

The Right Choice!



- Dedicated, knowledgeable staff
- A comprehensive, fun curriculum
- A nurturing, safe, home-like atmosphere



Early Learning Academy

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Phone: (650) 755-8440

Fax: (650) 755-9472

Website: www.earlylearningacademy.org

Early Learning Academy Parent Handbook

Because you want the very best
for your child...



An Academic
Preschool

Thank you for choosing Early Learning Academy for your child's preschool program. We welcome you into our family and hope that you and your child will enjoy your stay with us. Please read carefully through our Parent Handbook so that you are familiar with all of our policies, procedures, and events. Should you have any questions, please feel free to stop by the office or give us a call. We have planned a fun and instructional year for your child and are excited to get to know you!

Early Learning Academy's Mission

In an atmosphere of warmth, love, and understanding, we will provide a developmentally appropriate program which maximizes each child's individual needs; a program that nurtures social, emotional, physical, and cognitive growth, while providing a variety of experiences to encourage independence and self-esteem.

Office Information

Office Hours 8:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Telephone 650-755-8440
Fax 650-755-9472
Preschool Director Susan Ignacio—Hao





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Philosophy and Goals

For almost 30 years, Early Learning Academy has been helping children grow into capable, happy, and responsible youngsters who are ready for Kindergarten. We are committed to providing experiences which encourage your child to develop to the fullest potential emotionally, socially, and academically. We welcome all races and creeds. No religious doctrine is taught, however, we do stress accepted standards of personal integrity and ethical behavior.

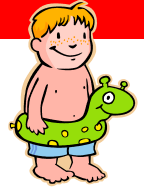
Our preschool goals, which are based on the Core Knowledge preschool sequence, include:

- Providing opportunities for the development of basic social and emotional skills needed in elementary school.
- Affording comprehensive and balanced learning experiences, including vocabulary development, phonemic awareness and early reading skills, basic mathematical concepts, awareness of the world around us, and the scientific concepts of observing, measuring, and predicting.
- Encouraging creative exploration and expression.
- Promoting independence and responsibility.
- Fostering an innate desire to learn.
- Building self-confidence and self-esteem.

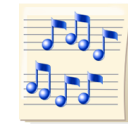
We believe that children desire and are capable of learning basic academics at a much younger age than is normally thought, especially if it is in a non-traditional academic setting. Therefore, we provide opportunities for learning in fun, imaginative ways which will foster children's enthusiasm for learning. This gives them a head start in Kindergarten, which in turn builds their sense of accomplishment and their self-esteem.



Admission into Kindergarten



Our affiliated elementary school, Hilldale School, located at 79 Florence St. in Daly City, is a great choice for parents seeking an outstanding private school education for their child. Hilldale aims to challenge above average and accelerated students who are willing to make the commitment to rigorous academics and to strive for excellence. Admission to Hilldale is selective, and application for admission includes screening for academics and basic social skills. Our ELA Pre-K children receive preferential admission status during the January testing process. We hope that you will schedule a tour and consider Hilldale School in your search for the best education for your child.



Behavioral Standards

EXPECTATIONS

At Early Learning Academy, we believe that all children deserve to be cared for in an environment characterized by respect, warmth, and understanding.

In the preschool years, children are experiencing new feelings and working through their new developmental stages. We realize that they may try out many new behaviors to test the limits set by the adults around them. The staff at Early Learning Academy works with the children to help them develop appropriate ways to show or resolve these feelings.



DISCIPLINE

Physical punishment or verbal abuse, in any form, is strictly prohibited at Early Learning Academy. We believe that children flourish in an atmosphere of frequent praise and positive reinforcement, and we make every effort to guide and redirect behavior. If difficulties arise at school with the behavior of your child, the teachers have a variety of non-punitive techniques to achieve appropriate behavior. This may include asking a child to take some time out to sit with a teacher and talk about the problem until he/she is ready to join the group again. If inappropriate behavior is serious or repeated, the teacher will contact the parents for help in solving the problems. If the teacher, parents, and director are unable to help the child develop the skills necessary to interact safely and fairly with other children, the family may be asked to find a different school for their child.



Daily Schedule

7:00 – 9:00	Indoor and outdoor extended care activities
9:00 – 9:15	Snack
9:15 – 10:00	Circle time, language Arts activities, music & movement activities
10:00 – 10:50	Math, Science, and Social Studies activities
10:40 – 11:20	Outdoor play
11:20 – 11:50	Lunch
11:50 – 12:20	Outdoor
12:20 – 12:30	Get ready for naps
12:30 – 2:30	Nap time
2:30 – 2:45	Afternoon snack
2:45 – 3:45	Circle time, Art, and Readiness activities
3:45 – 4:30	Outdoor play
4:30 – 6:00	Story time and Choice activities

Curriculum

A good preschool experience is key to academic success in elementary school. It is at this time that children acquire an academic foundation in reading and math, develop logic, imagination, and self-esteem, and discover an excitement for learning. Through positive and challenging learning experiences at this early age, children will develop attitudes and traits which will prepare them to succeed in a competitive world.

The comprehensive curriculum at Early Learning Academy is based on learning objectives in the following skill areas:

- Movement and Coordination Skills
- Autonomy and Social Skills
- Language Development
- Cognitive Development
- Orientation in Time and Space
- Musical and Artistic Awareness



Learning at Early Learning Academy is exciting! The children participate in a variety of activities which challenge them and encourage creativity and curiosity. They are encouraged to develop memory skills, follow directions, and persist to complete tasks. Each day they will grow and learn through exposure to:

- Circle Time – Concentrating on language, calendar, and math concepts, circle time also includes stories, nursery rhymes, poems, finger plays, storytelling, group games, and songs which introduce the children to the joys of language and literature.
- Letters – Children learn letters and letter sounds and are taught pre-reading skills through a variety of motivating activities. Those who are ready progress into a reading program tailored for the young child.
- Numbers – The children are introduced to beginning number concepts such as patterns, classification, matching, geometrical shapes and sizes, measurement, counting, numbers, simple addition and subtraction, time, and money.

Please see the Enrollment-Payment Agreement for specific details on your Financial Agreement.

CHILD CARE CARDS

A card for additional hours to be used as needed (no expiration; siblings may use together) is available in the office for \$120.00 for 10 hours. There is no refund for unused hours.

EXTRA DAYS

For those who have fewer than five full days of school, additional drop-in days may be arranged if the class has space available on that day. The charge is \$65 per full day or \$45 per half day, and payment is due on the morning of the extra day. Check with the office for space details at least one day prior to the planned extra day.

LATE PICK-UP

The Morning Program ends at 12:00. There is a late charge of \$10.00 per child for the first 1-10 minutes (or each portion of an hour) of extra time before or after the 12:00 mid-day pick-up/drop-off for half day children who are brought early or picked up late.

Early Learning Academy closes at 6:00 p.m. If a parent is late picking up a child, a fee of \$20 per child will be assessed for the first 5 minutes and \$1 per child for every additional minute after that.

WITHDRAWAL

Upon withdrawal, a two-week written notice is required. Tuition will be prorated to the withdrawal date, or in the absence of a written notice, two weeks after the withdrawal. All tuition and fees must be paid by that date in order to secure transfer documentation.

TERMINATION

Early Learning Academy reserves the right to terminate enrollment for non-payment of fees, behavioral problems, lack of parental cooperation, or for any other reason. Any unused tuition will be refunded in such a case.



Payment and Withdrawal Policies

TUITION

Tuition rates take effect on September 1st of each year. Tuition for the school year is divided for convenience into a number of equal monthly payments. Because the days in each month vary, the payment due for a particular month does not necessarily correspond to the days attended in that month.

Early Learning Academy is funded solely through tuition. Please do not request reduced fees for partial attendance during any month. No credit or refund is given for illness or vacations or on days when school is closed.

When tuition adjustments or withdrawal are necessary, tuition is calculated by applying a daily rate to the days enrolled. Those who withdraw because of an extended vacation must pay a new registration fee upon return.

PAYMENTS

All tuition payments are due the first school day of each month. A late fee of \$5 per day, beginning on the original due date, is charged to accounts paid after the 5th of the month. Accounts that are not paid within 30 days are also subject to interest at the rate of 18% per annum from the due date.

A \$25 charge plus all related fees will be charged for bounced checks or other dishonored payment. Payments may be made by electronic funds transfer (preferred), check (may be processed electronically), or money order. Payment in full by September 1st provides a 5% discount.

If you have difficulty making your monthly tuition payments, please contact your school office. We will try to work out a mutually agreeable payment schedule.



- Science – Observations, experiments, nature walks, and discovery activities encourage the children to explore the world through their five senses. They learn about human, animal, and plant characteristics, needs, and development; about the physical elements of water, air, and earth; and about the qualities of the seasons.
- Social Studies – Children learn basic concepts of time and space by talking about maps, environments, and about children in other places and times.
- Art – Creative observation and expression are encouraged through the use of varied media such as paint, crayons, chalk, clay, scissors, glue, and more.
- Music – Rhythm, song, and dance activities foster the children's musical appreciation and skills. Children acquire a joy of singing and of feeling rhythm while learning imaginative, uplifting songs.
- Movement – A combination of creative movement games and gross motor activities help develop the children's coordination and awareness of the body. They learn to "work" together in a group setting, as well as to move creatively and expressively.
- Dramatic and Creative Play – Formal and informal play activities expand the children's understanding of families, communities, and self.
- Computer – An early "hands-on" introduction to the world of computers provides many additional avenues of learning.
- Spanish – Children love to learn the basic Spanish words, such as the numbers, colors, greetings, and some common words, that we introduce. They sharpen their listening skills and their ability to hear the sounds of unfamiliar words.
- Free Play – Children learn social skills and expand their imagination through free play while thoroughly enjoying our wonderful outdoor play apparatus, sandbox, and toys as well as our many indoor activities.

Miscellaneous Parent/Student Information

REGISTRATION FORMS

Accurate information on each child is essential and required by the State of CA to be submitted promptly upon registration. It is the responsibility of parents to carefully complete all requested forms and to notify the school immediately of any changes which occur during your child's enrollment.

SCHOOL FORMS

Please keep all forms updated especially phone numbers, your current address, and secondary contacts.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

We take school supervision and safety very seriously, and therefore ask that our families assist us in keeping safety at the forefront when dropping your child off in the morning or picking him or her up in the afternoon.

We encourage children to be in school by 9:00 AM. Young children have a difficult time walking into a group that has already begun. Picking your child on time *builds trust*, so please try to be on time returning for your child.

SIGN-IN-SHEET

You are required to sign your child in and out every day with the time and your full signature. It is our primary checklist should we have an emergency. Only the people listed on the office sign-out authorization will be allowed to pick up your child. If you send someone to pick up your child, and this person is unfamiliar to the staff, he/she should expect to have his/her identification checked.

PUBLICITY RELEASE

Parents are asked yearly to sign a pro forma release form granting permission for their child to be photographed, filmed, videotaped, or interviewed during the school year for the purpose of promoting and publicizing the school. This includes using pictures for Early Learning Academy brochures as well as allowing the student's name to be released for opportunities of positive recognition.

DISASTERS (EARTHQUAKES, FIRES, ETC.)

Early Learning Academy maintains an Earthquake and Disaster Plan. It is important that parents and guardians complete and return the Emergency Preparedness Form at the beginning of each school year. In the event of an evacuation, our gathering place is on the playground areas away from the buildings.

Teachers will account for and supervise the children in their classes in the event of an emergency. They will stay with the students until picked up by an authorized person. Non-teaching staff will assist as directed, including relieving teachers who may be needed for first aid. Office personnel will handle home/school communications via phones and cell phones, as available. Every attempt will be made to bring a speedy reunion between parents/guardians and children. Please be certain to sign your child out, so that all children can be properly accounted for.

If it is necessary to close the school due to an emergency or crisis situation, we will place an announcement on the news radio stations KGO (810 AM) and KCBS (740 AM), in addition to using our own phone message system.

Earthquake drills are held regularly, and children are taught to drop and cover with their hands locked over the back of the neck and elbows covering the sides of the eyes for protection. Fire drills are also held regularly, and evacuation plans for each classroom are posted by the exits. Every building and all fire extinguishers are inspected annually by the fire department, and emergency kits are available to teachers in each classroom.

Early Learning Academy maintains an emergency kit for each student containing: food bars, water, and blankets for use if an extended stay at school is necessary.



General Emergencies

ACCIDENT REPORTS

If your child falls or is injured, we will fill out an Accident Report explaining what happened. If your child's name is colored with a highlighter pen on the sign-out sheets when you arrive, it means that there is an accident report for you in your parent's mailbox. Often a report will be made even if there is no indication of a scratch or a bruise. We feel it is important to keep you up-to-date on everything that happens during the day.

Wounds are cleaned with soap and water only. Parents or guardians are notified by the director or teacher for all potentially serious injuries and for any head injury. In the event that a child sustains a serious injury and a parent cannot be reached, the family's doctor will be contacted, and if necessary, 911 emergency services will be called.

INCIDENT REPORTS

An Incident Report is sent home to let you know anything we may have noticed about your child during the day. You may be given an Incident Report to say that your child had a great experience during the day that we think you should know about. You might learn that he/she was exceptionally tired or sad. Or maybe we noticed a sliver that should be removed. We feel it is important to keep you up-to-date on anything important that happens during the day.

INCLEMENT WEATHER CONDITIONS

In the event of inclement weather, students will have lunch and recesses in their designated classrooms. In the event of hazardous weather conditions, when the entire School District closes, Early Learning Academy will also close for the day. If only particular schools in the district close, Early Learning Academy may remain open unless conditions are deemed unsafe. If school has already started, parents will be notified by telephone.



DRESS CODE

Please help us keep the children focused on cooperative play by NOT allowing "Super Hero" type of clothing, shoes, or lunch boxes at school. These characters often encourage distractibility and silly behavior. Also, children will often compete with one another and even engage in 'put-downs' with regards to the 'Super Hero' printed on their clothing. For these reasons, please, ELA is a **NO SUPER HERO ZONE!**

Children wearing Power Rangers, Spider-Man, Batman, Avenger, Superman, etc. on their clothing will be asked to change into more acceptable attire from ELA's clothing supply.

CLOTHING

Children are to wear comfortable; play clothes (appropriate for the weather). Please dress up your child as if she/he were going to the park. NO costumes or "costume like" attire.

While we encourage children to wear aprons when working with paint, messy art projects, etc., it is not advisable to send children wearing clothes that cannot get dirty.

Children who are newly potty trained should wear clothing that is simple for them to get on or off. Loose fitting, elastic waist pants or shorts, or dresses are best for children to prevent "accidents".

Two sets of clothes should kept in your child's cubby, in case a change is needed. Even if your child is beyond having "accidents," he or she may spill paint or fall in a puddle. We will provide the container (a plastic shoe-box).

SHOES

Please send your child in closed-toed athletic rubber-soled shoes that are securely fastened. Flip flops, sandals and hard-soled shoes are NOT good for climbing and running.

PLEASE LABEL EVERYTHING

Everything should be clearly labeled, so that it is easier to identify and keep track of your child's belongings. Please take time to put an **identifying mark on the inside tag or collar of all your child's jackets, coats, sweaters, shoes, etc.**

Miscellaneous Parent/Student Information

TOYS AND PERSONAL ITEMS

“Show and Tell” is held every Tuesday only. Please bring an item that has an educational value. Toys from home create problems at school. We have a variety of great toys for children to play with. For this reason, and because it is so upsetting to the children when something is lost or broken, please do not let your child bring toys to school. A soft and cuddly stuffed animal is, however, welcome for nap time.

OUTDOOR PLAY

Outdoor play is part of our curriculum in both hot and cold weather. We believe that in order for children to be healthy, they need fresh air and exercise and that play enhances social and communication skills. The staff will monitor the weather conditions to assure that the children are safe and reasonably comfortable. In order to provide adequate coverage for all children, we cannot allow children to stay indoors. If a child is too ill to be allowed out, he/she should not be in school, since he/she will not be able to participate in the activities.

SUNSCREEN

Sunscreen should be applied before you leave your child in the morning. WE will re-apply with your signed approval, before playing outdoor in the afternoon. Each parent should supply ONE bottle of spray-on sunscreen marked with the child’s name.

NAP TIME

According to state licensing regulations, all children are required to nap. It is not required that they sleep, but they do need to rest quietly on their beds. Please provide TWO “baby size” blankets, and (if desired) a small pillow and a “sleep buddy,” all together in a reusable grocery bag. Please take these home to wash on Friday and bring them back on Monday each week.

SUPPLIES

All necessary classroom supplies are provided by Early Learning Academy.



ALLERGIES

It is imperative that we be informed and updated about serious allergies and asthma and that we be told the procedures for care in the event of a problem. A list of these allergies is made available to all school teachers and personnel and is kept in every room at the doorway.

LICE, CHICKEN POX, RINGWORM, AND PINK EYE

There are a number of illnesses that are common to school communities, such as lice, chicken pox, ringworm, and pink eye. As a precautionary measure, parents and guardians should check their students’ hair and body periodically. **Please contact the school office if you suspect that your student has any contagious infection or illness.** Once reported, the entire school community will be alerted immediately for school-wide health awareness and precautionary actions. If an “epidemic” occurs, daily checks will be required, and any infected student will be required to stay at home until fully cured.

MEDICATIONS

Whenever possible, medication should be given at home. Only medications prescribed by a licensed physician and prescribed for use three times or more can be given at school; medications prescribed once or twice should be given before and after school. The medication must come with a prescription label or a doctor’s note for any over-the-counter medication. The label on the medication must have all of the following instructions clearly stated: the child’s name, current date, physician’s name, name of medication, dose, and number of times that the medication should be given. Parents should bring the medication to the office.

It is the obligation of the parent to inform the office personnel if a student is on any kind of on-going medications taken at home and to inform us if the child has any notable health problems such as severe allergies, asthma, etc. Please be sure to update your child’s information forms if a new health issue arises.

Illnesses

Hand washing is by far the best way to prevent germs from spreading and to keep your kids from getting sick. It is important that your child(ren) wash hands immediately upon entering (and leaving) their classroom.

GENERAL SICKNESS

Children should be kept home when they are visibly ill or have a temperature greater than 99 degrees. It is especially important to keep a child out of school if he or she has a contagious disease, such as nausea, diarrhea, undiagnosed rash, or pink eye, as “bugs” are so easily shared in a school setting.

Please keep the child at home until all symptoms have been gone for 24 hours. Parents who attempt to bring a child back to school without 24 hours symptom free will be asked to leave. In severe cases, a doctor’s note may be required before admission back to school is allowed.

If your child becomes ill at school, he or she will be sent to the office where an assessment will be made as to the severity of the child’s condition. The administrator or office personnel may consult the parent. Situations in which a student would be sent home include: fever, a chance of exposing others, or severe discomfort. Please help your child understand that mild stomach aches, headaches, runny noses, and general malaise do not warrant going to the office or being sent home.

Students who are sent to school with a fever or who exhibit visible signs of illness will be sent home. It is crucial that parents or guardians respond promptly when sick children need to go home, and that emergency numbers are kept current, so that family members or friends may be contacted in the event that parents or guardians are not available.

If a student must be absent due to illness or other last-minute problems, parents are asked to call the office *each* morning between 8:00 and 8:30 a.m. to inform the school of the reason. If no one answers, you may leave a message on the office manager’s phone line. This safety procedure provides the school with the whereabouts of all students.



CLASS SIZE

Classes will be no larger than twelve children with a head teacher or twenty-four children with two teachers working together. This small student/teacher ratio will provide a maximum of interaction and support for our young students.

LUNCHES AND SNACKS

The children are provided with a nutritious morning and afternoon snack each day. Lunches are to be brought from home in an insulated bag, as we cannot place food in our school’s refrigerator. We do warm up food for lunches as needed. However, we do not cook food, so don’t send uncooked or frozen foods like Cup-o-Noodles or TV dinners, etc. Please remember also, that no candy, soda, or gum are allowed.



STUDENT ASSESSMENTS & CONFERENCE TIMES

Children are assessed in their daily interaction with their lead teacher. Conferences are generally held twice a year, in the late fall and late spring of each school year, so that parents have a time to discuss the developmental growth of their child with the lead teacher. Aside from these scheduled conferences, teachers are also available at any time during the year to talk to you about the progress of your child. Please try to set up a conference time for this purpose, as it is difficult for teachers to stop during the day to chat.

GRADUATION PROGRAM

This Pre-K event is held in July each year. It is an opportunity for your child to be recognized for his/her achievements and to celebrate the completion of his/.her preschool years. Just like any event, children are not required to attend the graduation program. Only children who are enrolled and who attended school throughout the mid-June-through-July/August practice time can participate in the graduation program.

Miscellaneous Parent/Student Information

BIRTHDAY PARTIES AND INVITATIONS

If party invitations are distributed on campus, the school requests that *all* classmates be invited in order to avoid hurt feelings and harbored resentments. If this is not possible, please invite particular classmates *outside* the school environment. Parents are welcome to send a birthday treat for the entire class to be distributed during recess or at lunch, but we ask that you inform the school at least a week ahead that you plan to do this, in part to avoid conflicts with field trips, school projects, and other birthday parties.

BIRTHDAY BOOK CLUB

This is a special way to honor your child. It is an ELA tradition for children to give a book to the school on their special day. Books should be sent birthday-wrapped, so your child can open it at circle time and have it read to the group. It should be a story book that can be read and re-read often. You may choose instead to donate an educational CD, game, or toy.

HALLOWEEN

Your child may come to school in their costume. PLEASE label each piece of your child's costume. ELA is a **NO SUPER HERO ZONE, please NO SUPER HERO costumes.** Weapons of any kind are also not allowed; no guns and swords! Please bring extra clothes for your child, so we can change them after the parade.

We will be sending home trick or treat bags with candies. If you do **not** want your child to have one, please let us know.

Our Halloween Parade will start at exactly 9:10 AM. The parade usually lasts about 15 minutes. Parents are welcome to join us for the parade. You are also welcome to come in costume (no masks please, as they scare some of the children).

Home/School Communication

PARENT MAILBOX

Student file folders for each child are available in the classrooms and should be checked daily for newsletters, important notes from the Director or teachers, and any work your child has done.

CALENDAR

Each year you will receive a school calendar. It will indicate school holidays, special events, and other miscellaneous information. Updates will be placed in your child's cubby or in the Parent Mailbox.

WEEKLY LESSON PLAN

At the beginning of each week, the preschool teachers will post a tentative schedule of activities that will indicate the weekly classroom curriculum plans and special events.

MONTHLY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Each month, the Director will send home a newsletter with upcoming events, group activities, special reminders, staff highlights, and parenting information.

FATHERS' AND MOTHERS' BREAKFASTS

A few times each year, parents are invited to join their children for a meal at school. These are great opportunities to meet your child's teacher, other parents, and students, as well as to see what the children have been doing and enjoying at school.



SHARE THE JOY

Parents are encouraged to help out by spreading the news to prospective parents about what a great program Early Learning Academy has. Please know that we really appreciate your support and recruitment efforts!