

DREAM

Kindergarten Readiness Academy

Parent Handbook

Our Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide academic, social, emotional, physical and intellectual development to children 3 -5 years of age to ensure a successful start to elementary school. We offer an educational experience that encourages children to develop their capabilities and interests at their own pace and according to their individual needs. Our goal is to recognize the uniqueness of each and every child and offer positive encouragement for the child's continued growth.

WHO WE ARE ...

DREAM is a non-profit community-based organization providing affordable childcare services that offer academic and enrichment opportunities to assist children with the necessary skills for student success. Financial support for our program is provided by paid tuition and grant funded through (ABC) Arkansas Better Chance Programs. Our program is open to the public and available to all students regardless of race, religion, gender, social status, disabilities, or academic level.

Transitioning to Kindergarten

We will take every measure to ensure that all students are academically and socially prepared for Kindergarten. In addition, we will schedule family fieldtrips to the child's assigned elementary school, and keep parents informed of any school functions throughout the school year, prior to their child attending kindergarten. Our program will offer scheduled family nights that will primarily focus on math and literacy skills and will assist parents in reinforcing daily classroom instruction.

Eligibility

Tuition Paying Students

- Eligible children must at be 3 years of age by August 1st of the year in which they enroll.

- There are no income guidelines for this program.

ABC

Eligible children for the ABC program must meet the following qualifications:

- Must be 3 or 4 years of age by August 1st of the year in which they enroll.
- Gross family income less that 200% of FPL

Enrollment

The following forms must be completed and signed by the parent/guardian and returned to the center before the child will be able to attend:

- Enrollment Application
- Immunization Records/Emergency Release
- Well Child Physical Examination (3-5 yrs only)
- Birth Certificate
- Signed Parent Handbook forms
- USDA Child Care Food Program Enrollment Form
- Tuition Agreement

ABC Programs

- Enrollment Application
- Immunization Records/Emergency Release
- AR Kids Insurance Card
- Physical Examination
- Birth Certificate
- Proof of Income/ College School Schedule
- Signed Parent Handbook forms
- USDA Child Care Food Program Enrollment Form

Academics

Developmental Assessments

Students ages 3-5 attending the DREAM Kindergarten Readiness Academy will receive academic instruction based on their individual ability and skill level. All students will be developmentally assessed within the first 45 days of the first day of school. The developmental assessment will serve as a guide to classroom teachers for instruction. Students that do not pass the assessment maybe referred for therapeutic assistance such as speech, occupational, or behavioral. Assessment scores will be discussed with parents at the first teacher/parent conference and suggestions to assist in promoting learning strategies in the classroom and at home will be made at this time.

Daily Instruction

Each classroom will provide daily academic instruction. Daily instruction includes: exposing students to a print rich environment, providing diverse opportunities for students to explore various cultures, letter and numerical recognition, phonemic awareness and motor skill development. Learning is a step by step process and students will be taught age/skill appropriate curriculum. Our program is designed to allow students with advanced learning to progress without barriers as well as to ensure that students working below proficiency are provided with the assistance necessary to attain adequate skill level.

Nutrition and Meals:

DREAM will provide breakfast, lunch, and snacks to the children at the center. The menus follow the guidelines of the United States Department of Agriculture for healthy foods. Those children who have special dietary needs must provide a written notice to the director of the center from the child’s physician regarding the special requirements. All students that attend our program are required to complete a USDA Child Care Food Program Enrollment Form.

Personal Property

DREAM is not responsible for any personal belongings that are lost, stolen or broken while a child is in the care of the center. Please be sure to label all of your child’s personal belongings to ensure that lost items can be returned. DREAM will not be held responsible for broken personal items due to accidents.

Health Policies:

All centers follow the guidelines for ensuring the health and safety of the children in the centers as required by state law and by the accrediting body the National Association for the Education of Young Children. They must have a recent history & physical screening on file according to DHS guidelines. For more information see Illness topic below.

Calendar:

DREAM hours of operation are listed below. All programs will operate according to the Academic Year Calendar provided to parents in their enrollment packet.

Early Childhood Program (Non-ABC)	6:00 am – 6:00 pm
ABC Program Hours	8:00 am – 3:30 pm
Before School Program	6:00 am – 8:00 am
After School Program	3:30 pm – 6:00 pm

The After School Program begins at 3:30 pm for ABC students. Parents will be charged \$10 for a day or \$50 (more than one day late) for the week no matter how long your child stays in after care.

In the event of special events or holidays, DREAM reserves the right to close early with written notification to the parents of the center at least one week in advance.

Regular Program Hours of Operation

Program hours of operation, excluding ABC are 6:00 pm to 6:00 pm, Monday-Friday,

according to the DREAM School Calendar. If your child is not picked up by 6:00 pm, the following policy will be in effect.

1st Offense: Verbal Warning and documentation to file.

2nd Offense: Payment of \$5.00 per minute after 6:00 p.m. according to our time.

3rd Offense: Dismissal for one-week plus payment of late pick-up fee.

4th Offense: Cancellation of enrollment in addition to payment of late pick-up fee.

Inclement Weather Policy:

- Early Morning Closing – DREAM will be closed due to inclement weather. All DREAM scheduled activities will be cancelled in case of inclement weather. Parents will be notified through our Text Message Group, our Facebook Page, our Website and local media stations regarding school closings. Also, if in doubt please note that we follow the same inclement weather procedures as PCSSD, you may call us or log onto our website www.dreamarkansas.org for information about center operations during inclement weather days.
- Mid -Day Dismissal – In the event schools are closed during school hours, the DREAM staff will notify parents/guardians of early dismissal through our subscribed text messaging system. Upon receipt of this call or email, parents have one hour to pick up their child from the center.

Dress Code: DREAM requires that children wear appropriate school attire, casual type shoes, or dress shoes. All clothing and shoes should be clean and in good repair. Socks must be worn at all times.

Toys: Children are only allowed to bring toys to school on allotted days. Children are permitted to bring specified items from home for show-n-tell. However, soft toys / pillows are permitted for rest time.

Parent/Teacher Conferences: Parents of children ages 3-5 are required to attend at least two scheduled conferences per year to discuss the progress or methods of improvement of their child.

Guidance/Discipline:

DREAM has established clear, consistent and simple expectations that will attempt to meet the diverse needs of the children. Every attempt will be taken to avoid conflict between a child and caregiver. All children will be approached in a calm, respectful manner. They will be given reminders, in a positive way, of the behavior that is expected. The center will be set-up so that there are a number of visible areas that children can go to have a quiet play space if needed. Time-out appropriate to the age of the child will be used as a last resort.

One of the goals of the DREAM Kindergarten Readiness Academy is to create an environment that is stimulating and safe for your child. This includes assisting children

in making appropriate behavioral choices. Teachers will communicate daily student performance by indicating the color in the legend below on the Student Monthly Performance Calendar in your child's communication folder.

GREEN (GO!)	GREAT DAY! NO RULES WERE BROKEN TODAY
YELLOW (CAUTION!)	WARNING FOR MISBEHAVIOR
BLUE (CONSEQUENCE!)	2 WARNINGS AND TIME OUT FOR MISBEHAVIOR
RED (STOP!)	CONFERENCE WITH DIRECTOR, PHONE CALL TO PARENT

At the end of each day, we will record the color of your child's performance, each day is to be initialed and sent back to school in the communication folder daily.

Parent/Teacher Communication:

In efforts to communicate student progress, all students ages 3-5 and assigned to our PreK3 and PreK4 classes will receive a Communication Folder at the beginning of the school year. This folder will be sent home daily with your child's work, school events and daily performance report. Parents must sign this folder daily and return to school. Any comments or concerns regarding the student should be written in the folder to ensure effective communication between the teacher and parent. The communication folder is free of charge, if the folder is lost or damaged, parents will be charged \$1 to purchase a new folder.

Transportation Policy: All participants will be transported by parents to and from the program daily. Kindergarten Readiness Program participants will only receive transportation from the DREAM program through a professional / licensed transportation provider in the event of field trips throughout the school year.

Illness: Any child showing signs of illness (vomiting, diarrhea, undiagnosed rash, flu or fever) will not be able to attend the center. This is to ensure that the best care can be given to the child and other children. Also, this minimizes the infecting of others who are working or attending the center. If a child becomes ill while at the center the child will be kept comfortable until the parent makes alternate arrangements. After any illness, a child must be symptom free for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to this facility.

Medications: Medications will not be administered without written authorization of the parent or guardian nor will it be administered without a labeled container with appropriate dosage on it. Medication must be prescribed by a physician and must be within 30 days of seeing physician.

Tardiness and Absences Policy:

With efforts to ensure that all children receive the best services available, we recommend that all children arrive to school no later than 8:30 am. Most academic instruction begins at 9:00 am.

Tardies – Any student tardy or has received an accumulation of tardies will:

- Receive a written warning that can result in the dismissal of your child from the program. Breakfast will be served at 8:00 am, arriving after this time, may result in your child not being able to eat a hot breakfast, however, we will ensure that all students receive a meal or snack if hungry.

Absences – Any student will be counseled for habitual absenteeism and accumulation of absences. The DREAM program requires that children be in attendance 7 hours daily, to ensure 100% SUCCESS. ABC students can risk losing a slot due to excessive absences.

- 2 absences – verbal warning
- 3 absences – written warning
- On the 5th absence in six months 2nd written warning and possible dismissal from the program

After a written warning, a probationary period may or may not be instituted at the Director's discretion.

Emergency Situations: During emergency situations, DREAM will make arrangements for a replacement caregiver to come to the daycare, so that he/she can accompany the child, with the emergency team, to the hospital. The parents will be informed immediately of the situation.

Fire and Tornado: Monthly practices will occur to help prepare in case of an emergency. Fire escape plans are posted in areas throughout the center. In the case of a fire/tornado, staff and children will go to a designated area and parents/emergency contacts will be advised.

Cancellation Policy: The parent or caregiver is required to give two weeks' notice for cancellation of services. Parents going on holidays with their registered child, for 5 days or more must notify the director at least two weeks in advance.

Tuition & Fees- Pre-K Programs

FULL DAY PROGRAM INCLUDES BREAKFAST, LUNCH, SNACK

REGISTRATION FEE	\$25 PER FAMILY
TODDLERS (25-36 months)	\$100 PER WEEK
ABC	FREE OF CHARGE 8:00 AM – 3:30 PM
PRE-K (NON-ABC)	\$ 90 PER WEEK
BEFORE CARE	\$ 25 PER WEEK
AFTER CARE	\$ 50 PER WEEK
BEFORE AND AFTER CARE	\$ 55 PER WEEK
ABC STUDENT NON-SCHOOL DAY RATE	\$17 PER DAY

Fees are based on a weekly basis and vary due to qualifications. All fees are due on Monday or Friday, weekly or biweekly. State Childcare Vouchers are accepted, scholarship opportunities are available. No students will be turned away due to financial status.

Methods of Payment:

DREAM accepts cash, checks and money orders at the Payment Box located at the front Check-In Station, debit/credit payments can be processed in the office, and online payments can be made by going to www.dreamarkansas.org and clicking on the My ProCare link. We must have an email address on file for you to make online payments, this email address is requested on the enrollment application.

Registration Fees:

New applicants will be charged a \$25 application and registration fee, this is a per family charge and is not applicable to ABC applicants.

Late Fees:

Late charges are \$5 per day and can result in the dismissal of your child after 10 days. **Late fees do not apply to ABC students.**

Service Charge:

For all participants, there will be a **\$25** service charge on all returned checks. The returned check and service charge **MUST** be paid in **CASH** in order to clear the debt.

Prorating:

All enrolled participants are responsible for making weekly/biweekly payments. Each family will be allotted one free vacation week per year, **all other weeks regardless of closing MUST be paid**. Prorating will be at the discretion of the DREAM Director and Advisory Board.

Rate Changes:

Parents/Guardians will be notified ON OR BY August 1 of any rate changes that will be effective the following August.

ABC Program Fees:

Qualifying students will attend the DREAM ABC Program at “NO COST” to the parent

during school hours only. The DREAM After School Program is a separate program and fees apply to all students who attend.

Employees:

All employees of DREAM must submit to a FBI Check, a criminal background check, and a child maltreatment check.

Volunteers:

All DREAM volunteers must submit to a criminal background check. In a child becomes upset or misbehaves, the teacher/assistant will follow the Guidance/ Discipline Policy procedures. **Under no circumstance is the volunteer permitted to discipline any child in care at DREAM**

Child Maltreatment:

All caregivers are responsible for reporting, to the appropriate authorities, any concerns about the occurrence of abuse towards a child in our care. Child Maltreatment Hotline 1-800-482-5964

Custodial Dispute Policy:

DREAM will only release children to authorized persons listed by the parent(s)/legal guardian. It is the parent's / legal guardian's responsibility to inform us of any and all changes to this list. DREAM reserves the right to exclude our company from being involved any custodial disputes that do not have a court order with specific instructions regarding us releasing a child to a non-custodial parent.

Please Sign and Return this Page

POTTY TRAINING COMMITMENT

All children participating in our Early Childhood Readiness Programs are required to wear pullups or underwear to school daily. Children wearing diapers ARE NOT eligible to participate in classes 2 1/2 and up. With parent participation, our goal is to ensure that all participants of this program are potty trained within the first semester of enrollment.

Please sign below that you will actively participate in assisting us with potty training. If your child is potty trained, please write N/A on the signature line below.

Signature

Date

DISCIPLINE STATEMENT

With my signature below, I am stating that, I have read, agree, and understand the policies for discipline for the DREAM Kindergarten Readiness Academy. I understand that every effort will be made by the staff to correct behaviors that may distract or disrupt the learning environment. As a parent, I agree to attend conferences and assist with the improvement of my child's behavior in efforts to ensure that they receive the highest amount of academic assistance offered by the program.

Child's Name

Date

Parent Signature

Date

Parent/Child Handbook Agreement

With my signature below, I am stating that, I have read, agree, and understand the Kindergarten Readiness Academy Parent/Child Handbook for the DREAM Program. I understand that it is my responsibility to comply with the policies and procedures of the handbook. I have been given a copy of the handbook for reference of all policies and procedures of the Kindergarten Readiness Program.

Child's Name

Parent Signature

DREAM

Parent Handbook

for Preschool Programs



Before opening this handbook to view the policies, procedures and requirements for DREAM...We would like to first inform you that DREAM is not a Daycare. We are an Early Childhood Preparatory Academy with the goal to provide a learning experience for both child and parents that will establish life-long learning and academic accountability.

If you are willing to commit to participate in our educational and social efforts to ensure that your child has his/her most successful start to Kindergarten, then there are a few things we would like to focus on before you turn this page...

- All children must arrive to school by 8:30 am to ensure they participate in daily academic instruction.
- All Communication Folders should be signed and returned daily.
- All homework should be completed and returned on time.
- All children must have a weather appropriate change of clothing (including underwear and socks) to be kept at the center.
- All parents must keep their account current to continue services.
- All parents are required to submit all enrollment forms and responsible for keeping their child's file updated.

Thank you for choosing DREAM and committing to participate in your child's educational experience. Feel free to turn the page...