



Emerson Academy, a program of The Emerson Foundation, 501 (c)(3), is an inclusive child development center, serving children ages 6 weeks to 10 years. Our classes are made up of typically developing children as well as children with special needs; including children with speech/language disorders, cognitive and neurological disabilities, physical disabilities and behavioral needs.

The center offers a full-day program as well as part-time programs, including a half-day program (7:00-12:30pm or 12:30pm-6:00pm) and two or three full days per week. Our hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

Family Handbook: 2010-2011

Accident/Incident Reports

If your child is seriously injured during school hours you will be notified by phone and an accident/incident report will be sent home. The center will keep a copy of all accident/incident reports in your child's file and our accident/incident file for periodic review by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

Attendance

We encourage families to send their children to school on time every day, unless the child is ill. When children are absent or arrive late they miss out on valuable learning opportunities and disrupt the learning of other children.

Biting Policy

In order to ensure the health and safety of all children enrolled at Emerson Academy a biting policy has been implemented. Parents will be asked to follow the policy received in the registration packet and keep a signed copy on file. If biting becomes a problem that is occurring on a regular basis the director will meet with the parents and teachers to develop a behavioral plan. In rare cases a child may be dismissed from our program if his/her biting issue cannot be resolved.

Children's Product Safety

New licensing standards require that we certify that there are no unsafe children's products in use or accessible to children in the child-care center at any time. Our staff regularly checks the items used by children at the facility to ensure the safety of the children, including reviewing the Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC) lists of recalled children's items. You can access a listing of unsafe children's products through the CPSC Internet website (www.cpsc.gov) or through the DFPS Internet website (www.dfps.state.tx.us).

Clothing

Please send your child in comfortable, weather appropriate clothing that does not inhibit your child from participating in physical activities. Our program emphasizes hands on learning, which can be messy. Play clothes are recommended because our staff will not discourage children from participating in an activity in order to protect his/her clothing. Closed toe shoes are required for children that are walking age. Flip-flops or other shoes that do not stay on your child's feet will not be permitted for safety reasons. All children should have a season-appropriate change of clothes at school at all times. Children that are toilet learning will be expected to have several changes of clothes daily.

Communication with Families

Daily reports will be sent home for children in our infant and toddler classes. The reports will let family members know: what/how much was eaten, diaper changes, sleep patterns, general mood, and activities that your child enjoyed. We encourage daily communication for children with special needs about your child's progress. If you would like, we will be happy to provide you with daily written notes for a particular behavior or activity of interest if requested.

Communication with Service Providers

In order to provide consistent care for your child it is important that we have open communication with outside service providers, such as your child's school district or any outside therapists. With your permission, we will communicate at least once a semester with your child's service providers.

Conferences

Conferences will be held in January, May and September to discuss your child's progress and development. Please feel free to discuss any questions/concerns you have at any time with your child's teacher. Your child's teacher will be able to speak with you during his/her scheduled conference time or you may make an appointment so that we can have someone cover his/her class.

Confidentiality

It is essential that every adult involved in Emerson Academy assume the utmost respect for every child's right to confidentiality. Teachers/staff may only divulge confidential information about a child to persons involved in the child's care, such as caregivers, fellow teachers and/or outside service providers. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to, disability status, family/parent status, medical information, and involvement in an incident.

Diapers

Family members are responsible for supplying diapers and wet wipes for children that are not yet toilet trained. Please send 10-20 diapers at a time due to limited storage space. Your child's teacher will notify you when the supply is getting low.

Discipline

At Emerson Academy we believe that discipline and education go hand in hand. Our expectation is that children, caregivers, and family members will treat one another with respect and dignity. Discipline begins at home and will be strongly reinforced at the center.

Our staff is committed to caring for your child and teaching him/her how to behave appropriately in a school setting. We use developmentally appropriate language combined with principles of Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) to guide our disciplinary practices. Our practices include consistent behavioral expectations, redirecting children to constructive activities, natural consequences (Ex: cleaning up a spill), and encouraging negotiation. Children may be directed to a "cool down time" for aggressive behavior.

There will be no harsh, cruel or unusual punishment treatment of any child. Parents and teachers will be asked to read and sign an understanding of the complete discipline and guidance policy in accordance with the Texas Administrative Code, Title 40, Chapters 746 and 747, Subchapters L, Discipline & Guidance. If you have not already read and signed this memo of understanding, please ask to do so.

Drop-off

Children in the full-day program should arrive between 7:00 a.m.-8:30 a.m. Please communicate with your child's teacher if your child will be arriving late due to an appointment. Caregivers are asked to make drop-off time as brief as possible so that the children can transition easily. Classes may be combined between 7:00 a.m.-8:00 a.m.

Dismissal

Emerson Academy reserves the right to dismiss a child from the center at any point. Parents will be responsible for that month's tuition.

Emergencies

In the event of an emergency we will call 911 and administer first aid/CPR. Our staff members are certified in first aid and CPR, and are able to implement the center's emergency plan for natural disasters and emergencies. Emerson Academy's emergency evacuation site is *Pump It Up*, located at 3918 Gattis School Rd. Suite 100. In the event of an emergency such as a fire or prolonged electricity outage in severe weather, we will evacuate the children and notify families immediately.

Family Participation

Family involvement is an essential component of our program. Throughout the school year there will be many opportunities for participation through volunteering and program input. You may wish to send a special snack for your child's birthday or a special occasion that your family celebrates, such as a holiday. Please check with your child's teacher about children with special diets and food restrictions. Many children with special needs have dietary restrictions that will need to be taken into account.

Field trips

Caregivers will be notified at least 48 hours in advance of a field trip. We must have a signed permission slip for each child including permission to transport the child, if applicable.

Gang-free Zone

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.

Grievances

If you are upset about something that has occurred, or you have a concern, please contact either your child's teacher or the directors. Please do not discuss sensitive matters in front of the children (i.e. at pick-up time).

Hearing/Vision Tests

The state requires that each child in a school setting who turns 4 by September 1 have a hearing and vision screening on file at the school. This is required for all children at Emerson Academy upon enrollment. Please forward copies to be added to your child's school records.

Holidays

Emerson Academy closes for the following holidays: New Year's Day (January 1st), Memorial Day (May), 4th of July, Labor Day (September), Thanksgiving Day (and the following day), and the Week of Christmas. In December 2010, Emerson Academy will be closed on Friday, December 24th, 2010 and the following week (December 27-31st, 2010).

Illness and Injury

If your child is ill or has an injury that prevents participation in activities, including outdoor play, please do not send your child to the center. If your child becomes ill while in our care we will contact you to pick your child up.

We may not admit children that have one of the following, unless medical evaluation by a health-care professional indicates that the child can be included in the center's activities:

- Oral temperature of 100.4 degrees or greater, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs/symptoms of illness;
- Rectal temperature of 101.4 degrees or greater, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs/symptoms of illness;
- Under arm temperature of 99.4 degrees or greater, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs/symptoms of illness;
- Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, two or more vomiting episodes in 24 hours, rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, behavior changes, or other signs that the child may be severely ill; or

- A health-care professional had diagnosed the child with a communicable disease (such as Chicken Pox), and the child does not have medical documentation to indicate that he/she is no longer contagious.

Immunizations

Current immunization requirements must be met at all times and are required upon enrollment and updated as necessary thereafter. If you choose not to immunize your child, a signed doctor's release and a notarized conscientious objection affidavit must be on file and updated yearly. Information on immunization requirements can be found online at: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/default.shtm>

Infant Feeding

As a licensed child care facility we are required to have Infant Feeding Instructions that must be updated every 30 days, or sooner if there are changes to the infant's feeding schedule. Bottles and infant formula and/or breast milk should be supplied daily, with your child's name labeled clearly on each container. If your infant is beginning to eat solid foods, please keep your child's teacher informed as you introduce new foods into his/her diet. Baby food should be sent daily, labeled with your child's name. A refrigerator and microwave are available in the infant classroom for cooling/heating your child's milk and food. Daily reports will be sent home to provide the following information: feedings (amount consumed and the times), diapers (wet/soiled and the times), sleep (amount and times), and anything special that occurred that day.

Individual Education Plan (IEP) and Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)

An Individual Education Plan (IEP)--for children ages 3-6 years--or an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)--birth to three years--will be developed for children with disabilities who qualify under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IFSPs and IEPs will be developed upon entering the school or upon completion of an evaluation. The IFSP/IEP is a developmental assessment that documents your child's strengths and areas for improvement. Each classroom teacher will plan and implement activities based on each child's IEP/IFSP. IEPs/IFSPs will be updated annually and reviewed during conferences held in December and May.

Licensing Information

You may contact the local Licensing office at 834-3195 and the FPS website is www.dfps.state.tx.us. The FPS abuse hotline is 800-252-5400. You may review a copy of the minimum standard rules in the office as well as the Emerson Academy's most recent Licensing report on the bulletin board in the hallway.

Meals

Every child that is eating solid foods should bring a nutritious lunch to school daily. Emerson Academy is not responsible for the nutritional value of meals sent from home or for meeting your child's daily food needs. Lunches may not include candy or sugary/caffeinated drinks. We suggest that your child's lunch include the following: a drink (milk, juice, or water), a protein, a vegetable/fruit, and a whole grain. Lunches should be packed in a thermal lunch box with a cold pack. Please send food items that do not need to be heated. The Health Department allows us to heat food for infants under the age of 18 months.

Medication

In case of an emergency, we need to be able to provide information to emergency personnel concerning your child's medications. The following guidelines must be followed if you administer medication to your child or request that we administer medication:

- The school must be notified when medication has been administered at home.
- If medication is to be administered at the center, parents must sign an authorization and include times for center employees to administer each medication according to label directions.
- Medication must be in the original container labeled with the child's full name and the date brought to the center. Expired medication will be sent home.

- Medications may only be administered to the child for whom it is intended. If you have more than one child at the center, you will need to provide each child with his/her own medications (including over-the-counter meds used on an as-needed basis).
- If your child has a periodic and recurring medical problem, such as asthma attacks or allergic reactions, a medical authorization may be signed by a caregiver or health-care professional allowing Emerson Academy to administer the medication when symptoms occur. The authorizations need to be updated every *six months* and must include symptoms to look for.

Non-Profit Status

In January of 2010 Emerson Academy, LLC was donated to The Emerson Foundation, a 501 (c)(3) organization dedicated to inclusive education. Therefore, Emerson Academy is a non-profit organization and any and all donations are tax-deductible. Also, many employers such as Dell will match donations made by their employees to non-profit organizations.

Outdoor Play

At Emerson Academy we value time spent outdoors as often as possible. For children of all ages, the minimum standard rules in Texas require that children have daily opportunities for outdoor play as weather permits. During the summer months we take the following precautions to keep the children safe: applying sunscreen before going outdoors, taking frequent water breaks, limiting time spend outside, and encouraging the children to cool down in the shade. During cold weather we ensure that the children are dressed appropriately (jackets, long pants, hats, gloves or mittens, socks and warm shoes or boots) and that the temperature is not unreasonably cold (below 40 degrees Fahrenheit and/or a wind chill factor at or below 15 degrees Fahrenheit).

Parties

Birthdays and holidays are an especially exciting time for young children and the Center will be pleased to help your child celebrate with classmates and staff **if arrangements are made in advance**. Parent participation is welcome, but not required. Party planning should attempt to minimize disruption of routine and prevent unwarranted anxiety for the children. Balloons are a choking hazard for young children and should not be brought into the Center (if you absolutely cannot do without balloons, Mylar balloons are acceptable). Since licensing regulations prohibit any type of open flame in the Center, birthday candles are not permitted. If birthday invitations are distributed at the Center, **all children in the class should be invited**.

Payment

Tuition is due by the 1st of each month. There is a 4-day grace period for late payment, but arrangements will need to be made in advance. After the 5th day that tuition is late \$20 will be added to that month's charges. After the 10th day that tuition is late, your credit card will be charged for the full tuition plus a five percent penalty. If payment cannot be collected by the 10th, your child may be dismissed from our program. Payment options include: Check, Cash, Visa, MasterCard, Discover, American Express and bank debit cards. Please complete the attached Payment and Enrollment Agreement for 2010-2011.

***Peanut-free policy**

Peanut allergies are becoming more and more prevalent in the U.S. In order to protect the health and safety of ALL of the children at Emerson Academy we have a very strict no peanut policy. Lunches provided from home may not include peanuts in any form. Please consider the following substitutes: Almond Butter, Cashew Butter or Soy Nut Butter. Food sent to school that contains peanut butter will not be served. We will call and ask that you bring an alternative that is peanut-free.

Pets

For the health and safety of our children and staff, pets are not permitted on the premises. Service dogs and certified therapy dogs are welcome, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). From time to time the children will have the opportunity to visit with animals for special events and science lessons. With permission from the Director, teachers may have classroom pets for observation purposes. Please inform your child's teacher of any allergies to pets that your child may have.

Pick-up

All children must be picked up at the end of their designated enrollment time. Children who attend mornings must be picked up by 12:30pm. Children who attend afternoons must and full day must be picked up by 6:00pm, no exceptions! If other program times have been arranged with the director, the designated pick up time must be adhered to strictly. Pick up is defined as out of the building. Pick-up is not a time to conference with teachers or to have lengthy discussions with other parents. If your child is picked up later than their designated program time, there will be a \$1.00/minute charge added to the next month's tuition. After 15 minutes, there will be a \$5.00/minute charge. For the sake of consistency, an atomic clock mounted at the entrance to the center will be used to determine the time. Of course we understand that true emergencies come up, so please call if you anticipate being late.

Preschool Classrooms

Each of our preschool classes consist of 16 children, ages 3-6 years, with a balanced mixture of typically-developing children and children that are learning above and below the expectation for their age. 50-75% of the children are typically-developing, with the exception of children with special needs that attend the class with a 1:1.

Records

The Center is required to maintain the following records up-to-date for each child: Registration Information Questionnaire, Authorization for Emergency Medical Care, Child Release Information, Daily Attendance, and Health History/Immunizations. We rely on parents to provide the above information and keep records current upon Emerson Academy's request.

Rest/Sleep Time

Every child over the age of 12 months will be provided a supervised rest/sleep period after lunch. It is essential that children be well rested, so we will encourage the children to sleep or participate in a quiet activity daily. Children will not be forced to sleep during this time (code 746.2905 of TDPRS minimum standards). If your child has a special blanket and/or comfort object that may help him/her rest please feel free to send those items. We discourage the use of pacifiers for children above the age of two.

Snacks

Two nutritional snacks are provided daily. We follow the nutritional requirement guidelines suggested by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), which exceed the State requirements. Each snack will consist of: protein, fruit/vegetable, and a whole grain. An example snack is apple juice, cheese cubes, and whole-wheat crackers. Special diets will be accommodated, but the caregivers are responsible for providing up to date information on dietary needs.

Snow/Inclement Weather

We strive to accommodate the needs of our working families while also valuing the safety of the children in our care and the safety of our staff. Emerson Academy reserves the right to close at any time due to severe weather conditions, or for other emergencies or natural disasters. In general, Emerson Academy will close for severe weather whenever the City of Round Rock offices close. Unfortunately, no refunds are given due to inclement weather closings.

Thirty Day Notice

If for any reason your family decides to no longer have your child/children enrolled at Emerson Academy you will be expected to give the director a written 30-day notice. If notice is not given by the 1st day of the last month your child will be attending, you will be responsible for the next month's tuition.

Tuition

Families will be given notice two months in advance when tuition rates change. The tuition rates are based on our very low student: teacher ratios and are available for review. Tuition rates are dependent upon a child's chronological age, level of need, and full/part time status. Families that have more than one child enrolled will receive a 10% discount, which will be applied to the older child's/children's tuition. There are a limited number of scholarships availability through The Emerson Foundation for families that have children with special needs.

Waiting List

In order to place a child on the waiting list, we require a \$75 fee. Our waiting list operates on a first-come, first-serve basis with the following exception: priority is given to families that have children currently enrolled at the center. Families that are expecting another child through birth or foster care/adoption should place their child on the waiting list based on the expected age of the child and the expected enrollment date.

Water and Sensory Activities

Emerson Academy is committed to your child's overall growth and development, including his/her sensory development. Part of our curriculum is aimed at exposing children to various, multi-sensory activities that promote this development. At times, your child will participate in activities involving water such as the sensory table, sprinklers, and painting. Your child will also be involved in a variety of hands-on activities with materials that will help to strengthen his/her sensory development.

Emerson Academy and The Emerson Foundation do not discriminate on the basis of age, race, gender, religion, national and ethnic origin, or sexual orientation.

Family Handbook Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Emerson Academy Family Handbook. I am aware of my responsibilities as a parent/guardian of a child enrolled at Emerson Academy and I am fully aware of all policies and procedures, including the *peanut-free policy.

I was given a copy of the Emerson Academy Family Handbook on the _____ day of _____, 20_____.

Parent/Guardian # 1

Parent/Guardian #2