planning and develop goals for individual children. We will share the results of the ASQ's with you within 5 business days after they are administered. We may send you a letter noting your child's results or contact you in person or by phone. If you feel you need further clarification, please schedule a conference with your child's teacher and/or Director.

Children's screening and assessment records will be kept confidential in locked files in the Director's office. Results of the screening or assessments will only be accessed/shared with the parent/guardian who enrolled the child, teaching staff, administration or appropriate professionals (with the parent/guardian written permission) for the purpose of supporting the child's growth and development. Please indicate whether you'd like your child to participate in this service on the permission form on the back of the registration form.

Confidentiality:

At I.S.T.A.B.A Peace Academy, we make every effort to preserve the confidentiality of you and your child. We do not share or sell personal information and we will not discuss your child and his/her needs with any unauthorized person without your permission.

Child File Updates:

We update all our student files at least every 6 months; sooner, if necessary. We will notify you of any missing or outdated information in writing. Please submit these changes by the date listed on the letter. Also, please submit any changes you would like to make to your child's file in writing. This helps keep track of any modifications.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

Tuition and Fees:

Tuition, registration fees and all other fees are non-refundable. All fees shall be paid on time.

Tuition is calculated on a yearly basis in order to maintain your child's position in our care. As such it is subject to change annually. **Additionally, tuition must be paid routinely, including holidays, vacations time off and/or days absent for any reason.** Tuition is due every Monday morning if paid weekly and on the 1st of the month if paid monthly.

***Tuition and fees are subject to change with notice.**

We are an approved Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) and School Readiness provider.

Registration Fees:

- New Student Registration fee is currently \$40.00 per child; each additional sibling is \$20.00 per child.
- Returning Student Registration fee currently \$25.00 per child; each additional sibling is \$10.00 per child.

Full Time Rates:

- Children under 2 years of age: \$120.00 per week / \$480.00 per month
- Children 2 – 5 years old: \$110.00 per week / \$440.00 per month
- School Age After School Rate: \$60.00 per week / \$240.00 per month

Part Time Rates

We currently do not offer part time programs for children less than 2 years of age.

(Part time is Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. **or** Monday, Wednesday and Friday, from 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.)

- Children 2 - 5 years old: \$80.00 per week / \$320.00 per month

*Tuition for School Readiness Vouchers calculated upon registration.

- VPK Wrap-Around is \$160.00 per month.

Late Payment Fees:

We do not currently charge late fees. However, I.S.T.A.B.A. Peace Academy reserves the right to deny child care services in the event that tuition is not paid on time.

Late Pick-Up Fees:

A fee of \$1 per minute applies to any child picked up after 6:00 p.m. (for full time students), and \$5 per half hour or any part thereof after 12:10 p.m. (for VPK students). Likewise, if your child's schedule is 8:00 – 4:00/5:00 p.m., the late fee is \$5 per half hour or any part thereof after your allowed schedule. This fee is due before the child can return to school and is paid to the staff member who was supervising the child past business hours/ child schedule. Excessive lateness is grounds for dismissal from the child care program.

Returned Checks:

A fee of \$25.00 is due for any returned checks.

Withdrawal Policy:

Once your child is successfully registered, their spot is guaranteed in their classroom. Therefore, we require at least one week's notice prior to withdrawing your child from our program. Students withdrawn without notice are not guaranteed a place upon their return to school and must be re-enrolled. Subsequent enrollments are subject to Director's approval.

OPERATIONAL INFORMATION

Hours of Operation:

Our hours of operation are Monday through Friday, from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Holidays

I.S.T.A.B.A Peace Academy will be closed on the following holidays:

- ☞ Thanksgiving Day
- ☞ Christmas Day
- ☞ New Year's Day
- ☞ Memorial Day
- ☞ Labor Day
- ☞ Eid-ul-Fitr
- ☞ Eid-ul-Adha

*Occasionally, some of these holidays will fall on a weekend. In this case, we will close the following week day. The two Eids are calculated by the sighting of the moon. We will send a notice detailing the exact date on a yearly basis. Additional closures will be posted on the parent bulletin board in the classrooms; parents may also receive an additional reminder in writing.

School Calendar

The school calendar will be posted monthly on the parent bulletin board in each class.

Arrival Procedures:

Parents are responsible for escorting their child to the classroom. All students (including those not receiving School Readiness funds) will be accounted for on the teacher's attendance log.

Parents of students receiving School Readiness funds are further responsible for signing their child in. Each classroom has an attendance log in a binder or folder. Please be sure to sign in with your name and arrival time. Also, be sure to directly inform the teacher that your child is present.

Arrival time is crucial for communicating daily information. Please feel free to take a minute to speak with your child's teacher and alert him/her of any news (child didn't sleep well, got a new pet, etc.). We welcome every opportunity for exchanges of information.

Full-time students may arrive no earlier than 7:30 a.m. Part-time students may arrive no earlier than 8:00 a.m.

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) may arrive no earlier than 15 minutes before their class is scheduled to start. For example if VPK hours are from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., the child may arrive no earlier than 8:45 a.m.

Departure Procedures:

For parents of students receiving School Readiness funds, it is the parent's responsibility to sign their child out every day. Parents will use the same attendance log to sign their child in and out.

All students (including those not receiving School Readiness funds) will be accounted for on the

teacher's attendance log. All students may be released only to authorized persons listed in the child's file. All changes must be made in writing and added to the file prior to releasing the child to anyone other than the parents. All such persons are required to show valid photo identification prior to removing the child from the center.

Again, please feel free to take a minute to speak with your child's teacher and alert him/her of any news at this time.

If a child is not picked up on time, we will attempt to contact the parents by phone. If we are unable to reach the parents, we will call the emergency contacts listed in the student's file. If we are still unable to reach anyone, we will escort the child to the I.S.T.A.B.A office to wait. If the child is not picked up an hour after closing time, we will contact Child Protective Services.

Fees for late pick-up are \$1 per minute and must be paid before the child can return to school. These fees are due to the staff member who supervised the child after closing hours.

In the event an incapacitated adult arrives to pick up the child, we will make every effort to contact another authorized person to pick up the child. However, we are not authorized to physically prevent the person from removing the child from the premises.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Open Door Policy

At I.S.T.A.B.A Peace Academy, we welcome parents into our classrooms with open arms. Please feel free to visit with your child at any time.

Parent Participation

We at I.S.T.A.B.A Peace Academy make every effort to involve parents in classroom activities. We send home monthly newsletters and invite parents to special classroom events. We host an annual Culture Dinner, where parents are invited to bring a dish from their culture to share with the child's classmates.

We also send home articles on developmental milestones, such as potty training and early literacy. We do our best to have these articles translated in to other languages as needed.

Besides the Culture Dinner, parents are invited to the Eid Carnival (ticket discounts are available), the annual Open House and the VPK and Pre-K Graduation.

Communication

Parents are notified of special events through written invitations. We also send home monthly newsletters as well as toddler and baby grams. Each classroom has a parent bulletin board posted with new and exciting information. And of course, parents are always welcome to drop by and give suggestions, comments and address any concern with the teacher and/or Director.

Parent/ Teacher Conferences:

Parent/ Teacher conferences may be scheduled by the parents, teacher and/or Director at any time. Please submit a written request for a conference to your child's teacher along with a call-back number and an appropriate time to reach you. We will schedule a conference as soon as possible.

Parent Education and Resources:

We send home articles on the latest in educational research and techniques and welcome all discussions on the information contained therein. We also post notices of community events on the parent bulletin board in each classroom.

Grievance Procedure:

Please share any comments, concerns or questions with the Director. You may contact her on the Center phone number and/or schedule a conference to discuss the matter in person. Your satisfaction is very important to us and we do our best to deal with any concerns promptly and confidentially.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Meals and Snacks:

All children arriving after 8:00 a.m. are expected to have eaten breakfast at home.

All students must bring their own healthy lunch. Childcare licensing requires that all snacks and meals meet USDA guidelines. Information about USDA guidelines will be provided to parents at the time of enrollment. An acceptable lunch includes options from at least 4 different food groups: fruits, vegetables, grains, meats/proteins and dairy. **We are not licensed to heat**

lunches; please send in a meal that can be served cold or send hot items in a thermos. Sodas and candies are NOT allowed.

Full time students are required to bring an additional snack for the afternoon. An acceptable snack includes items from two of the five food groups (they cannot be from the same group): fruits, vegetables, grains, meats/proteins and dairy. An acceptable lunch requires items from at least four of the five food groups: fruits, vegetables, grains, meats/proteins and dairy. Juices must be 100% fruit or vegetable juice.

Pizza Friday: Parents are given the option to purchase a pizza meal on Fridays for \$3.00. This includes 2 slices of pizza, a healthy snack and juice. All pizza fees are due no later than Friday morning when the child is dropped off. If the parent chooses not to partake of this option, please send the regular lunch and snack as usual.

Nutrition Policy:

I.S.T.A.B.A Peace Academy only provides breakfast (cereal, oatmeal, etc.) for those students arriving prior to 8:00 a.m. We do not provide lunch besides a pizza meal on Fridays.

We do allow food to be brought in for special occasions. Please notify the teacher prior to bringing such foods in case of any allergy or other medical conditions that may be aggravated by certain foods. Please only bring in store-bought foods with original ingredient label attached in original, unopened packages. Candies may be brought in goodie bags to be taken home by the students, but not for consumption at school. Sodas are not allowed at all.

Allergies:

Children with allergies or chronic medical conditions are identified by information provided by parents on enrollment forms. This information is kept in the student's file in the office and in the classroom. Allergies are posted on a special list in the classrooms and lunch/snack areas. Using information from the enrollment forms, the Center will work together with parents to establish procedures to accommodate food and non-food allergies. See Medications for information regarding procedures for Epi-pens and other medications related to student allergies.

Medical Conditions:

Individual emergency assistance plans will be established at the time of enrollment. The Center Director will maintain a master list of students needing special assistance and their individual emergency assistance plans in the allergies list in the student's classroom. See Medications for information regarding procedures for Epi-pens and other medications related to student medical conditions.

Illness Policy:

Sick children should be kept at home to allow them a chance to rest and recuperate, as well as to protect the other students from contagious antibodies. If any sickness appears on your child, including but not limited to: fever, vomiting, diarrhea, green mucus, etc. please keep them home. If these symptoms appear at school, you will be contacted to pick your child up. They will be expected to return after 24 hours **without** the symptoms, accompanied by a Doctor's note.

Medication Policy

Parents must sign a medication authorization form before any staff will administer medicines (both prescription and over-the counter medicines (i.e. sunscreen, bug spray, diaper rash cream,

etc.). All medicine must be in the original container, not expired and with clear directions for administering. All prescription and non-prescription medication shall be dispensed according to written directions on the prescription label or printed manufacturer's label. Prescription medicine must have the child's name, doctor's name, and prescribed amount. In addition, parents should administer the first dose at home, in case of any allergic reactions.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of an emergency, our policy is to first contact the appropriate authorities, and then to contact the parents by phone. If we are unable to reach the parents, we will then call the alternate emergency contact persons listed on the child's enrollment form.

The Center has an emergency response procedures plan which is reviewed annually by staff. Staff is also trained in first aid and CPR. Fire and emergency drills are practiced with the children monthly or as required by licensing. If you are interested, a copy of this is maintained on our website at: www.istaba.org/pa.

If we have to evacuate, we will first in gather the I.S.T.A.B.A. Mosque (large white building with gold domes). If further evacuation is needed, we will proceed to Camp Chief Tallahassee 6927 Orient Rd. Tampa, Fl. 33610 across the street from the back parking lot.

Guidance and Discipline:

The Hillsborough County Child Care Licensing requires that parents are notified in writing of the disciplinary practices used while in care prior to admission. Spanking or any other form of physical punishment is prohibited. Discipline shall not be associated with food, rest, or toileting. Children shall not be subjected to discipline which is severe, humiliating or frightening.

The goal of discipline is to help children see the sense in acting a certain way. Of course, this is a time consuming task and it is important that we remain realistic in the expectation of the behavior of each child. His/her developmental age and stage must be taken into consideration.

At I.S.T.A.B.A Peace Academy, we encourage positive behavior in the following ways:

1. Allowing the child choices of activities, equipment, and materials, giving him/her a feeling of control over his/her environment, so that conflict with others can be avoided.
2. Guidance in developing language skills, which will help them resolve conflicts with words and not with inappropriate behaviors such as biting, hitting, kicking, etc.

If a child is experiencing difficulty controlling his/her behavior, the following procedures will be used:

1. He/she will be redirected to another play area which may prevent escalation of the problem.
2. If a problem still exists, the child will be removed from the play area and given time away from the group to regain control. The time limits for this personal time are determined by the child. He/she may return to the group when he/she is ready.
3. If continued unacceptable behavior occurs, the parent will be scheduled to discuss a team approach to remedy the problem.

If the issue is still irresolvable, I.S.T.A.B.A Peace Academy reserves the right to dismiss the child from the program.

Statement of Receipt and Acknowledgement of Parent Handbook

I/We, _____, the
parent(s)/legal guardian(s) of _____,
acknowledge that I/We have received a copy of I.S.T.A.B.A. Peace Academy's Parent
Handbook and have been given the opportunity to read the manual, ask questions about, and
understand the policies contained therein. Furthermore, I/We agree to abide by the policies
set forth in the manual.

I/We understand that the policies described in the Parent Handbook are not conditions of
enrollment, and the language does not create a contract between I.S.T.A.B.A. Peace
Academy and the parents. I.S.T.A.B.A. Peace Academy reserves the right to alter, amend, or
otherwise modify these guidelines, in its sole discretion, without prior notice.

Child/Children's Name(s): _____

Parent Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Parent Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____