

PARENT HANDBOOK



Pinnacle Learning Center
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Letter from Director

Welcome to Pinnacle Learning Center and thank you for considering us as your partners in educating and caring for your child. Everything we do here is focused on the social, emotional cognitive, and physical development of each child with an emphasis on independence.

I am proud to be the owner and director of Pinnacle Learning Center. I started this business with the commitment of providing something unique to the area and the industry. I have always desired my center to be a place where kids would be given the tools, guidance, and encouragement required to reach their full potential. I wanted a place where parents didn't feel like they were simply settling, but a place where they would be proud and excited to take their kids each day, as well as have the confidence of knowing that their child would be given every opportunity to develop through independent growth.

I knew to achieve this I had to surround myself with people that share my same passions and desires, and who have the skills to effectively teach and care for each child we are entrusted with. It's through our shared vision and unity that makes our teaching and administrative team second to none.

Sincerely,

Yuliya Bykova

Owner & Director

PHILOSOPHY

Pinnacle Learning Center's goal is to be North Jersey leading preschool program. Our program gives children ages 1 year through 13 years old enriching opportunities to develop the whole child. We focus on learning through child-directed play experiences and curriculum time. We believe a balance of play and preschool enhances growth and development in all areas: physically, socially, emotionally, creatively, and intellectually. This is achieved in a safe and loving environment with caregivers who are dedicated to enriching children's lives.

Our school offers a safe, loving, nurturing and creative environment, which encourages each child to blossom. We encourage children to experience the joys of learning as well as the spontaneous delights of childhood. Children's work is their play!

TEACHERS

Our certified teaching team works diligently to ensure that all areas of development are met coupled with an exciting curriculum that engages each child. This allows children the opportunity to learn in an environment that is dedicated to a hands-on, interactive and stimulating education. Each of our teachers are dedicated to each child's success

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Pinnacle Learning Center does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, religion, or national or ethnic origin in admittance, education, or other administrative policies and extends to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally made available to students at the school.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

The center maintains an open-door policy with all parent/guardians of enrolled children. Parent/guardians are not only welcomed, but also highly encouraged to volunteer and visit their child's classroom. Parent/guardians and all visitors are required to check in with the Director, Owner(s), or acting supervisor, before proceeding to the classroom. Parent/guardians are encouraged to help with certain tasks such as cutting out items for the classrooms, sharing information about their job or hobby, or to read to a group of children. The teacher will always remain responsible for the student's health and safety. Parent/guardians will have immediate access without prior notice to the center. In situations where there is custody or domestic issues the center's Standards of Conduct will apply at all times.

REQUIRED POLICIES

Pinnacle Learning Center is licensed and regulated by the New Jersey Department of Family and Protective Services. The following policies are required by Child care Licensing per The Minimum Standards for Child Care Center R-8/3/20. - 02PIN0001

1. CENTER OF OPERATIONS

We are open for operation between the hours of 7:00 A.M. and 6:30 P.M, Monday through Friday. We close to observe the following holidays: **New Year's Eve - close at 1PM, New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, George Washington's birthday, Friday before Easter, Memorial Day, Independence Day, September preparation day (Friday before Labor Day) Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day and following Friday, Christmas Eve - close at 1PM and Christmas Day. Full Tuition is due for Holiday.**

NOTE: In some cases, if the holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, Early Care and Education may close the day before or the day after the holiday. Parents will be updated on each year's holiday schedule in January.

2. RELEASE OF CHILDREN

Per New Jersey Laws, parents have a right to access their child at any time. However, we strongly encourage parents to drop off their children by 9:00am each day so that the child can take part in our full educational program. In the event that a parent is unable to pick up their child, they may authorize another legal adult to pick up. Children will not be released to a minor. Authorized adults must be listed on the enrollment form to pick up and the authorized adult must bring a picture ID. Children will not be released to adults without a picture ID.

An hour or more after closing time, and provided that other arrangements for releasing the child to his/her parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s), have failed and the staff member(s) cannot continue to supervise the child at the center, the staff member shall call the 24-hour State Central Registry Hotline 1-877-NJ-ABUSE (1-877-652-2873) to seek assistance in caring for the child until the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the child's parent(s) is able to pick-up the child.

If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) appears to be physically and/or emotionally impaired to the extent that, in the judgment of the director and/or staff member, the child would be placed at risk of harm if released to such an individual the child may not be released to such an impaired individual; Staff members will contact the child's other parent or an alternative person(s) authorized by the parent(s); If the center is unable to make alternative arrangements, a staff member will call the 24-hour State Central Registry Hotline 1-877-NJ-ABUSE (1-877-652-2873) to seek assistance in caring for the child.

For school-age child care programs, no child will be released from the program unsupervised except upon written instruction from the child's parent(s).

Occasional lateness is understandable, but please make every effort to observe your child's arrival and pick up time. Please call us for any unusual lateness. Please pick up children on time the grace time is 10 minutes for late pick up. In one hour after closing time, if the provided other arrangements for releasing the

child to his/her parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s), have failed and the staff member will call the 24-hour State Central Registry Hotline 1- 877-NJ-ABUSE (1-877-652-2873) to seek assistance in caring for the child until the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the child's parent(s) is able to pick-up the child.

SIGN IN & OUT

Pinnacle Learning Center keeps a record of your child's drop off and pick up times for their safety. It is a mandatory record by the State of New Jersey.

We use Brightwheel application for sign in and out. Please find Brightwheel barcode on the wall right next to main entrance door. If someone drops off or picks up your child other than parent, she or he will be asked to sign paper form and show photo ID and the school will make and keep a copy of the ID.

3. DISCIPLINE & GUIDANCE POLICY

Pinnacle Learning Center staff members are trained to use a positive method of discipline and guidance that encourages self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction. Just a few examples used in this situation are: praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior; reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements and redirecting behaviors. Pinnacle Learning Center staff will never use Corporal Punishment or negative discipline that may hurt or humiliate a child.

Research has shown that positive guidance teaches children skills which help them get along in their physical and social environment. This aim is to develop personal standards in self-discipline, not to enforce a set of inflexible rules. Giving children understandable guidelines and redirecting their behavior helps them to develop internal control of their actions and encourages acceptable behavior. Positive cooperation is required from the family when dealing with disruptive behavior. We feel that consistency from all parties involved is the best way to handle these issues. Pinnacle Learning Center reserves the right to terminate care for the child for discipline problems at any time.

SUPPLIES/TOYS

Parents should bring in the following items:

1. Diapers and wipes for 2 weeks to keep in facility.
2. **LABELED** bag with extra clothing (underwear, socks, and T- shirts/pants/skirts).
3. One extra bedding set or blanket.
4. Pinnacle Learning Center provides children with toys. The Parent agrees not to bring toys to the care except one favorite toy. Should the Parent still decide to bring any toys, books, or games, the Provider will not be responsible for any damage of the child' belongings.

NOTE: IT IS THE PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO TAKE OFF/PUT ON CHILD'S CLOTHING IN DROP-OFF/PICK-UP AREA.

4.USE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Pinnacle Learning Center uses Facebook, Instagram and Center's Website in order to share the relevant information regarding the news, updates, upcoming events, holidays and schedule changes. ***This networks/social media tools also can be used for advertising.***

Text Messages, Emails or any similar kind of communication can be done only by specially designated staff. Tagging, Sharing, Posting, Commenting, Live Streaming etc. are certainly appreciated.

Parents are welcome to post and share video, photos or any other information they would like to publish to any of listed devices, but only of their children.

Any vulgar or abusive language, disparaging remarks and/or references of a disparaging manner and other are prohibited and disrespected.

Staff & Parents communication is preferred to be done via Center's Website, Application or any Social Network. Information regarding children, photo, video and so on should be done only with parents written permission; and any breaches of the Center's policy should be reported to the Director as well.

The emails and messages which can be sent to parents via mentioned devices and social media tools can contain the information regarding children's illness, accidents, behavioral concerns, daily updates, emergency closures, photographs, unusual accidents, community information and others.

5. PARENT NOTIFICATIONS

Open Communication with parents is very important to children's success. Pinnacle Learning Center has multiple ways of communicating with parents. We use Brightwheel application that you will be required to download to your phone. In some situations, parents may be asked to sign documents acknowledging that communication has taken place.

While children are in our school, they will receive all their personal attention not only for basic needs-feeding, sleeping, and playing, but also various learning skills.

We need parent's active participation for the best educational outcome.

Parents and teachers must work together to make children's best early childhood experience.

Please pay close attention to below:

1. Read all letters that teachers send home. It is the best way to send a message to many parents at once.

2. Check your Brightwheel app regularly. Special announcements, monthly lesson plans will be sent by the app.

3. Emergency text message will be sent from the director.

Teachers will respond to parents' msg or phone calls ONLY during children's nap time or after the class time.

Please use the school phone number. If nobody answers the phone, please leave your message. We will get back to you as soon as possible.

6. PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING EMERGENCIES

We keep a fully supplied first aid kit in a safe accessible location in the classroom, for staff to use if a child suffers minor injuries while in school. Our staff is certified in CPR and First Aid.

All accidents or incident will be reported to parent and parent will sign it and return to school.

In a serious emergency, we will call to 911 first. Then call the parents or The Valley hospital if necessary.

When going for treatment to the hospital, the child's complete file including parent's emergency treatment consent and injury report form (if applicable) is taken.

In the case of an accidental injury, we will make an immediate attempt to contact a parent using the information provided on the Registration form. The school will maintain a parent's signed consent form authorizing a doctor to perform emergency medical procedures. If we are unable to reach you, we will call the child's physician and emergency contacts listed on form. It is to your child's benefit to keep the school up to date on emergency phone numbers, physicians' numbers, medications and other pertinent information. If a child ingests or comes in contact with a poisonous substance the staff will contact the Poison Control Center 1.800.222.1222.

EMERGENCY CONTACT – school closing due to the inclement weather or power failure.

We realize that parents need to work, and we try to open even in bad weather. However, it may be very difficult for our staff to reach the school on very snowy or other inclement weather.

The school will decide early dismissal, late opening, or closing day based on the weather advisory, alert, or Mahwah public school's decision.

Teachers will send Brightwheel text msg and the school director will send mobile text message to each parent early in the morning or previous night for complete closing day.

If weather authority alerts the severe weather during the day, please contact to school and check the situation and try to pick up children early.

7. ILLNESS AND DISEASES POLICY

Children who are ill should not attend preschool Pinnacle Learning Center observes the standards set by the New Jersey Department of Family and Protective Services for ill children. The most common standards for exclusion are:

1. Illness that prevents the child from participating in child care activities, ***including outdoor play.***
2. The illness results in a greater need for care than caregivers can provide without compromising the health, safety and supervision of the other children.
3. Excessively runny nose and/or frequent sneezing
4. Yellow or green nose drainage
5. Oral temperature of 100 or armpit temperature of 99.
6. Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrollable constant cough from the chest, sore throat or difficult and rapid breathing
7. Red eyes with discharge.
8. Abdominal pain, blood in urine.
9. Head lice.
10. Rashes that you cannot identify or that have been diagnosed by a physician
11. Pink Eye.
12. Diarrhea (keep your child home for at least 24 hours after the last incident)
13. Vomiting (keep your child home for at least 24 hours after the last incident)
14. Impetigo of the skin.

If a doctor diagnoses any kind of infection, and prescribes an antibiotic, the child should not be brought to the care until he/she has been on the medication for 24 hours.

When the child comes back to school from the communicable disease, parent should submit a doctor's note to the school office.

If a child becomes ill while in our care, we will contact the parent immediately. We will care for the child apart from the other children with proper supervision and give extra attention to hand washing and sanitation practices.

Parents need to pick up children within 1 hour of notification. In the event of *severe* illness or injury, or if a parent fails to pick up their child within a reasonable amount of time, Early Care and Education may call for an ambulance at the parent's expense.

If a child is sent home sick from our program, they may not return until the child is symptom-free for 24-hours.

The parent agrees to call the Pinnacle Learning center the day before by 6:30PM or on the day of child's absence by 7:00AM should the child stay home for any reason on a scheduled day.

8. MEDICATION

Please inform your physician that your child is in full-day or part-day preschool and that you prefer to give medications at home, morning and evening. Knowing this, many doctors will order longer acting medications. Limiting medications dispensed away from home prevents medication errors. Please remember Pinnacle Learning Center is designed for **well** children.

If medications need to be administered at school, the following conditions must be met:

- **Prescription medication will be accepted only if it is in the original container and hasn't reached its expiration date.**

- Nonprescription medication may only be administered by following the manufacturer's recommendation on the label. Medication must be in the original container and accompanied with a copy of the information given to you by the pharmacy.
- Before any prescription or nonprescription medication can be administered, including sunscreen, we must have permission in writing by the child's parent or guardian. Please fill out the medication forms and enter instructions into the Daily Medication Log Book. Please bring a copy of the information given to you by the pharmacy.
- Medication needs to go home after the last date that the medication is administered.

Health forms are required to be completed at the time of enrollment showing any allergies, physical handicaps, a statement of general health, and a current immunization history. These must be updated and kept current.

Medication may be given to children with a signed medical information sheet. These are located in the office.

9. IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Immunization records must be current for all children enrolled in the Toddler, Preschool programs. A copy must be in the child's file. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that your child's immunizations are current. Failure to keep children current on immunizations may lead to disenrollment.

From time to time Pinnacle Learning Center may have children enrolled that have not received immunizations due to personal belief. A notarized affidavit must be on file for these children. Flu shots must be updated by December 31st of each year.

10. EXPULSION POLICY

Unfortunately, there are sometimes reasons we have to expel a child from our program either on a short term or permanent basis. We want you to know that we will do everything possible to work with the family of the child(ren) in order to prevent this policy from being enforced. The following are reasons we may have to expel or suspend a child from this center:

IMMEDIATE CAUSES FOR EXPULSION

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or him/herself.
- Parent threatens physical or intimidating actions towards staff members.
- Parents exhibits verbal abuse to staff in front of enrolled children.

PARENTAL ACTIONS FOR CHILD EXPULSION

- Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payments.
- Failure to complete required forms including the child's immunization records.
- Habitual tardiness when picking up your child. Verbal abuse to staff.

CHILD'S ACTIONS FOR EXPULSION

- Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time.
- Uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts.
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children.
- Excessive biting.

Prior to expulsion, a parent will be called, and correspondence will be sent home indicating what the problem is, and every effort will be made by both the center and the parent to correct the problem. If, after one or two weeks, depending on the risk to other children's welfare or safety, behavior does not improve, and the center finds that they can no longer accommodate the child, the parent will be asked to remove him/her. The parent will be given a minimum of one week's notice to find another center to provide care for this child.

11. MEALS, SNACKS and BIRTHDAY PARTIES

Parents will provide food/drink for the child. Pinnacle Learning Center serves morning snack at 10:00am. Lunch is served at 12:30pm. Afternoon snack is served after the rest period around 3:30pm, and again at 4:00pm for the school-age kids as they arrive after school. Pinnacle Learning Center **is a Nut-Free School**. If a child requires an alternative meal, milk or substitution, a note from a doctor may be required. The doctor's note must include a recommended substitution.

Birthdays are the most special day for all children. We love to celebrate birthdays together. Please let us know in advance of the date you plan to celebrate. You are welcome to send in little goody bags or treats and celebrate with us. However, any chocolate, hard candy, gums or soft gel candy will NOT be allowed to bring to school or in goodie bags. Parties are usually taking place during morning or afternoon snack time.

12. HEALTH AND SAFETY PRACTICES

1. Hand washing: Hands are washed frequently throughout and the day including before and after meals, after bathroom use, after nose blowing and wiping, and after handling an ill child.
2. Toys and Equipment: Toys are sterilized weekly or as needed with a recommended bleach solution.
3. Accidents and Injuries: In spite of every precaution being taken an accident occurs, the following procedure is followed: first aid is administered, and the parent is contacted right away.
4. Medical Emergencies: In the event of a medical emergency, 911 will be called first, then the parents or guardian will be contacted as soon as possible. Serious accidents are reported to the Department of Social and Health Service.
5. Release of Children: Children are absolutely NOT to be released to anyone except those signed below or those listed on the Identification and Emergency Information form.
6. Reporting Child abuse: New Jersey State Law and Licensing states that child care facilities are required to report immediately to the police and child protective services any reason to suspect child abuse, neglect, or exploitation. The provider is not obligated to inform parents/guardians of this report.

13. POTTY TRAINING POLICY

When you feel your child is ready for potty training, we ask that you begin teaching at home during a weekend or vacation. **PLEASE NOTE: We will only assist your child in potty training if you have successfully begun training at home for one week prior.**

We will follow through and encourage your child while in care. Potty training will be done in a relaxed manner with the cooperation of the family. We require that the child be at least 2 years of age and **MUST** also show signs of readiness (Please read the Potty-Training Readiness Checklist below). Positive reinforcements and consistency must be continued at home.

The child **MUST** be kept in pull-ups at all times. Please keep in mind that the activity level here at the center can distract your child from responding to an urge to use the potty, more so than at your home. Therefore, we will use diapers until your child can and will announce that he/she must use the bathroom and can control his/her bladder and bowels for a few minutes beyond that announcement. It is required that parents provide pull-ups, diaper (until child is ready for pull-ups only) and a few extra changes of clothing.

Proper Clothing

Do not bring your child in panties or underwear until he/she has nap time and bedtime control established. During potty training your child needs to be dressed in "User friendly" clothing as much as possible. The best items are shorts and pants with elastic waist. Please **DO NOT** dress your child in the following:

No tight clothing No shirts that snag in the crotch No pants with snaps & zippers No overalls or bib type clothing No belts No one piece outfits

The clothes listed above can make it difficult for your child to reach the potty in time. Your child also needs to be able to pull his/her pants up and down and these items will hinder your child's ability to do so.

Required Supplies

The following items are to be left at the childcare and replaced as needed. Soiled clothes will be returned in a plastic bag at the end of the day. Two (2) changes of clothing including socks (an extra pair of shoes if available) A bag of pull-ups – you will be notified when the supply is running low.

Potty Learning Schedule:

For the first week, the child will be scheduled to use the Potty at consistent times of the day whether the child indicates the need to use the Potty or not.

Upon arrival at the center

Before and after breakfast

Before and after lunch

Before and after nap

Before and after going outside

Just before going home

Potty Training Readiness Checklist

Verbal Stages of Readiness

Basic verbal skills. The child is able to speak in three to four-word sentences

Stage 1 The child tells you he/she has a wet diaper, recognized when he/she is wet.

Stage 2 The child tells you he/she is wetting, recognizes the sensation of being wet.

Stage 3 The child tells you he/she will wet, can control himself and uses the potty.

Physical and Psychological sign of readiness:

1. Stays dry for a long period of time (the child is able to “hold” his/her urine and bowel movement)
2. Can recognize when diaper is wet or soiled.
3. Has bowel movement at regular times (child chooses when to move its bowels)
4. Adult can recognize when child is moving his/her bowels (Child is deliberately moving bowels)
5. Can undress and pull up his/her own pants (Important because this is the work of the child not the caregiver)
6. Initiates interest in using the potty and asks to wear underwear.
7. Wants to be independent which is very important for the learning process.
8. Child is emotionally ready and is open to learning (is child generally cooperative?)
9. Child has an awareness and knowledge of the world beyond himself. (This sign may seem unrelated to Potty training, but it is a behavior that has been seen in children ready to use the Potty)
10. Can follow three and four step instructions (this is critical for learning to urinate or move bowels, wipe himself and wash hands)
11. Can use consistent words or gestures to communicate.
12. Is able to physically get to the potty and sit on it without help.
13. Must show a willingness to want to sit on the potty and understand its function.

14. TRIAL PERIOD OF ENROLLMENT

There is **1 (one)** week of trial period during which both, Parents and Provider, can terminate the service without a prior notice.

15. ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

Upon selecting Pinnacle Learning Center to meet your child's educational needs, **all enrollment paperwork is required before the child can start our program.** Incomplete paperwork will not be accepted. Paperwork required for enrollment includes:

- Enrollment Form
- Authorization for Emergency Medical Attention
- Vaccination Records
- Physician's Statement
- Tuition Agreement

Parents will be notified within 30 days of any policy change in writing. Signatures from parents may be required.

16. QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

If parents have questions or concerns about our program, we encourage you to have open communication with your child's teacher and the Center Director. Through open communication, we can ensure that all parties are well informed and working as partners in the child's education. From time to time, the center director may complete a Parent Concern Form. Parents will receive a copy of this form with the appropriate outcome.

SUMMATION

All children enrolled in Pinnacle learning center are treated with love and respect and are provided with the opportunity to engage in a wide variety of activities. Our most fundamental objective is to provide for your child a safe, clean, and loving environment, in which each child will feel that he/she loved, valued, and wanted.