



Abeona House Child Discovery Center Employee Policy Guide

Contents

Structure and Culture	5
<i>Origins</i>	5
<i>Governance</i>	5
<i>Licensing</i>	5
<i>Mission Statement</i>	5
<i>Values</i>	6
<i>Reggio Emilia Philosophy</i>	6
Curriculum Framework	6
<i>Negotiated Learning & Emergent Curriculum</i>	6
<i>Our Work with Young Children</i>	6
Hiring	7
<i>Equal Employment Opportunity Provision</i>	7
<i>Hiring Process</i>	8
<i>Physical Clearance from a Doctor</i>	8
<i>Reporting Harassment or Discrimination</i>	8
<i>Employment Classifications</i>	8
<i>New Employee Training & Probationary Period</i>	9
Disciplinary Actions	10
<i>Verbal & Written Warnings</i>	10
<i>Suspensions Without Pay; Dismissal</i>	10
<i>Corrective Action</i>	11
<i>Termination of Employment</i>	12
Giving Notice	12
Abeona House & CACFP Outside Employment Policy	12
<i>Private Babysitting</i>	13
Attendance	13
<i>Hours of Operation</i>	13
<i>Daily Routines</i>	13
<i>Scheduling</i>	14
<i>Signing In</i>	14
<i>Signing Out</i>	14
<i>Absence</i>	15
<i>Unscheduled Absence</i>	15
<i>How to Request a Day Off or a Short Day</i>	15
Daily Routines	15
<i>Teacher to Child Ratios</i>	15
<i>Child Sign-In</i>	16
<i>Daily Observations</i>	16
<i>Staffing Down</i>	16

<i>Opening & Closing Duties</i>	16
<i>Visual Check of Center</i>	17
<i>Checking Out</i>	17
Exploring Outdoors	17
<i>Supervision</i>	17
<i>Interactions</i>	17
<i>Hazards</i>	17
<i>Heat</i>	18
<i>Cold</i>	18
<i>Bathroom Visits</i>	18
Professional Behaviors	18
<i>Confidentiality</i>	18
<i>Communicating with the Director and Other Staff</i>	18
<i>Cell Phone Use</i>	18
<i>Personal Hygiene and Dress Code</i>	19
<i>Parking</i>	19
<i>Smoking</i>	19
<i>Drug and Alcohol Policy</i>	19
<i>Leaving School</i>	20
<i>Lunch Break</i>	20
<i>Computer Use</i>	20
<i>Social Media</i>	20
<i>Visitor Policies</i>	20
Professional Development	21
<i>Professional Development Days</i>	21
<i>Professional Development Week</i>	21
<i>DSS Mandated Trainings</i>	21
<i>Ongoing Professional Development</i>	22
<i>Individual Teacher Development</i>	22
<i>Louisiana Pathways</i>	22
<i>Annual Evaluations/Goal Setting</i>	22
<i>Staff Library</i>	23
Work Products of Lead Teaching Staff	23
<i>Daily Report</i>	23
<i>Daily Sheet for Infants and Ones</i>	24
<i>Prep Time</i>	24
<i>Bulletin and Documentation Boards</i>	24
<i>Weekly Plan</i>	24
<i>Yearly Curriculum</i>	24
<i>Substitute Teacher Folder</i>	24
<i>Portfolios</i>	24
<i>Student Evaluations/Parent–Teacher Conferences</i>	25
<i>Classroom Assessments</i>	26
Supervision of Children	26
<i>Definition</i>	26
<i>At Naptime</i>	26
<i>Potty Breaks</i>	26

<i>Handwashing</i>	27
<i>Staff in Charge</i>	27
High Quality Relationships with Children	27
<i>Values We Promote</i>	27
<i>Our Approach</i>	27
<i>Rewards</i>	28
<i>Transitions</i>	28
<i>Troublesome Behaviors that Should Not Be Tolerated</i>	28
<i>Challenging Behaviors</i>	28
<i>Losing Your Cool</i>	28
<i>Biting</i>	29
<i>“Aggressive” Play</i>	30
<i>Labels & “People First” Language</i>	30
<i>Discipline</i>	31
<i>Parent Relationships</i>	31
<i>Basic Customer Service: Our Business Depends on Keeping Our Families</i>	31
<i>High Quality Interactions with Parents</i>	32
<i>Conflicts with Parents</i>	33
<i>Parent Workdays</i>	33
<i>Prospective Parents</i>	33
The Food Program	33
<i>Feeding</i>	34
<i>The USDA Food Program</i>	34
Hygiene & Safety	34
<i>Handwashing</i>	34
<i>Sanitizing Toys</i>	34
<i>Sanitizing the Changing Table</i>	34
<i>Reporting Incidents and Accidents to Parents</i>	35
<i>Incident Reports</i>	35
<i>Parent Contact Info</i>	35
<i>Treatment of Bites</i>	35
<i>Bottles and Sippy Cups</i>	36
<i>Water</i>	36
<i>Diaper Changing</i>	36
<i>Soiled Sheets & Clothing</i>	36
<i>Walking Trips</i>	36
<i>Topicals</i>	36
<i>Medication</i>	36
<i>Health Information & Immunization Records</i>	37
<i>Exclusion of Nonimmunized Children</i>	37
<i>Allergies</i>	37
<i>Contact with Germs</i>	37
<i>Health-Related Exclusion/Sending Home a Sick Child</i>	37
<i>When a Child Can Return to Our Care</i>	38
Emergencies	39
Medication Administration	40
<i>Prescription Medication</i>	40

<i>First Time Administration of Medication & Changes in Dosage</i>	40
Allergies & Other Medical Conditions	40
Tobacco, Alcohol, Illegal Substances and Fire Arm Policy	40
Payroll & Benefits	41
<i>Advances/Early Issuance</i>	41
<i>Vacation/Personal Days</i>	41
<i>Sick Days</i>	42
<i>Final Wages</i>	42
<i>Holidays</i>	42
<i>Jury Duty</i>	42
<i>Workman’s Compensation</i>	43
Emergency Preparedness	43
<i>Emergency Evacuation of the School Premises</i>	43
<i>Emergency Notifications: The SchoolReach System</i>	43
<i>Hurricane Evacuation Plan</i>	43

Structure and Culture

This manual is a reference guide of current policies for Abeona House. These policies may change at any time. These changes may be articulated through memo, email, and staff meetings. It is each employee's responsibility to keep abreast of school policy.

Failure to adhere to the policies can result in being written up, suspended, or fired.

Origins

Named after the Roman goddess of children leaving home for the first time, the Abeona House Child Discovery Center is a nonprofit organization based in New Orleans that began as a direct response to the impact of the hurricanes on the region. In the wake of the hurricane, many childcare centers did not reopen, including the Gris Gris House, a Reggio Emilia–inspired center. The former families served by this unique program looked elsewhere for their childcare needs but were ultimately dissatisfied and decided to create the Abeona House, which opened in September of 2006, to continue to provide a Reggio Emilia–style education in New Orleans. Parents continue to volunteer time and resources to ensure the continuation and success of this vital community resource.

Governance

The organization is governed by the Board of Trustees that is comprised of parents (4-6 members) and community members (2-6 members). The board officiates such matters that are relevant to the long-term sustainability of the organization and oversees the efficacy of the Executive Director. The bylaws are available at the school for your review.

The Executive Director of the board works with the staff to ensure that the vision and mission of Abeona House is supported in our daily work through professional development, long-term planning, and community outreach. The Assistant Director manages the day-to-day operations of the staff and is the direct supervisor of center employees regarding these operations. The Pedagogista manages teachers' production and efforts in curriculum and documentation. Questions and comments regarding teachers, children, and their care should be brought to the attention of the administrative staff. Complaints regarding the Executive Director should be brought to the attention of any board member.

Licensing

The Abeona House is licensed by the Department of Social Services (DSS). Parents or staff may call or write the Bureau at any time should they have significant, unresolved licensing complaints.

Department of Social Services

Bureau of Licensing

PO Box 3078

Baton Rouge, LA 70821

Phone: 225-922-0015 Fax: 225-922-0014

Mission Statement

Abeona House is a Reggio Emilia–inspired childhood care and education center, grounded in a profound respect for the capacity of the child, teacher, and family.

Values

As an organization, Abeona House values:

- Community: connecting with our neighborhoods and supporting local businesses and New Orleans' recovery
- Lifelong learning: for children, parents and teachers
- Reciprocal relationships: collaboration between children, families, teachers, and community
- Environment as the third teacher: filled with beauty, simplicity, nature, the warmth of home, and documentation of children's learning
- Socioeconomic and ethnic diversity: celebrating each family's uniqueness
- Individuality of children: including diversity in ability
- Balancing livable wages and affordable tuition: as part of our mission to respect children, families, and teachers
- *Joi de Vivre*: loyalty to our New Orleans heritage
- Healthy, fresh, local food: nourishes us and energizes our interactions

Reggio Emilia Philosophy

The Abeona House curriculum is inspired and influenced by the early childhood teaching in Reggio Emilia, Italy. In this model, several key points converge.

- Respect for all individuals, each child, parent, and staff members
- Open communication between parents, teachers, and children in the discovery/learning process
- Sparking of curiosity and development of critical thinking in children
- An extended-family atmosphere so that parents feel welcome and children feel comfortable
- Recording, reviewing, and reflection of the learning process through documentation
- Freedom of expression through a multitude of media and representations, also known as "The Hundred Languages of Children"

Curriculum Framework

Negotiated Learning & Emergent Curriculum

In keeping with the Reggio Emilia philosophy, the teachers at the Abeona House develop projects in concert with the parents in advance of the school year. In planning, the teacher attempts to anticipate the directions the children will take the idea. The curriculum is seen as a loose garment that takes the shape of the students' interests, as they pursue new pathways that inevitably change each project. There is no strict timetable for project completion, and often, the work is revisited, restructured, and reconsidered.

Our Work with Young Children

The Reggio Emilia approach is built upon the foundation of "respect for the child."

At Abeona House, we interpret respect for the child in the following ways:

- Our curriculum is built on relationships. Positive relationships with teachers, parents, and children in this environment are critical for learning to take place, and

they enable us to discuss, plan, and do our work. Knowing the children we teach—individually, culturally, and developmentally—is key to our work.

- Children are curious and full of wonder, and they have the right to explore a wide variety of materials. As their teachers, it is our work to respond and support their interests and explorations. Interactions are intentional and powerful. Materials come in a wide variety of forms. The process by which young children explore media and ideas has great value and is worthy of our attention.
- The learning experiences we share have a relevant context. Discrete skills and topics are not explored in isolation. Our emergent curriculum is a response to the children’s ideas and play, the environment, experiences in our lives and in their families, and seasonal themes and celebrations. How children learn is as important as what they learn: Process and content go hand in hand.
- Our work is reciprocal. Both children and teachers have ideas and input that are valuable contributions. This shared ownership guides projects and activities.
- Play is an essential, powerful component of childhood. It is how we learn to care for others, negotiate situations, and problem solve. Ample time is given to provide free-play, facilitate relationships through play, and direct future projects through children’s interests initiated during play time.
- Adults at school, working together is as important as the child’s individual competence: lasting change begins with the adult community. We model collaboration, partnership, and mutual respect in our daily interactions and work together as stakeholders in children’s lives.
- Our work with children reflects diversity of ability, culture, heritage, and language.

Hiring

Equal Employment Opportunity Provision

It is the policy of Abeona House to provide equal employment opportunity for all applicants and employees. Abeona House does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions), sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, marital status, veteran status, gender identity, or any other basis prohibited under state or local law. Abeona House also provides reasonable accommodation for qualified individuals with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

USDA Nondiscrimination Policy

In accordance with Federal Law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call toll free (866) 632-9992 (Voice). Individuals who are hearing impaired or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish).

“USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.”

Hiring Process

Candidates for employment must submit the following to the Executive Director to be considered for a position.

- **A cover letter** highlighting the candidate's qualifications for the position
- **An up-to-date resume** that includes the candidate's formal and informal experiences in early childhood education
- The names and contact information of (or letters from) **3 professional references**

Qualified candidates will be selected for a face-to-face interview with our center director, if the minimum requirements are met. Successful interviewees will participate in an observation interview, in which a full-time staff person will observe their efficacy with children. A third interview may be scheduled with our executive director and a board member. Candidates must also satisfactorily pass a criminal background check. In the event an employee leaves for a period of more than 30 days, another criminal background check is required.

Physical Clearance from a Doctor

All candidates for employment must present clearance from a doctor to lift 20-25 pounds during the course of the workday and be otherwise fit for work. If at any time an employee is unable to meet these terms, he/she will no longer be able to work at the center. This must be presented within 30 days of employment.

Reporting Harassment or Discrimination

Any employee experiencing job-related harassment should report the incident immediately to the director. All instances of alleged harassment should be reported, including those which occur outside of the employee's work facility and/or during off hours.

The director or Board of Trustees will undertake an investigation of any complaint. If it is determined that an employee has harassed another individual, appropriate discipline will be imposed. Abeona House absolutely prohibits retaliation against any employee for filing a good faith complaint or for assisting in a good faith complaint investigation.

Employment Classifications

For salary administration purposes and to determine eligibility for overtime payments and employee benefits, Abeona House assigns employees in several categories:

Executive Director: The Executive Director works with the Board of Directors, and the staff and administration of the organization, represents the organization in the community, and guides the quality of pedagogical practices in the childcare center.

Center Director: This administrator assists with day-to-day operations of the center and oversees the staff, ensuring the program is in compliance with the licensing requirements set forth by the DSS, and best practices in early childhood education.

Food Program Administrator/Chef: The chef oversees our farm-to-table food program to meet the guidelines set forth by the organization and in compliance with the USDA.

Lead Teachers: Hourly employees who have completed 25 hours of training, and who work an average of 40 hours on site per week. Full-time teachers are the primary contacts with parents, develop curriculum and work to inform other teachers working with the children in their care. Teachers are contracted year-to-year (August to August).

Assistant Teachers: Hourly employees who have completed 25 hours of training. Assistants facilitate classroom operations in concert with the full-time lead teacher. Assistant teachers are contracted year-to-year (August to August).

Contract Employees: Employees who are paid by the job for their work. Our daily housekeeper, handy helpers, etc. are paid by the job.

Substitute Teachers: Hourly employees who work on an as-needed basis in place of any regularly scheduled staff-member who is unable to work.

Trainees: Recently hired employees who are not yet completed 25 hours of training and are not familiar with Abeona House routines, policies, and procedures. These teachers are not to be left with children unsupervised by a full or part-time teacher. Each teacher is required to complete 25 hours of observed, paid training over a 4 day period.

Volunteers/Work Study Students: These are unpaid helpers in the classrooms. They should not be left with children unsupervised by a full or part-time teacher at any time.

New Employee Training & Probationary Period

Prehiring paperwork: The following documentation is required on file for each employee-A resume and cover letter, I-9 (including a copy of driver's license and Social Security Card), current W4, L4 for state withholding, cleared criminal background check, sexual offender form, doctor's clearance, Louisiana Pathways form, emergency contacts, and copies of transcripts and any training certificates.

Professional development of staff, training, learning, evaluation and feedback are an ongoing process. The timeframes below are meant as benchmarks in the training process.

Part 1 Training: Childcare 101

During the first week of training, hires will participate in active training with an Abeona House lead teacher. This teacher will focus on specific points each day as outlined in the training guide that give the trainee a basic working knowledge of our program, licensing protocols, and interactions with children and parents.

Part 2 Training: Reggio Emilia 101

During the second week of training, hires will learn about the basic tenets of the Reggio Emilia approach.

Training as a Collaborative Process

Administrations will regularly check in with an employee's team teachers to inquire about performance, teamwork, relationships, and teacher effectiveness. Teachers are encouraged to regularly communicate with each other and help each other do their best work.

Probationary Period

The probationary period for new employees is 3 months. Administration will meet with new employees each month for the first 3 months to give feedback and give support where needed. Teachers in the infant and ones rooms may not be left completely alone with the children until they have completed 30 full days of an observed probationary period.

Disciplinary Actions

Abeona House employees accept certain responsibilities in regard to personal behavior and the care and supervision of children.

Employees must comply with Abeona House policies, and by extension, the licensing requirements for child care centers in the state of Louisiana. When an employee violates these regulations, the director may choose to exercise his/her discretion to use forms of discipline that are less severe than termination, depending on the circumstances.

Less severe forms of discipline include verbal counseling and reprimands, written reprimands, corrective action plans, and suspensions without pay. Although one or more of these steps may be taken in connection with a particular employee, no particular order or system is required. Confidential records of employee performance are kept and reviewed as needed, and annually during employee performance reviews.

Verbal & Written Warnings

All warnings, verbal or written, are added to each employee's file. The following infractions are grounds for a verbal or written warning.

- Tardiness or absenteeism,
- Failure to complete a required form (sign-in sheet, observation sheet, incident report, medication administration, daily sheet, visual check of center) or follow the steps of a policy (calling a parent of an child after an incident),
- Not maintaining a clean and safe classroom or yard,
- Failure to attend required training,
- Conducting personal stuff during working hours (reading novels, texting, playing on computers, etc.)

Suspensions Without Pay; Dismissal

- Repeated violations of those listed above,

- Violation of school policies, including leaving children unsupervised for any reason and rough handling of children
- Continued failure to attend mandatory meetings or training sessions
- Violating ethical standards, including signing another employee in or out.
- Violating safety regulations
- Harassing an employee or Abeona child or family member
- Poor customer service, including unprofessional behaviors in your interactions with Abeona House clientele at any time
- Failure to successfully complete professional development required before working with children
- Neglect of a child in your care
- Failure to check authorizations for medication, sunscreen, repellent, etc. in student file
- Releasing a child to an unauthorized person
- Uncooperative behavior which inhibits group effort
- Using a child's image for purposes unrelated to the school, without a parent's permission
- Failure to call a parent to inform them of his/her child's rash, infection, or fever
- As it relates to the administration of medicine, failing to deliver required medication in a timely manner, or administering more than the required dosage
- Gross insubordination
- Violence of any kind, including verbal threats to anyone on school premises
- Dishonesty or misrepresentation
- Use, sale, purchase, transfer, or possession of an illegal drug while on school property or while on school business
- Use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol on school property or while on school business, except during school-sponsored social events at which alcohol is provided, as long as the degree of impairment is insubstantial
- The use of alcohol, tobacco, and the use or possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances, fireworks, firearms, pellet or BB guns (loaded and unloaded) on the premises
- Breach of student confidentiality
- Excessive yelling at children (yelling should be reserved for hazardous, dangerous situations during which getting the child's attention is critical in his/her safety or the safety of others)
- Yelling and/or arguing loudly at other teachers or parents in the presence of children
- Failure to attend a scheduled professional development day
- Leaving the school grounds during work without permission
- Leaving a child on the yard or outside

Corrective Action

An employee who appears to struggle with work requirements and compliance may be placed in corrective action with specific targets for behavior change in a specified period. At the end of the corrective action period, administrators and the employee will meet to review progress in the target areas.

Termination of Employment

Termination of employment is an inevitable part of personnel activity within any organization, and many of the reasons for termination are routine. Below are a few examples of some of the most common circumstances under which employment is terminated.

Resignation: voluntary employment termination initiated by an employee.

Termination: involuntary employment termination initiated by Abeona House.

Layoff: involuntary employment termination initiated by Abeona House for nondisciplinary reasons

- If you wish to resign, you are requested to notify the director of your anticipated departure date at least 1 month in advance. Of course, as much notice as possible is appreciated by Abeona House and your coworkers. This notice should be in the form of a written statement.
- In the case of termination due to resignation, retirement, or permanent reduction in the work force, your accrued vacation pay will be paid on a prorated basis.
- Unused personal time is not paid upon involuntary termination.
- Furthermore, any outstanding financial obligations owed to Abeona House will also be deducted from your final check.
- A meeting between you and the director will take place prior to your last day of work. School keys must be returned at this time.

Giving Notice

Teaching contracts run August to August. Unless the work is completely unsuitable for either the teacher or organization, we expect staff to honor their commitment.

We are very thoughtful about who we introduce to our children and families. There is a high degree of professionalism expected from our teachers, even if they are leaving to work elsewhere. Out of respect for the children in your care, their parents, and your colleagues, we ask that employees moving into another phase of their professional lives give at least 1 month's notice. This allows us to adequately recruit and train a suitable replacement. While 2 weeks' notice might be sufficient in nonprofessional settings, replacing someone for your important job requires more thoughtful planning on our part.

Abeona House & CACFP Outside Employment Policy

Employees may accept employment outside of the organization, subject to the following conditions.

- Such employment shall not interfere with and/or adversely affect the employee's job performance, including anything that may comprise and/or impair judgment or actions.

Examples of adverse effects on performance (usually reflective of consistent behavior):

- Sleeping on job
- Leaving early and/or arriving late

- Excessive absences
- Inattention to details required for effective job performance
- Consistent failure to complete work duties due to other employment
- Such employment shall not involve a conflict of interest or conflict with employee's duties in any way.
- Such employment shall not occur during the employee's normal or assigned working hours.
- Such employment will be secondary to the responsibilities and duties assigned to the employee.

Violation of policies noted above will result in one, a combination, or all of the following actions:

1. Employee will be provided a written notice of violation(s) and asked to change such actions that adversely affect job performance.
2. Secondly, employee will be provided a written notice of violation(s) and asked to refrain from working outside of Institution.
3. Refusal to respond to such request shall be cause for dismissal.

Employee has the right to appeal action(s) taken in numbers 2 and/or 3 above.

- Within 15 days of receiving written notice of violations, employee may submit a written request to their immediate supervisor for an appeal of action(s) taken.
- Institution has 15 days to respond to employee's request for appeal hearing.

See details of Appeal Procedures.

Private Babysitting

As teachers develop relationships with Abeona families, they may be asked to babysit in the family home. Abeona House is not liable for any incidents resulting from these interactions. However, because they are interacting directly with our clientele, their standards of professionalism must be maintained, or the employee is subject to dismissal.

Attendance

Hours of Operation

Abeona House is open from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Opening teachers come in earlier and prepare the space for use. Closing teachers stay later and prepare the space for the next day.

Daily Routines

Abeona House relies on its faculty to contribute productively to the school's culture as well as its day-to-day operations. Because of teacher-to-child ratios required in our state licensing, attendance and punctuality are essential functions of all jobs and are expected of all employees.

Scheduling

Teachers have regularly scheduled hours that they are expected to work. Any changes to those hours must be preapproved. The assistant director will issue any schedule changes and notes the week before. **If you have requested a scheduling change, it is incumbent on you to ensure that those changes are accounted for on the schedule.**

Teachers work anywhere from 4 to 8 hours per day.

Signing In

As a licensing requirement, the staff sign-in information should reflect all teachers working in the building. **Teachers reporting for work must sign in upon arrival** using our automated ProCare sign-in system. You must also sign in and out for lunch breaks. **You may not report to your classroom without signing in.**

Teachers reporting for work should then check in with the other staff they will relieve and let them know they will be in after setting up their classroom.

Teachers who are running late are expected to call the school before they are late and inform the staff person in charge of their intended time of arrival. Three tardy arrivals (10 minutes or less) will result in a disciplinary action. Tardiness results in loss of privileges and/or increases in less pleasant work duties (e.g., taking out the play yard trash).

Payroll is taken directly from our sign-in data. Failure to sign in promptly results in a lapse of payment for the time not accounted for. Employees must account for this on their signed timesheets, including the reason for the sign-in failure, and turn the proposed revised timesheet in to the Executive Director prior to the following pay period's end (every other Tuesday).

Signing Out

Teachers may not leave earlier than scheduled without administrative approval. Teachers who become ill when an administrative staff person is not onsite should call to inform an administrator. Teachers leaving **later** than their scheduled time can only do so if approved. If there is a work-related nonemergency (completing paperwork, helping with a conflict), teachers must inform the administrator at that time, whether verbally or by leaving a note in the log. Ten minutes of leeway will be allowed at the director's discretion. However, teachers are asked to complete their work-related tasks during their work time.

Failure to sign out will result in employees being paid only for their scheduled time, regardless of actual time, until the following payroll. Timesheet must be corrected as described above.

Absence

An absence is the failure to report for a scheduled shift or work period and is defined as lost time (partial or full day) due to illness, injury, personal business, or other similar reasons.

Unscheduled Absence

In the case of illness, teachers are expected to call in by 9 p.m. the night previous, or after 6 a.m. the morning of your scheduled shift if you are too sick or for some other important reason are unable to work. **The executive director will determine whether or not a non-illness–related absence is allowed.**

You must call an hour or more before your shift, or you will be expected to report for your shift until a replacement can be found by the administration.

If you suffer from a contagious disease or infection, you must stay home. You will be asked to supply a clean bill of health from the doctor upon your return.

After 3 days of illness-related absence, you will be required to supply a doctor’s note to return to work.

How to Request a Day Off or a Short Day

Employees are expected to work the schedule for the role they are hired for. It is their responsibility to ensure that in their absence, there is a suitable replacement. **Teachers wishing to take a day off of work are required to receive approval from administration.**

1. Fill out the appropriate form.
2. Secure a sub and list the teachers’ name on the form.
3. Submit this to the assistant director for approval.
4. Within 1 week, the center director will respond to your request.

All prescheduled absences and use of personal days must be approved. Failure to receive approval may result in termination.

Absences will not be approved for the following days.

- Professional development days
- Professional development week
- Parent–teacher conferences
- Days before and after winter break
- The weeks immediately following the first day of school for the new year
- Scheduled staff meetings

Daily Routines

Teacher to Child Ratios

The following ratios must be maintained at all times, according to the Class A licensing standards for the state of Louisiana:

CHILDREN	STAFF
5 (nonwalkers and toddlers under 12 months)	1
7 (toddlers, 12 months to 23 months)	1
11 (2-year-olds, 24 months to 36 months)	1
13 (3-year-olds, 36 months to 48 months)	1
15 (4-year-olds, 48 months to 5 years old)	1

Two center staff must be on site whenever children are present.

Child Sign-In

A daily attendance record for children will be kept for all children entering the program and **completed by the teacher**. This record is the teacher's count for the day and must be accurate at all times. In the event of an emergency, the teacher must bring this information with them. Teachers should also always have an accurate count of the number of children with them at all times.

The child ProCare sign-in is not a substitute for the daily attendance record teachers fill out.

Daily Observations

When a child comes in with an obvious abrasion, rash, or other injury, teachers should inquire of the parent the cause of the irritation and record this on their clipboard, including the explanation given by the parent for these injuries. These are to be kept on the sign-in clipboard. When greeting the child, teachers should get up and go to the child, look them over carefully, ask necessary questions, and make a notation on the clipboard. Early morning staff must record this for all teachers on their clipboards as part of their duties.

Staffing Down

At the end of the day, as fewer children are left in the building, the staff becomes minimal. If you are not a closer, please communicate with the teachers who will see the child at the end of the day. Teachers must pass the sign-in clipboard and review what children are being left in the teacher's care, including any information that should be passed to parents.

Opening & Closing Duties

Each teacher has responsibilities upon beginning or ending a shift. By performing these tasks, we ensure the safety of the students and the cleanliness of the school. Teachers are responsible for maintaining a safe, organized, clean space for children.

These duties are not only a part of the individual's job, but also allow the school day to flow smoothly for the staff and students. When one person does not complete his or her duties, it means someone else will have to work harder. Our housekeeping staff is advised that they are not required to clean excessive mess that has been neglected by center staff. **Staff leaving their classroom or yard in this condition will be written up. When there is a group of teachers closing, all will be written up.**

Visual Check of Center

The entire center will be checked after the last child departs to ensure that no child is left unattended at the center. The exact time of this will be recorded. Consistently failing to perform scheduled duties may result in termination.

Checking Out

Every teacher checks out with the peers they are leaving behind to ensure that the classroom and outdoor spaces are in proper condition.

All teachers not completing their assigned responsibilities are subject to being written up.

Exploring Outdoors

Supervision

Students playing outside require our undivided attention. Children will challenge their developing gross motor skills and often copy what they see older, more agile children doing. **Be vigilant in monitoring children, and avoid getting engrossed in conversations with other teachers or even parents.** Calling a parent to explain a play yard injury that could have been avoided is difficult to do.

Interactions

Our playground is meant to inspire creativity, questions, and ideas. Time spent outside is not just intended for gross motor play. When you are outside, you are expected to be engaged with the children, making new discoveries and researching old ones.

Each week a class is assigned to set up an invitation on the playground. These invitations should be safe for children ages 1 and above and are meant to bring something new and exciting to the playground. Ideas can include things such as:

- Hiding bones in the digging pits for excavations
- Changing materials in the sensory tables
- Adding games such as bowling
- Setting up obstacle courses

The planning of this activity is the responsibility of the full-time assistant teacher that is designated on the schedule, but the full team is responsible for maintaining the care and upkeep of the materials, which includes communicating to the rest of the teaching teams anything that is needed to be known about the invitation.

Hazards

Please be aware of the following hazards to children playing outside:

- Overheating
- Dehydration
- Tripping
- Falling from play equipment
- Insects and possible allergies
- Unauthorized people talking to children through the front fence
- Choking hazards
- Toxic or caustic plants or materials

Heat

Teachers are reminded that children playing outside are expending a great deal of energy, often in the heat. Monitor children outside carefully for signs of overheating, including red cheeks and sweating, and move inside as needed.

Water cups are to be brought outside with every class group, and water is to be offered to children regularly.

Cold

During cold weather, children must wear a sweater or **zipped** coat or jacket. Socks must be worn with shoes. If a child is inadequately dressed and there are no extra clothes, he/she will not participate in outdoor play.

Bathroom Visits

Teachers are encouraged to bring children who need to use the restroom inside in groups. Teachers of potty-trained students are encouraged to invite children to use the bathroom before going outside to minimize trips to the bathroom from the yard.

Professional Behaviors

Confidentiality

Children's records are private and will be protected. Employees of the center shall not disclose or knowingly permit the disclosure of any information concerning the child or his/her family, directly or indirectly, to any unauthorized person. This includes detailing other children involved in incident reports.

Do not discuss children's behavior and/or their parents in front of the child (unless appropriate) and especially in front of other children. A confidentiality record is needed on file for each employee.

Communicating with the Director and Other Staff

It is your responsibility to report any incidents that occur before you take charge of a child or during your care to the director and teachers working with that group. The director and teachers must be able to field parent questions and concerns regarding the child, and it is your responsibility to pass the information on.

Cell Phone Use

Cell phone use during work hours for personal purposes is strictly forbidden and can be grounds for disciplinary action and/or dismissal. Cell phones are only to be used to check the time. Do not call or text other employees while they are working.

During school hours it is expected that you communicate with parents by use of the school phone. Parents are asked not to text you during work hours, and if they need to get in touch with you to also call the school phone. During nap and planning periods you may also email any pictures you took of the children to the parents. **Photographs of children for use in documentation should be taken with cameras, not camera phones.** You may take incidental photos throughout the day with your camera

phone to document experiences that might pass to quickly to capture with the real camera. These are not a replacement for documentation photos.

Personal Hygiene and Dress Code

Teachers must maintain their personal hygiene. Teachers are expected to bathe regularly and care for their personal appearance. Because we work closely with children, we ask that teachers not wear an abundance of perfume or scented oils and that they refrain from smoking. Teachers may be sent home if their personal body odor is distracting or harmful to children, as residual cigarette smoke has been proven to be.

Abeona House is a school. All employees are considered teachers of children and should dress appropriately. We do not want to convey the message that we are babysitters or camp counselors; we are professionals who take our fun work with children seriously.

That being said, working with children requires comfortable clothing that allows us the flexibility to sit on the floor, dance and play, and generally make a mess. Please dress in a professional manner that is appropriate for these activities. Clothes should be in good repair and absent of holes and stains. Clothing that references drugs or alcohol, religion, or a political preference is strictly forbidden. Scrubs are also not permitted.

Parking

Teachers are asked to leave the area directly at the N. Clark entrance for parents dropping off and picking up children. The parking lot and off-street parking along N. Clark, N. Jeff Davis, and on Canal are available for your use.

Smoking

Smoking is prohibited on the school premises. Because of our close work with children, teachers who smoke are asked not to do so prior to coming to work or at one's lunch break. Teachers who smell of smoke will be asked to go home and take the necessary measures to remove the odor.

Drug and Alcohol Policy

Abeona House is a drug- and alcohol-free workplace. Employees shall not use, purchase, sell, transfer, or possess any form of illegal drugs or any type of drug paraphernalia on school property at any time. Likewise, employees shall not possess or consume alcoholic beverages during work hours, including lunch and break periods. In addition, employees shall not report for work under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Any employee should report to his/her supervisor any medication prescribed by a physician where the physician or employee has indicated that the employee's senses, judgement, and/or job performance may be affected. Any information divulged by the employee will be held in confidence. Because these issues ultimately affect the children in our care, an employee may be asked to leave if his/her judgement is impaired due to drugs or alcohol. Disciplinary action will be taken where appropriate.

Leaving School

Teachers who are signed in to work are not to leave the school grounds during working hours for any reason other than the 45-minute lunch break. Leaving without seeking permission is grounds for dismissal. Teachers who need to leave the school for any reason during work hours must receive permission from administration.

Lunch Break

Teachers have a prescheduled lunch period and should use their 45-minute lunch break to eat their lunch. With children not needing assistance during their lunchtime, teachers may join them for lunch. Teachers should not use the children's naptime to eat their lunch, read novels, and conduct personal business. This is a work time and is to research, write daily reports, document, etc. In the absence of work, please offer your services to the administrator.

Computer Use

The use of computers while on the clock for non-work-related purposes is strictly forbidden and can be grounds for disciplinary action and/or dismissal.

Social Media

If you would like to be a part of the Abeona House group page on Facebook, you are invited to do so. Your profile pic image should be reflective of your professional role.

We recommend that you either **do not “friend” or “follow” parents**, or that you maintain a separate account for families. Additionally, in the interest of being nonbiased and maintaining confidentiality for students, teachers are asked not to comment on family social media pages. Complaints on a teacher's social media pages regarding work are highly unprofessional and also grounds for disciplinary action.

Visitor Policies

Sharing the center: All visitors are required to sign in upon arrival. New visitors of teachers may have a **brief** tour of the center and the teachers' classrooms. They are not allowed to touch or hold the children and are required to stay with the teacher at all times.

Children visiting the center: Children of staff and children family members of staff may visit for a short time when accompanied by a legal guardian not working at that time.

Parents visiting other children: Please work to limit Abeona House parents visiting and/or touching children who are not their own. Any parent interested in volunteering in your classroom must have a criminal background check.

Dropping off stuff: If you have a friend dropping off something, please meet them at the front gate to collect the item. If someone is bringing a big or heavy delivery, they can come with you into the building for drop-off.

Abeona House events: Significant others, siblings, parents, and friends are welcome to any event that is open to all families. This includes fundraisers, picnics, and weekend and evening events.

Professional Development

Be the teacher YOU want your child to have!

All teachers employed with Abeona House are expected to be aware of DSS licensing requirements, complete required trainings, commit to keeping qualifications current, attain required credentials for growth along the Quality Rating System (QRS), and grow in their knowledge in the Reggio Emilia approach.

Professional Development Days

Professional development days for staff are held during the course of the regular workweek. No vacation days are to be taken during these prescheduled days.

Professional Development Week

At the end of each summer, the school will be closed to children for 1 week. During this time, teachers will undergo a variety of trainings and meetings in preparation for the coming school year. No vacation days are to be taken during this period.

DSS Mandated Trainings

Each teacher is required to take the following trainings:

- Pediatric first aid (expires after 2 years)
- Infant, child, and adult CPR (expires after 2 years)
- Health and safety: medical administration (every other year)
- Health and safety: food safety (every other year)

In addition, teachers are required to take an additional 12 hours of childcare-related trainings in the course of the year (3 hours per quarter). Six hours of these will take place during professional development days, and teachers are expected to satisfy the additional requirements on their own. These will be tracked in the office, and it is the responsibility of the teacher to keep current with his/her required training.

Classes must be on the list of approved courses provided by the DSS. Abeona House will reimburse the cost for such training and pay the employee for his/her attendance at the rate agreed upon in the teacher's offer letter. Original certificates for completed training **must** be submitted to the director to keep employee files current.

In the event that an employee does not attend a paid-for (or mandatory) training, they will be expected to pay for the course.

Failure to keep current with training in two consecutive quarters is grounds for dismissal.

Ongoing Professional Development

Dialogue, growth, and development of each individual teacher and each team is key in a curriculum built on relationship. Several elements are integrated into the operations of the school to foster this. An administrative calendar of these dates is given to all staff.

- **Lead Teacher Planning Periods:** Each lead teacher has planning time each week for the purpose of completing work tasks, researching, and preparing materials. This time may be used for team meetings, planning meetings with the executive director, and occasionally to support the development of our other staff. Lead teachers should know that while we do work to make sure that they have time to complete their work tasks, meetings and staffing dictate our ability to offer this. If a lead teacher delegates a complex task to an assistant, it is both acceptable and prudent to offer the assistant the lead teacher's usual planning period in which to accomplish it.
- **Credential support:** When staff are working on getting their Child Development Associate (CDA) or other child development credentials, they must complete such activities while on the clock at work, either during planning periods or during the children's naptime. Exceptions are associate, bachelor, or master's degrees. Teachers are free to use work time to work on these degrees as long as their other responsibilities are being fulfilled, but they are not required to complete all work related to these studies while on the clock.
- **Planning meetings:** Each lead teacher will meet with the executive director to discuss observations, plan future work, and receive support to do work well. They will also meet with the Pedagogista for curriculum planning and support.
- **Classroom team planning meetings:** Each classroom group will have classroom meetings as needed in the classroom to discuss the needs of the children in the classroom and plan projects and with administration every 6 weeks.
- **Core team meetings:** Once a month, teaching groups will participate in a monthly meeting during lunch time.

Individual Teacher Development

Teachers will all work on specific goals identified by the administration. These goals will be revisited during monthly meetings and updated. Annual evaluations will rely heavily on teacher progress against these goals.

Louisiana Pathways

Childcare teachers who work in QRS centers are ranked by their qualifications through an organization called Louisiana Pathways. Teacher qualifications directly affect the ratings of our center. As teachers are evaluated by Pathways, they will meet with the executive director to make a growth plan that may include going back to school, earning a CDA credential, and/or seeking a higher degree. Scholarships are also available through Louisiana Pathways.

Annual Evaluations/Goal Setting

All staff will be evaluated for effectiveness of their job performance once a year. This is meant to be a supportive process to identify areas of growth. However, our professional development program is meant to be ongoing, with open dialogue around strengths,

weaknesses, and supports that can be offered. **Lead teachers are expected to implement coaching points in a timely manner.**

Team Work. The ability to work as part of a team is critical to this work. Specific expectations of teamwork are indicated below.

- Lead teachers must communicate relevant information about daily life to all members of the team.
- The entire team is working closely on team goals that are established at the beginning of the year.
- Closing teachers must communicate to opening teachers about any child and parent issues.
- Team members are expected to engage with each other effectively and honestly. This means doing so with respect, in a collaborative spirit, and without sarcasm.
- If a staff member seems unhappy, and it is negatively impacting the workplace, please report them to an administrator.
- Be kind, give others the benefit of the doubt, and treat others the way you would like to be treated.

Working here means that we working on individual strengths and weaknesses as a part of the team conversation. The strengths and weaknesses of each individual teacher offer opportunities for everyone to grow and learn through interactions with others. Teachers are encouraged to share areas of interest and expertise, as well as discuss the challenges of the practice. Through this shared information, opportunities for collaboration through coaching, mentorships, observation, team teaching, and team planning will naturally evolve. Teachers are encouraged to foster these relationships through informal discussion and in-group discourse.

Staff Library

Professional resources related to educational theory and methods are available for check out. As a professional courtesy, we ask that you sign these out, **do not remove them from the center**, and return them within 2 weeks. If you come across a book that you think would be a valuable resource, please pass the title on to the director. Teachers with napping children who have finished work tasks are encouraged to read!

Work Products of Lead Teaching Staff

Teacher work is tracked by the Pedagogista. It is expected that these are completed on time and with attention to quality. The list below describes the tasks required from lead teaching staff daily and weekly.

Daily Report

The lead teacher in the room is required to complete and submit a report detailing children's activities, notable conversations, and observations by 2:30 each day. This report is forwarded to parents Monday through Thursday.

Daily Sheet for Infants and Ones

A report explaining the child's activities, breakthroughs, and/or incidents will be kept for each child. For infants and ones, this will include a record of meals and diaper changes. This is a part of our commitment to involve parents. Not completing daily sheets in their entirety can be grounds for disciplinary action.

Prep Time

Teachers are expected to gather materials for activities in advance of these activities. This includes the week or day before, at arrival (as long as it does not interfere with child supervision time), and during planning time. Being in the hallway collecting materials between 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. and while the children are awake after nap means that you are not supervising and interacting with the children. Lesson plans are meant to guide you **in advance** of activity time. **Being an intentional teacher means having a plan in advance of the day.**

Bulletin and Documentation Boards

Teachers should track documentation relevant to the children's explorations of a particular material or intention. When these are completed, a documentation board showing the process of our exploration should be posted. **Art work without words or explanation is not considered documentation!** So get to it! These are to be changed monthly, with one thematic board that is examined by the Pedagogista.

Weekly Plan

Lead teachers are responsible for completing a weekly lesson plan sharing what the children will do in the coming week. Leads are encouraged to include assistants in this process. Lesson plans are to be posted the Friday before the coming week. Schedules posted online should also be posted on the classroom bulletin board. At any time, administration should be able to see the lesson posted in action in the classroom, or can request to see examples of completed pieces.

Yearly Curriculum

Each year, we have a school-wide intent. The work and lesson plans that flow from this should be evident in the classrooms and documentation. Teachers should also have some major projects in mind when considering their students and what will evoke curiosity and discovery on their part.

Substitute Teacher Folder

Lead teachers are responsible for creating and maintaining a substitute folder that includes the daily schedule of the children, a nap map, 4 to 5 sample activities, and details about the children in their care (including approaches to challenging behaviors). Subs are hesitant to work in a room where the finer details are left for them to figure out.

Portfolios

Teachers track student learning and thinking in a portfolio that is updated regularly. These should include pictures of children where necessary and other items of interest.

Other elements, with themes that will recur in the curriculum over the 5 years the child is here, will be kept and added to each year.

Each child leaving your classroom should have a record of what they learned and experienced. When a new student starts at the center, their first day should be well documented. This is a very special day for parents and children. When children age up to the next room, this should be passed on to the parent. It should be an ongoing project of the teacher.

Each lead teacher keeps an ongoing portfolio for the children in their care. Each week, the teacher should have some anecdotal information to add to the portfolios. Photos, children's work, and documentation of their responses to materials are also nice contributions. These portfolios are visible in the classroom and always available for parent or teacher reference/review. Teachers should share them at parent-teacher conferences. At the end of the year, teachers will pull the most telling pieces to follow the child on their journey through Abeona House. The other pieces are returned to the family when the child transitions to the next classroom

Student Evaluations/Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are held twice annually. The fall conference is a great time to kick off your relationship with your child's parents. The spring is great to wrap things up for a child who is aging out. Each parent is asked to sign up for a conference time for the fall conference. The spring conference is optional. It is a good time to follow up with parents or meet with a new child's parents.

In advance of the parent-teacher conference, teachers will send home:

1. A copy of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) (described below)
2. A letter from the director highlighting the importance of the evaluation and conferences
3. A form asking parents to identify specific topics and concerns they would like addressed in this important opportunity

As early childhood educators, your role as part of the early intervention team is critical. Twice yearly, teachers will complete an ASQ evaluation of each child. This measures the child's developmental growth along five areas:

1. Gross motor skills (big body movement)
2. Fine motor skills (use of hands in the performance of a task; writing)
3. Communication (expressive and receptive, AKA expressing outwardly and receiving information)
4. Problem solving
5. Personal-social

Teachers should familiarize themselves with these assessment tools early on. The more documentation you have, the easier it is to discuss the growth of the child.

The evaluation is one small but important part of parent-teacher conferences.

Additionally teachers should prepare to meet discuss the whole child, examples of student work, how the child interacts with peers, and any concerns the parents may

have. Parents take these very seriously; a well-prepared teacher at an informative conference can make a big impact. Similarly, a poorly conducted conference is disappointing and can feel like a waste of everyone's time.

In the interest in helping teachers conduct high-quality conferences, parents will be asked to complete a reflection-evaluation afterwards.

Teachers who are nervous about the conferences may elect to "practice" with another staff member.

Classroom Assessments

From time to time, state officials, coaches, administration, or the classroom teacher may conduct assessments of the classroom materials and layout. Teachers should know that they might be observed at any time and should do their best to be themselves and do what they would normally do.

Supervision of Children

This is not your job: this is a part of your job. INTERACTION is teaching, and how you should think of your work!

Definition

You are supervising children if you can see them all without having to get up or move in any kind of way. If you cannot see them, you are not doing your job.

- Position yourself so that you can see most/all of the room.
- At all times, you should know the number of children in your care.
- If you have children who are wanderers, your exits should be closed.
- Count children on your way in and out of the door.

At Naptime

Each child has their own belongings. Sharing mats and blankets is an easy way to spread illness and dirt. Children's mats should be placed with the same side down each day, and in the same configuration.

At naptime (and crib time), children are to be spaced at least 18 inches apart, with no "two heads facing each other," also known as "head-to-toe." Staff ratios in the building must be met during naptime.

Children 5 years and younger shall have a daily rest period of at least 1 hour.

While awake, children shall not remain in a crib/baby bed, swing, highchair, carrier, playpen, etc. for more than 30 consecutive minutes.

Potty Breaks

Twos: Twos should be accompanied by a teacher until they show a high degree of independence with all the parts of the pottying process.

Preschool: If a child in your class needs to use the potty, it is recommended that you position yourself in the preschool doorway to ensure the child returns to you after using the facility. If this placement is not convenient to you, ask the teacher in that space to be a lookout for you, or have the floater help out. Children may need assistance with wiping. This is an important part of personal hygiene.

Handwashing

Hands will be washed before every mealtime and after every use of the potty. Children need guidance and supervision with handwashing. To assist children in learning how to do this, hand-over-hand washing should be used as often as possible. Teachers should also monitor children with the expectation that they adequately wash their hands for the appropriate time and thoroughness. This will help keep staff and students healthy.

Staff in Charge

When the director or assistant director is not on the premises, they will designate a person to act as “staff in charge.” This person will be indicated on the office dry erase board, and should be consulted for minor issues. The “staff in charge” should contact the director at any time for any reason.

High Quality Relationships with Children

Relationships are the cornerstone of the school community. **Love and trust** are the basic ingredients in all interactions between teachers and the children in their care.

Values We Promote

- Community
- Cooperation
- Responsibility
- Self-Awareness
- Independence

Our Approach

Feelings first. Starting with infancy, we use feeling words to describe our moods (hungry, thirsty, tired, hot). Our twos begin identifying feelings and what tools they can use to self-regulate. For example, a sad child can ask for a hug, hold a soft toy, or look at a picture of their family. A frustrated child can work some hard clay, practice deep breaths, or take space with a toy or book.

Love and trust are communicated to children through good-humored control and firm discipline. We intervene in specific situations that require management by moving directly to the children needing guidance (not yelling across the room) and using warm voices and kind eyes at the child’s eye level. We use gentle hands with the children.

Teachers **model** the behaviors we want to see. We “show them how to act, not how not to act.” This means that we do not spank, isolate, shake, or shout. Teachers should use “inside voices” in the building. Our **voices** are casual and soft when things are going

well, and firm to communicate that something needs to change. We DO NOT YELL unless someone is in danger.

When you give a **command**, prepare to follow through if the child is not responsive. This may mean that you gently physically move the child. This helps to show them that you mean what you say and need them to cooperate.

These teacher responses are reserved for extraordinary situations:

- When a whole group of children is misbehaving, the teacher's voice should rise out, but not in a shrilly or nasty way.
- A child who is **consistently not responding** to the teacher's words and is exhibiting defiance should be given a time out for 1 minute for each year of age. This is the strongest consequence we use.

Rewards

In learning to respect their relationships with teachers, peers, and the school, children should not be given rewards (stickers, treats, privileges) as incentive to do the right thing. Rewards should be reserved as a "surprise" from a teacher who feels proud. We do not want to develop expectations for external rewards for good behavior ("If I do X, I'll get X"). The reward for good behavior should be feeling good about oneself.

Transitions

Transitions require established routine to facilitate with the confusion that changes can bring. Children are aided by teachers reminding them of the rules for the next activity.

Troublesome Behaviors that Should Not Be Tolerated

- Biting
- Hitting
- Pinching
- Climbing and sitting on tables and other furniture
- Running from a caregiver
- Opening doors and gates without permission
- Moving furniture
- Running indoors
- Screaming indoors (teachers or children)
- Getting up from structured times like morning meeting, lunch, and snack

Challenging Behaviors

Just as adults are individuals with special needs, children deserve to be treated in ways that are best for them as individuals. This does not mean that an intense child is receiving "special treatment." *All* children learn from what goes on between one adult and one child. If you settle down one restless child or befriend a shy one, all those present will learn that you take good care of children and feel safe with you.

Losing Your Cool

If you are challenged by a child and feel overwhelmed, please contact another teacher so that you can get a change of scene and regroup. In the event that you overreact verbally in your interactions with a child, you are encouraged to acknowledge your inappropriate behavior to the child and apologize in simple language. It is important to model

responsibility for one’s actions, as well as show the child how healthy relationships function despite conflict.

Biting

When a child is bitten, we comfort both the victim and aggressor. Each child needs reassurance they are both loved and valued. The bitten child will receive first aid, with the bitten area being cleaned and treated.

There are many reasons bites happen among preverbal children. Part of managing your classroom is thinking through triggers so you can prevent future bites.

When a bite happens:

1. Teachers will complete a **Biting Form** for both children involved in these incidents and consider how these incidents can be prevented, articulating this to both families (*see chart*).
2. The teacher will also log the incident on the **Biting Log**, which will allow us to see patterns in incidents. Patterns include time of day, transition occurring, which child they are biting, etc.
3. Teachers will **call** the parent of both children involved. The teacher will explain the trigger and what will be done to prevent the situation from occurring again. The teacher will also ask if the parent would like a copy of the bite form.
4. **If this is the third incident for either child, the executive director will call the parent.**

Place biting form in **TODAY** file.

Biting Triggers and Preventive Teaching	
Child behavior	We can
Experimenting by biting	Immediately say “no” in a firm voice Give them a variety of toys and materials to touch, smell, and taste and encourage sensory–motor exploration
Has teething discomfort	Provide cold teething toys or chewy foods
Is becoming independent	Provide opportunities to make age-appropriate choices and have some control (pretzel or cracker? yellow ball or blue ball?) Notice and give positive attention as new self-help skills and independence develop
Is using muscles in new ways	Provide a variety of play materials (hard/soft, rough/smooth, heavy/light) Plan for plenty of active play both indoors and outdoors
Is learning to play with other children	Try to guide behavior if it seems rough (Take the child’s hand and say, “Touch Jorge gently. He likes that.”) Prevent conflicts by offering more than one of any especially attractive toy and creating open play space Reinforce pro-social behavior (like taking turns with toys)

	or patting a crying child)
Is frustrated in expressing their needs and wants	“Read” the child and say what they are trying to communicate (“You feel mad when Ari takes your truck.” “You want me to pay attention to you.”)
Is threatened by new or changing situation such as a parent returning to work, a new baby, or parents separating	Help the child talk about feelings even when they say things like “I hate my new baby.”
Is overwhelmed by noise or stimulus	Bringing child to a quiet spot, or having them help take space where it’s available
Boredom	Freshening up materials and experiences

As you can see it is a complex problem. It is also an emotional issue that leads to children and parents often feeling unsafe. **It is incredibly important that teachers think through the reasons it happened and make adjustments immediately.**

Biting Epidemics

When multiple children are biting, the same child keeps getting bitten, or the biting behavior continues for a long time, we consider this an epidemic. These situations can become emotionally charged as parents of all children involved feel bad. It is important for teachers to be empathetic, proactive, and responsive, especially at these times.

Please also remember that parents sometimes villainize this typical but challenging behavior, and may want to find out who has been biting. Do not divulge, even if they make it clear that they already know. You may give them general details regarding the biting epidemic, such as saying that it is more than one child biting or being bitten, but even this should be approached with caution. You may always seek guidance or mediation from the director.

“Aggressive” Play

Children learn through play and sometimes become fascinated with sword play, guns, and other play that involves pretending to fight. We ask that parents not send guns as toys, and we do not have these kinds of toys available to the children. However, our creative little ones can make toys even using their own fingers. We generally tell children that this play can only be engaged in with others who want to play that game, and pointing pretend guns and swords or chasing children who do not enjoy that play is not allowed. Quite simply, we tell children that we do not hurt our friends or even pretend to.

Remember to be professional in your communications about the child. Describe the behaviors/observations; do not judge or evaluate them. *For example: “Child X pulled the other child’s hair 3 different times when they were not engaged in play,” instead of “Child X has been very aggressive lately and is picking on other children.”*

Labels & “People First” Language

We do not ascribe labels to children for negative behaviors. We describe the behavior in nonjudgmental terms. Children are working through a wide range of feelings, and it is

our job to assist them with acceptable alternatives to challenging behaviors. Instead of “aggressive” or “violent,” use “physical.” Instead of “biter,” explain that the child is biting.

“People first” language is a sensitive topic that varies from family to family and person to person. Some families or individuals may prefer “people first” language (e.g., “a child who is deaf”), whereas others may prefer self-identification with their disability (e.g., “deaf child”). Please follow the family’s or child’s lead on this. Our primary goal is to respect any individual’s self-identification and to avoid forcing any identity onto anyone or denying anyone an identity they wish to have.

Discipline

The following methods of discipline are strictly prohibited.

- No child shall be subject to physical punishment, corporal punishment, verbal abuse, or threats.
- Cruel, severe, unusual, or unnecessary punishment shall not be inflicted upon children.
- Derogatory remarks shall not be made in the presence of children about family members of children in care or about the children themselves.
- No child or group of children shall be allowed to discipline another child.
- When a child is removed from the group for disciplinary reasons, they shall never be out of sight of a staff member.
- No child shall be deprived of meals or snacks or any part thereof for disciplinary reasons.

Parent Relationships

Abeona House’s unique origins demand an open, ongoing partnership with parents. Abeona House invites parents to visit, volunteer, and help their child transition to the school as long as their child is currently enrolled. We are proud of our open door policy.

Our work is to create a partnership between parents and teachers to ensure a happy childhood. We are not a service model of childcare. Two components are critical to high-quality interactions with parents:

1. Teachers recognize that parents’ knowledge, input, and expectations of their child have great value.
2. Parents recognize that teachers have unique knowledge of their child in a group setting in a childcare environment.

Both components require mutual respect.

Basic Customer Service: Our Business Depends on Keeping Our Families

- Be courteous. Smile, be polite, and use good manners.
- When a parent is upset, listen to complaints and concerns, and pass them on.
- Wipe their child’s face, change dirty clothes, offer a last diaper change on their way out the door. (We do this because the kids deserve it first).
- If you feel misunderstood, do not argue with the parent. Talk to administration about your concerns.

- Consider your appearance and odor at work.
- It is recommended that you limit your social networking with these families to the Abeona House Facebook page. Please feel comfortable ignoring parent “friend” requests.
- Return phone calls and emails in a timely manner, depending on urgency.

High Quality Interactions with Parents

The greeting at drop-off

You should walk over to the child and greet him/her at eye level.

Use this opportunity to talk with the parent, welcome them into the space, invite them in (or help them go; read their cues), listen to what they have to say about their child (their evening/morning, feeding, etc).

Help with transitions

When parents are new, they might not trust us. Spend some time just talking with the parent (not just at drop-off, but pick-up too!). This will help the parent to feel more secure about their child’s time with you. Do not feel insulted or defensive if it takes them some time. Different people have different levels of anxiety and/or guilt about leaving their children in childcare. If you need extra support when developing trust with a particular parent, administration and/or the Board are happy to provide it.

When a parent cannot get out the door without their child reacting, assist in this process in an appropriate way that does not diminish the child’s feelings. If the child is particularly dramatic, follow up with the parent later, and assure them that the day is going better.

Inquire about their absence

Call when the child is not at school. Ask about their vacation. Notice.

Communicate (in writing or text) about the day

Most full-time teachers are gone by the time children are picked up. This is unfortunate because they spend the bulk of the day with the child. Does your daily sheet reflect the amazing, comical, and interesting things you are noticing about the child? Or are you doing it “just because”? Consider daily sheets (whether individual sheets or about the whole class) an opportunity to develop relationships with those parents. Parents also love texts of pictures from teachers during the day.

Be honest & choose your words carefully

It is disrespectful to “keep parents from getting upset” about how much/little their child is sleeping, eating, misbehaving, crying, etc. It gets in the way of authentic communication. Be honest.

Talk at pick-up

Greet parents at pick-up time, and tell them something about their child. Your work with them is important to them. They want to hear your observations and about their

child. Do your best to keep these interactions upbeat, even if the child had a challenging day. Pick-up is not the time for a conference about troublesome behaviors. It is a time for a brief talk about the child's day. If a conference is needed, schedule one via a phone call during your planning period.

Engage with them directly about what you want

Talk to them about your ideas, dreams, and desires for their child's classroom. Invite them to field trips and workdays. Ask them to share a gift or talent or talk about an experience.

Conflicts with Parents

Conflicts with parents may arise when a child is injured or there are behavior issues or conflicts with other children in the classroom. Sometimes parents may be struggling with their own issues and respond to a situation at school in an emotional way. When talking to parents about their child, it is important to describe their child's behaviors and possible motivations carefully. Words have many connotations, and you may unintentionally speak in a way that is not respectful of the child. A good approach to speaking with the parent of a challenging child is to ask them how they handle similar situations at home.

In the event that a parent loses their temper while discussing a matter at school, you are asked to move to a place more suitable for a conversation, and away from children. You may also direct an angry parent to the director. Sometimes these uncomfortable interactions distort our relationships with parents and even our feelings toward the child. It is important to work past our personal feelings and be sure to treat all people with respect.

Parent Workdays

When parents work at the school on weekends, the school gets pretty messy. Please expect a little chaos on Monday, and do not forget to say thank you!

Prospective Parents

Families calling for information about our program should be directed to our website (abeonahouse.org) and encouraged to complete a wait list registration form. Teachers should not comment on the length of the wait list; it has no bearing on placements because of our admission policy. Prospective parents tour the school after being put on the wait list (or by appointment on rare occasions). These generally happen twice a month. Please be sure your space is organized and neat and that children and your classroom are ready to receive visitors.

The Food Program

Abeona House's food program is designed to provide children with a wide array of healthy, locally grown, fresh foods to support their optimum health and growth. Teachers play a key role in this regard.

- Teachers are expected to show respect and enthusiasm for the offerings made to the children.
- Teachers may not bring junk food or soda into the building. We are modeling healthy choices, and as we know, children learn more from what we do than what we say. Teachers may bring a cup for a beverage, but no drink containers with logos are allowed unless for water, coffee, or fruit juice.
- Teachers encourage children to try new things and work to learn what children like.
- Teachers are encouraged to try the offerings from the kitchen.
- Teachers are asked to give constructive feedback to the chef of children's preferences.

Feeding

Meals are a time of connection. Teachers are asked to observe these standards for meal times.

- Infants shall be held while being bottlefed.
- One-year-olds shall be given utensils at lunchtime, eat on plates, and work actively to learn to drink from open cups.
- Children 2 years and older shall receive a paper napkin at meals and snacks.
- Food should be placed respectfully in front of children.
- Teachers eating lunch with children should sit with them and engage in conversation with them (not peer teachers in the room).

The USDA Food Program

Teachers are required to maintain certain paperwork for our center to receive reimbursement through the USDA food program. Teachers will be trained in using these adequately, and are expected to complete the paperwork appropriately.

Hygiene & Safety

Handwashing

Handwashing is our greatest defense against illness and disease, for ourselves and the children we serve. These guidelines are to be strictly enforced.

- Teachers wash hands upon arrival to work and are not to physically interact with children until their hands are clean.
- Teachers of children 2 years and under must use hand-over-hand washing.
- Teachers will wash their hands and those of their children before every meal and snack and after each use of the potty.
- Teachers will wear gloves over clean hands to handle food.
- When diaper changing, teachers may use sanitizer. However, teachers should fully wash hands at every third diaper.

Sanitizing Toys

Teachers in rooms of children who are mouthing (infants and ones) must remove toys that are placed in children's mouths into a bin to be sanitized regularly throughout the day.

Sanitizing the Changing Table

The changing table is to be sanitized first with a soap and water solution, and then with bleach, after each diaper change, and underneath is to be cleaned at minimum at the end of each day.

Reporting Incidents and Accidents to Parents

Despite our efforts to supervise children well and create a safe environment, accidents are inevitable. Each employee is trained in first aid and CPR so that they may respond to emergencies appropriately. In the case of a major incident when emergency services must be called, the director must be called and will call the parent to explain the incident.

1. Tell the parent that the child is ok quickly after saying hello.
2. Explain what happened in a couple of sentences. Tell the parent how the child is doing. Make clear that the parent should/should not pick up the child.
3. Ask if the parent would like a copy of the incident report.

Parents must be called **immediately** in the event of:

- A bleeding injury not contained in an adhesive strip
- Any injury to the head
- Any human bite that breaks the skin
- Any animal bite
- An impaled object
- Broken or dislodged teeth
- Allergic reaction
- Skin changes (rash, swelling, spots, etc.)
- Unusual breathing
- Dehydration
- Any temperature reading over 101° oral, 102° rectal, or 100° axillary
- Any illness requiring professional medical attention

Incident Reports

An **incident report** is to be completed, signed by the staff person in charge (when possible), and photocopied if a copy requested. The parent should sign the school copy at pick up, and it should be filed in the TODAY file.

Parent Contact Info

Each room is supplied with a red emergency binder complete with parent contact information and permissions for other people who can pick up a child. These should be kept in an agreed-upon place, and referred to as needed.

Treatment of Bites

When a child is bitten, we carefully wash the affected area with soap and water, *regardless* of whether the skin appears to be broken. Ice should be applied to the bite, and a bandage should be used if the skin is broken. As per protocol, parents of both the bitten child and the child who bit should be called, a bite report filled out, and the biting log completed in the classroom.

Bottles and Sippy Cups

Families of children who take breast milk or formula are expected to supply Abeona House with **one sanitized bottle (with a lid) for each feeding. Bottles may not be refilled.**

Cups and pitchers are washed at the end of the day by staff. Closing teachers are expected to use the dish sanitizer in the kitchen to wash the cups for their own class at the end of each day. Opening teachers will fill cleaned pitchers with water. They are also responsible for filling water cups for the children in the morning. If a problem arises with this routine, you are expected to communicate to the assistant director around it.

Water

Drinking water shall be available indoors and outdoors to all children. Drinking water shall be offered at least once between meals and snacks to all children. Teachers are required to keep all cups properly marked at all times.

Diaper Changing

There is time in the daily schedule for diaper changing. However, please change the child if it is apparent that he/she is soiled, and you are able. We do not “check diapers.” If it is scheduled, change it.

Soiled Sheets & Clothing

Sheets and coverings must be changed immediately when soiled or wet.

In the event that the child’s clothes are soiled or become exceedingly dirty, each child has a spare set of clothes to wear. Remember to send a note home asking the parent for a new spare set when one is used.

Walking Trips

Each week, children who walk with ease may participate in walking trips. Please consider:

- Child/staff ratio plus one additional adult shall be met for all field trips.
- It is advised that teachers use the walking ropes for these trips.
- Be sure that children have a signed permission slip for walking trips.
- Be careful not to schedule walking trips around student pick-up times.

Topicals

The provider shall not apply topical ointments/sprays/creams (e.g., sunscreen, insect repellent, diaper rash ointment, etc.) without a written one-time authorization signed and dated from the parent, unless changes occur.

Medication

Medication or medical procedures to be provided on an as-needed basis or maintenance prescription shall be updated as changes occur, or at least every 3 months by the parent.

Only teachers receiving medication administration training can administer medication of any kind.

Prescription and over-the-counter medications, poisons, cleaning supplies, harmful chemicals, equipment, tools, and any substance with a warning label stating that it is harmful or that it should be kept out of the reach of children shall be locked away from and inaccessible to children. Whether a cabinet or an entire room, the storage area shall be locked.

Health Information & Immunization Records

Each child is required to have on file a health statement, which includes a record of up-to-date immunizations and the signature of the child's source of medical care. Each year, health information immunization forms must be updated by the deadline given. Families who choose not to immunize are required to have on file a statement that the child is under ongoing medical supervision.

Exclusion of Nonimmunized Children

In the event of an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease (such as the flu, chicken pox, rotavirus, measles, etc.), Abeona House reserves the right to exclude nonimmunized children from school until the risk of transmission has subsided.

Allergies

Children with environmental or food allergies are required to have an allergy plan from their allergist/pediatrician on file with the school. We serve children with nut allergies and remind our families that we are a nut-free center. Please be vigilant when sending your child with snacks, and avoid things like peanut butter, almond milk, etc.

All classrooms with children having allergies must have a list hanging within view (with confidentiality maintained) showing all children with allergies and their pictures.

Contact with Germs

Working in close contact with young children means that you are likely going to be exposed to illness and/or parasites. When there are particular nuisances found in multiple children, we will follow the best practices of the experts in the field. We have found that employees tend to get anxious and reactive in these situations, even spreading apprehension throughout the center. When teachers are found to act against administration and seem uncomfortable with the best practices that are being employed, they may be sent home. If you feel that the school is not acting expeditiously enough, you are encouraged to respectfully ask for some time with the executive director to better understand the actions being taken and the recommendations of the medical professionals and agencies whose advice we follow in these cases.

Health-Related Exclusion/Sending Home a Sick Child

In the interest of the health and well being of all children and staff of Abeona House, we reserve the right to have a parent pick up a child because of what appears to be an infectious disease. When the parent of a child is called, they are expected to pick up their child within the hour. If they are unable to make contact, or there is some issue hindering this, emergency contacts will be notified.

Abeona House follows the guidelines described in the report “Caring for Our Children, National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care.” Please feel free to read through this document, which may be obtained online: http://nrckids.org/CFOC3/PDFVersion/PDF_Color/CFOC3_A.pdf

The following symptoms could be an indication of serious illness in a child. Abeona House will request that a child be picked up from school within 1 hour if one or more of the following conditions exists:

- Illness which prevents the child from participation in activities
- Illness that results in a greater need for care than the childcare staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children
- Lethargy
- The child has any of the following conditions:
 - Fever of 101° (or 100° axillary)
 - Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness not cleared by a medical professional
 - Lethargy that is more than explained/expected tiredness
 - Uncontrolled coughing
 - Inexplicable irritability or persistent crying
 - Labored or difficult breathing
 - Wheezing
 - Other signs that the child is acting or feeling very unusual
 - Diarrhea (an increase in watery stools not associated with changes in diet that is not contained by the child’s diaper or ability to use the toilet)
 - Children with chronic loose stools who otherwise seem well, will not be excluded once stool cultures are proven to be negative.
 - Children with diarrhea caused by bacterial infection (e.g., *E. coli*, *Salmonella*) or enteric disease (e.g., hepatitis A infection) may be subject to special guidelines (see appropriate standards in full guide).
 - Blood in stools not explained by dietary change, medication, or hard stools
 - Vomiting illness (two or more episodes of vomiting in the previous 24 hours), until vomiting resolves or until a health care provider determines that the cause is noncontagious and that the child is not in danger of dehydration
 - Persistent abdominal pain (continues more than 2 hours) or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs or symptoms
 - Mouth sores with drooling, unless determined to be noninfectious
 - Rash with fever or behavior change, until a health provider determines the cause do not indicate communicable disease

When a Child Can Return to Our Care

Parents will be notified in the event a child exhibits symptoms consistent with these conditions, and we ask that parents comply with the following terms for seeking professional care and/or treatment. Inclusion and exclusion criteria for a few common illnesses are as follows (please see the full guide for a list of all diseases/conditions).

Illness/Symptom	Exclude Until
Diarrhea (two or more loose stools, or over and above what is normal for that child)	Diarrhea resolved or is controlled (contained in diaper or toilet)
Fever of unknown origin (100° oral or 101° rectal or higher) and some behavioral signs of illness	Fever resolved or cleared by child's physician/health department and NOT on fever-reducing medication
Undiagnosed generalized rash/diaper rash	No draining or oozing sores or lesions, or on antibiotics for 24 hours
Varicella-zoster (chickenpox)	Children who develop chickenpox should remain home until all sores have dried and crusted (usually 6 days).
Vomiting	Last emesis 24 hours
Difficulty breathing/wheezing	When criteria for exclusion are resolved
Purulent conjunctivitis ("pink eye" that includes white or yellow eye discharge).	24 hours after antibiotic treatment initiated for bacterial, or cleared by doctor
Ear infection	No exclusion once fever has resolved for 24 hours
Pediculosis ("head lice")	Children will be sent home and may return after the first treatment
Ringworm	Children receiving medical treatment for ringworm on the scalp or body will not be excluded from school.
Strep throat or other streptococcal infection	Children should remain home until 24 hours after initial antibiotic treatment and cessation of fever.
Viral illness (common cough, cold, rash)	Child is well, able to participate, and has no fever.

Emergencies

In the case of a medical emergency during the school session, the staff will administer first aid. The parent will be notified as quickly as possible. If medical attention is required, the staff will call the local ambulance service, which will transport the child to the local hospital. If it is more prudent to remove the child via a staff person's car, the staff member in charge will decide to do so. Every effort will be made to contact the child's own physician.

Medication Administration

No medication, either over the counter or prescription, shall be given to a child without written authorization from the parent or guardian. All prescription medication must be accompanied by the “Prescription Medications At School” as well as the medication authorization form on the website. All topicals (sunscreen, mosquito repellent, diaper crèmes, powder, etc.) are considered medication and will be locked at school. Please inform us of any medication or topicals that are sent to school.

Forms with necessary information are available from the staff. All information must be presented in order for staff to give medication. All medications administered at school should be accompanied by an oral syringe to ensure proper dosages. Any questions regarding a medication will be made directly to the physician listed on the medication or the child’s master card. **Medication is only given by designated staff members who have been trained in medication administration.**

Prescription Medication

It is Abeona House policy to administer prescription medication only if it is given a total of 3 times a day. Parents must give the first and last dose to the child, and the staff will administer the midday dose. Any prescription given twice a day can be attended to at home, before and after school, and will not be administered by school staff. However, parents are asked to inform the school of the administration, as well as explain any side effects that may be evident.

Additionally parents dispensing medication to a child while in the center must be supervised doing so, and this administration must be documented. Drug information sheets (available at pharmacies) should be sent to school with details about the medication. This will be kept on file.

All medication sent to the center shall be in its original container and clearly labeled with the child’s name and complete directions for giving the medication. The center shall follow instructions on the container pertaining to with/without food, drink, and so on. Do not mix medication with formula or food. Please send it to school in its original container. We will not accept medication that is mixed with other substances.

First Time Administration of Medication & Changes in Dosage

Medications that have not been given to a child before will not be administered by school staff. Parents are asked to administer any new medications or changes in dosage to their child at least 24 hours before sending the child to school to observe side effects and reactions.

Allergies & Other Medical Conditions

The school is to be made aware of all allergies, and parents of children having active medical conditions are to create an emergency plan with their pediatrician and supply this to the childcare center.

Tobacco, Alcohol, Illegal Substances and Fire Arm Policy

This center prohibits the use of tobacco and alcohol as well as the possession or use of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances, firearms, or pellet or BB guns (loaded or unloaded) in the center, on the playground, or on a center-sponsored field trip.

Payroll & Benefits

Paydays occur every other Friday by direct deposit. Pay periods go from Wednesday to the following second Tuesday.

All employees receive their hourly wage for working their scheduled hours, unless salaried.

Your paycheck will have a check stub attached that itemizes the various deductions required by law or authorized in writing by you. It is important that you inform the director of any changes that affect the amount of your deductions (e.g., change in marital status or addition of a dependant).

If an error should ever occur on your paycheck, report it at once to the director so that action may be taken for review and adjustment.

Paychecks will only be issued to the named employee by direct deposit unless a request is made for a paper check.

Advances/Early Issuance

There will be no early issuance of paychecks, nor will we issue any cash advances.

Vacation/Personal Days

Vacation/Personal Days are time you elect to use for the following reasons:

- Physician and dental appointments for yourself or family members
- Time away from the school when either you or a family member is sick
- Time away from the school for any personal reason

You are not required to give any specific reason for using your personal/sick time. However, when you plan to use time for “personal” reasons and/or scheduled appointments, you must notify the director of this preference and schedule the time off as far in advance of the event as possible. **Administration will assist in finding a sub, but ultimately the responsibility for finding a replacement for a day off falls on the teacher. Requests may be refused.**

Full-time teachers (30+ routinely scheduled hours per week) employed for 1 year or less are eligible for 7 personal days per year that are accrued at a rate of .58 days per month.

Full-time teachers (30+ routinely scheduled hours per week) entering their second and third years are eligible for 10 days of paid time off per calendar year that are accrued at a rate of 0.833 days per month.

Full-time teachers (30+ routinely scheduled hours per week) entering their fourth year or more are eligible for 15 days of paid time off per calendar year that are accrued at a rate of 1.25 days per month.

Time may not be used before it is accrued. You are permitted to take time off without pay if it is approved by the administration.

Paid time off is accrued on an annual basis, with the teacher's start date marking the start of the accrual year. Teachers may bank up to 5 days of paid time off, but any paid time off in excess of that amount must be used prior to the teacher's annual anniversary, or it will be lost.

Sick Days

Full-time employees may use accrued time for sick days but may also request for the time to be unpaid.

Final Wages

An employee who is discharged must be paid all of his/her wages including accrued personal days on the following pay period.

Holidays

There are 17 paid holidays per year. Holidays that fall on a Saturday will be observed on the preceding Friday, and those falling on a Sunday will be observed on the following Monday. A new calendar is issued each August.

Jury Duty

While it is the duty of every citizen to serve on a jury when called, Abeona House recognizes that this often means the loss of income. Abeona House pays the difference between the jury pay and regular wages for days when you are unable to report to work because of jury service.

The above statement applies provided that you:

- Show your supervisor your summons to serve on a jury prior to the time that you are scheduled to serve
- Provide documentation to show your attendance for any days not worked and return to work if your service is not needed
- Furnish your supervisor with evidence of having served on a jury for the time claimed

Jury absence will be noted on your timesheet. Time spent on jury duty will not be counted as hours worked for the purpose of computing overtime pay. Regular wages are paid until jury pay is received. Jury pay is then deducted from your regular wages.

This benefit cannot be applied to any court appearance other than jury duty unless such appearance is related to your employment.

Workman's Compensation

Workman's compensation is available for full-time employees injured in the fulfilling of job-related duties. In the event of a work-related injury, the employee must report the injury immediately to the director.

Emergency Preparedness

Fire Drills

Each teacher will display an "escape path" out of the school. A fire drill will be conducted once a month. These shall be conducted at various times of the day. It is important to exhibit and promote calm to the children as you safely guide them outside. Teachers are asked to exit last and close the classroom door (and any other doorways) on their way out. One drill every 6 months will take place at naptime.

Emergency Evacuation of the School Premises

In the event that the school property is evacuated for any reason, children will be moved to the nearest available business on Canal Street, and parents will be contacted to arrange to pick up their child.

Teachers should be familiar with the evacuation map for each room of the building. Once mobile children are secured, free staff persons should help infant and ones children to evacuate the building safely. The infant cribs (on wheels) may be used to transport nonmobile children longer distances.

Teachers should bring the class binder with them. This contains emergency numbers needed to reach the child's family.

Emergency Notifications: The SchoolReach System

Should severe weather or other conditions (e.g., storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, loss of power, loss of water, etc.) prevent us from opening on time or at all, an automated notification to the families and staff will be made by the phone number listed on the SchoolReach information sheet and by email. Please note that when you (or your voicemail) pick up, it will be necessary for the automated response system to hear "Hello" for the message to activate. A delay in the voicemail message may result in an undelivered message. Also, these messages, even if delivered remotely, will show "Abeona House" in the caller ID. In the case of evacuation or reopening, if you return this phone call, there may not be anyone to return your call. Please then check your email, as we will use both methods to reach you.

Hurricane Evacuation Plan

Prior to hurricane season, each employee will be required to complete a contact record, with current phone numbers and possible destinations during an evacuation. If a mandatory evacuation is called, employees are encouraged to follow the advice of local officials.

In the event of such an emergency, all employees must establish contact with the director informing them of their destination and methods of communication. Once it is determined that it is safe to return, employees will be asked to give a specific date of

return so that operations may return to normal, and families may be informed of the availability of childcare.

Communication

Because cell phone service is generally unreliable in emergency situations, employees are asked to have paper copies of important work-related numbers on hand.

In the event of an evacuation, each teacher is asked to contact the director (cell phone or email) and give a secondary number and current location. Because our ability to staff the school will directly affect our ability to serve families, each teacher is to estimate when they will return to the area.