



dream

DEDICATING RESOURCES TO EXCEL ALL MINDS

**EARLY CHILDHOOD ACADEMY
P A R E N T H A N D B O O K**

Welcome to DREAM...

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

If you are willing to commit to participate in our efforts to ensure that your child's daily experience at DREAM is filled with love, nurturing, skill development and social interaction, then there are a few things we would like to focus on before you turn this page...

- It is recommended that all children arrive to school by 8:30 am to ensure their participation in daily academic instruction.
- Parents must bring enough diapers to last for the week. Formula and bottles can be brought daily.
- 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...

****Please be sure to sign and return the last page of this handbook****

Who We Are

DREAM (Dedicating Resources to Excel All Minds) is a non-profit community-based organization providing affordable childcare services that offer developmental skills, academic readiness, and enrichment opportunities to assist children with the necessary skills for student success. Our program is open to the public and available to all students regardless of race, religion, gender, social status, disabilities, or academic level.

Our Mission Statement

DREAM is committed to establishing a strong foundation of learning through providing readiness and academic skills to children 6 weeks to 5 years of age. Our programs provide daily instruction that builds skills to effectively prepare children to reach the highest levels of academic and social achievement beyond elementary school.

Hours of Operation

Our hours of operation are 6:30 am to 5:30 pm, Monday-Friday, according to the DREAM School Calendar.

Calendar:

A calendar displaying days closed and holidays will be provided to every parent upon enrollment. 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.

Locations & Facility Information)

Infant & Toddler Development Center

11 Shelby Rd

Sherwood, AR 72120

Phone: (501) 835-3274

Fax: (501) 835-3582

Early Childhood & Afterschool Academy 8324

Hwy 107

Sherwood, AR 72120

Phone: (501) 414-9503

Fax: (501) 835-3582

Website: dreamarkansas.org

Email: dreamnlr@yahoo.com

Facebook: DREAM Arkansas

Infant & Toddler Development Center

Infants (Ages 6 weeks-15 months)

Our Infant Environment is designed to meet the needs of each individual child as much as possible in a group setting. Infants are fed, diapered, and scheduled for naptime according to their needs. As you can imagine, in a room of 8-10 children there will inevitably be times when the caregivers are faced with multiple needs at the same time. We fully recognize this potential and tackle this challenge in many creative ways. We ask parents to provide us with information about your child's routines, before their first day, to help us become familiar with your child's schedule. We are aware that children's schedules change as they grow, and we adjust as needed. Please feel free to discuss with teachers any questions you may have.

Toddlers (Ages 15-29 months)

Our Toddler Classrooms provide an individualized curriculum for all students, recognizing that each child is unique and special with differing talents and gifts. Our classroom setup is cheerful and nurturing, with hands-on activities that encourage creativity, exploration, and learning.

Our theme-based curriculum for toddlers focuses on providing opportunities for children to explore and discover their surroundings through hands-on activities. Children will stay busy with experiences that build on their social, emotional, cognitive, language and physical development. All skills learned in the Toddler Class will assist in positively transitioning students to our Preschool & Kindergarten Readiness Programs.

Diapering

Diapers/Pull-Ups must be provided by parents. Children's diapers are changed every 2-3 hours and after every bowel movement. Staff, at every diaper change, use disposable gloves. Children are changed at a changing table on a changing pad that is sanitized with a bleach/water solution after every change.

Potty Training

Potty training shouldn't be rushed; it is important that your child is psychologically and physically ready for training. Pull Ups must be provided by the parent/guardian during this transition period, no regular style training pants or underwear will be used until your child maintains 2 continuous weeks of bladder/bowel control; of course, if your child regresses after this 2-week period we will assess the next step.

Preschool & Kindergarten Readiness Academy

Preschool (Ages 2 ½-3 years)

DREAM's Preschool Classrooms offer theme-based curriculum for children that focuses on providing opportunities for children to take a daily adventure of their surroundings through hands-on activities. The children are occupied with an adventure that builds on their social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development.

Our daily schedule is full of art projects, manipulative experiences, water play, dramatic play, and object investigation. Group interaction consists of discussing the theme, color, and shape of the week. Stories, songs, and finger plays enhance their developing oral language skills. These daily skills will assist with effectively preparing and transitioning children to our Kindergarten Readiness Academy.

Kindergarten Readiness Academy (Ages 3-5 years...Must be 3 by August 1)

Our Kindergarten Readiness Academy offers several options and provides 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 child and offer positive encouragement for the child's continued growth.

ABC (Ages 3 ½ -5)

The ABC (Arkansas Better Chance) Program was created for 3 ½ –5-year-old children whose family's gross income does not exceed 200% of the Federal poverty level. Our objective is to provide a safe and nurturing environment that promotes development and enhances learning for each child. We strive to establish relationships with the families of the children in our care and to collaborate with our community members to deliver high quality Early Education services. The program utilizes a written overall curriculum plan that covers topics like cultural diversity, social and emotional development, and language skills. Children participate in a daily schedule that includes indoor/outdoor activities, quiet/active activities, individual/group activities, fine/gross motor skill-building activities, and children/teacher-initiated activities. ABC is a grant awarded program provided by the Arkansas Department of Education. Qualifying children attend this program free of charge.

Pre-Kindergarten 3-4

Our Pre-Kindergarten 3-4 classrooms are academically structured by skill level to offer an environment that encourages children to develop their capabilities and interests at their own pace and according to their individual need. This classroom provides academic,

social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development to children 3 to 5 years of age to ensure a successful start to elementary school. Our goal is to recognize the uniqueness of each child and provide positive encouragement for their continued growth.

S.T.E.A.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math)

STEAM explorations offer children the skills needed for lifelong learning. Pre-K children are effective STEM learners due to their innate sense of wonder and curiosity. The DREAM STEAM environment offers children opportunities to learn how to observe, ask questions, investigate, and use problem-solving skills that lead to innovative thinking. Students ages 4-5 will receive the opportunity to help us pilot the first STEAM Pre-Kindergarten Class in our community. This state-of-the-art classroom is equipped with all the latest and most relevant STEAM equipment and learning materials to provide your child with the most meaningful and educational experience EVER!

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 may be 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.

Academic Instruction

Each classroom will provide daily academic instruction using Creative Curriculum. 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.

Center Policies & Procedures

Hours of Operation

Hours of operation are 6:30 am to 5:30 pm, Monday-Friday, according to the DREAM School Calendar. If your child is not picked up by 5:30 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 5:30 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.

Tardiness & Absences

With efforts to ensure that all children receive the best services available, we recommend that all children arrive at 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.

Meals & Nutrition

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

children that attend our program are required to complete a USDA Child Care Food Program Enrollment Form.

As children are beginning to master their self-help skills, we encourage them to use sippy cups and utensils. As children progress and prepare for their next group teachers will work with the children and help them be more prepared for any mealtime routines prior to transitioning to the next class. For example, when moving from Toddlers to Preschool classrooms children will transition from sippy cups/cups with straws to a regular drinking cup.

Naptime

Infants nap in a crib designated to each child. All children Toddler-Pre-Kindergarten sleep on a cot with a cot sheet provided by the center. Parents are required to bring a blanket for their child to use at naptime, blankets will be sent home each Friday for parents to wash and return the following Monday.

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 and shoes (age appropriate) must be always worn.

Parent/Teacher Communication

Infants & Toddlers

In efforts to communicate regarding a child's daily progress, the ProCare App can be used for staff and parents. Due to DHS policy, staff cannot use their phones when working with the children, but we allow a break in the day for them to send messages and respond to parents about their child's daily progress. If there is an emergency, and you need to speak to someone immediately, please contact our office.

Preschool & Kindergarten Readiness Academy

In efforts to communicate student progress, all students 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. Parents will also be provided with access to the teacher through our text messaging system.

Parent/ Teacher Conferences

Parents of children enrolled in our PreK 4-5 classes are required to attend at least two scheduled conferences per year to discuss the progress or methods of improvement of their child.

Behavior Guidance/Progressive Discipline:

Center wide, 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 the 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 several 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.

Behavior Guidance Practices for Preschool & Kindergarten Readiness Academy

One of the goals of the DREAM Preschool & 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.

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.

Communication folders will not be sent home during the summer.

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

Daily Performance Legend for Parent/Teacher Communication Folder Preschool/Kindergarten Readiness Academy (Ages 3-5) Only!

Health Policies

DREAM will 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.

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 infection 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 the facility.

Fever / Symptoms:

Before allowing entry into the facility, all DREAM children and staff will be screened, to include taking the temperature of each person upon arrival at the facility each day. Any person with a fever/temp of 100.4°F or above will not be allowed to attend.

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

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.

Safety Policy/ Video Surveillance

To ensure the safety of children, employees and visitors, designated areas within our facility are continuously monitored and recorded by video surveillance systems, operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Real-time video feeds are available in these locations to support investigations related to accidents, near-miss incidents, or quality concerns. Access to previously recorded footage is restricted exclusively to the Executive Director. Surveillance will not be conducted, nor recordings made, in private spaces such as restrooms under any circumstances.

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.

Tuition & Fees (Effective 8/1/2025)

FULL DAY PROGRAM INCLUDES BREAKFAST, LUNCH, SNACK

REGISTRATION FEE	\$40 PER FAMILY
INFANTS (6 weeks-14 months)	\$180 WEEKLY
TODDLERS (15-24 months)	\$165 WEEKLY
PRESCHOOLERS (25-36 months)	\$155 WEEKLY
PRE-K (NON-ABC)	\$145 WEEKLY

ABC	FREE OF CHARGE 7:30 AM – 3:30 PM
AFTER CARE (ABC Student)	\$60 PER WEEK

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 Voucher Assistance is available through an application and approval process through the Arkansas Department of Education / Arkansas Department of Human Services. No students will be turned away due to financial status.

***No religious activity will be paid for or subsidized using public funds or occur in any manner suggesting governmental endorsement of any religion or religious message.**

Methods of Payment:

DREAM accepts debit/credit card payments, these payments can be processed in the office, and paid using ProCare App. We must have an email address on file for you to make payments to the ProCare App, this email address is requested on the enrollment application.

Registration Fees:

New applicants will be charged a \$50 application/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.**

Prorating:

All enrolled participants are responsible for making weekly/biweekly payments. 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 for the upcoming school year.

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.

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.

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.

Employees & Staff:

All employees of DREAM must be cleared of FBI Check, Criminal Background Check and Child Maltreatment Check prior to employment, these checks will be resubmitted every three years for clearance.

Volunteers:

All DREAM volunteers must be cleared through an FBI, Criminal and Child Maltreatment Check to volunteer in any capacity. If 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.

Suspected Child Abuse & Neglect

Children may be subject to interviews by licensing staff, child maltreatment investigators or law enforcement officials to determine licensing compliance or for investigative purposes without parental notice or consent. Children enrolled at DREAM are subject to interviews by licensing staff, child maltreatment investigators and/or law enforcement officials for the purpose of determining licensing compliance or for investigative purposes. (Child interviews do not require parental consent or notice).

Written Procedure for Reporting Suspected Maltreatment

Every employee is mandated by state statute to report any cases of suspected child abuse or neglect. Such a report is not a statement of blame; it is simply a statement that will result in an investigation by the proper authorities. If the Department of Human Services

carries out an investigation of child abuse, DREAM and its staff will cooperate fully with investigators.

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 all changes to this list. DREAM reserves the right to exclude our business from being involved in any custodial disputes that do not have a court order with specific instructions regarding us releasing a child to a non-custodial parent.

Parent Handbook Acknowledgement & Consent Form

Parent/Child Handbook Agreement

With my signature below, I am stating that I have read, agree, and understand the DREAM Early Childhood Parent Handbook. 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 Toddler Program.

Child's Name

Parent Signature

Date: _____

POTTY TRAINING AGREEMENT

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 ½ 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

N/A:

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE STATEMENT

With my signature below, I am stating that I have read, agree, and understand the policies for Behavior Guidance at DREAM. 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

**** Please sign and return this page****