

**Florida Association of Academic Non-Public Schools (FAANS)**

**Minimum Standards for Early Childhood Education  
of Infants through Kindergarten**

**For Use by Member Organizations for the Purpose of Participation in VPK Only**

**1. Philosophy**

- 1.1 The school has a written philosophy regarding the education of young children. The philosophy is consistent with the program's mission and objectives.

**2. Mission**

- 2.1 The school has a mission statement that includes its purpose for educating young children.

**3. Governance**

- 3.1 The corporate status of the entity having oversight of the early childhood program, whether incorporated, franchised, proprietary, or religiously affiliated, has a clearly articulated legal documentation for the operation or establishment of the early childhood program.
- 3.2 Written governing policies and procedures, consistent with the school's philosophy, are established by the governance.
- 3.3 Minutes of the governance meetings are recorded and maintained.
- 3.4 The governance ensures an annual written evaluation of the administrator/director.
- 3.5 The governance ensures the early childhood program meets all applicable governmental regulations.
- 3.6 A written evaluation of the program is conducted and used to establish long and short-term goals for strategic planning in accordance with the requirements specified by the accrediting entity.
- 3.7 The governance ensures the financial resources and the management of the school shall be such as to sustain the program and maintain a financial position of stability.
- 3.8 The governance ensures evidence of financial stability by requiring an annual financial review, compilation, or an external audit a minimum of every three years prepared by a qualified source using generally accepted accounting procedures.
- 3.9 The governance maintains adequate liability and accident insurance including insurance on any vehicle that transports children.
- 3.10 The governing entity provides a compensation policy for personnel, including benefits, which is reviewed annually. The compensation policy shall be available to and understood by all personnel.

**4. Admission**

- 4.1 Admission policies and procedures are nondiscriminatory and clearly stated

in written form which comply with USC 2000d regarding "race, color, or ethnicity."

- 4.2 Admission policies and procedures are consistent with the school's mission and philosophy.

## **5. Records**

- 5.1 Current and cumulative records are kept on each child. The records should include birth certificates/notarized affidavits of birth date, attendance, health reports, documentation of immunization, assessments of developmental and cognitive development. The records shall be kept secured and confidential.

## **6. Discipline**

- 6.1 A written discipline policy is clearly stated and distributed to parents and faculty. There shall be evidence that this policy is understood and is implemented effectively to promote the healthy development of appropriate behavior.

## **7. Personnel**

- 7.1 The director or administrator has earned a minimum of a Bachelor's degree or its equivalent in early childhood education/child development, or in elementary education with twelve credit hours in early childhood education/child development, or in any other subject area with twenty-four credit hours in early childhood education/child development, or holds the state required credential, or academic credentials that exceed the foregoing deemed satisfactory to the accrediting entity.
- 7.2 The school's hiring procedures must satisfy the state or federal background screening and fingerprinting procedures required under law at a Level 2 screening which includes a history regarding abuse and any criminal convictions for all employees, and volunteers as defined in statute as those having direct contact with, or access to the children.
- 7.3 The school has a published nondiscrimination policy regarding hiring practices related to race, color, and ethnicity.
- 7.4 Teachers in the kindergarten program shall meet the requirements of the particular FAANS-member accrediting association to which the school belongs, but teachers and directors/administrators of programs participating in VPK must meet or exceed the credentials requirements of applicable state laws governing participation in VPK.
- 7.5 Teachers in the infant to pre-kindergarten (four-year olds) program shall meet the requirements of the particular FAANS-member accrediting association to which the school belongs, but teachers and directors/administrators of programs participating in VPK must meet or exceed the credentials requirements of applicable state laws governing participation in VPK.
- 7.6 All support staff and instructional personnel are provided with an annual orientation and review of the program goals and expectations including written personnel policies.
- 7.7 All instructional personnel participate annually in a minimum of twelve documented clock hours of continuing education and/or professional development related to child growth and development, or that which is required by their accrediting agency.
- 7.8 The director or administrator ensures that an annual written evaluation is conducted for each staff member. The written evaluation is shared with the staff member and maintained in the staff member's professional development file.
- 7.9 The director ensures that all personnel contribute to the annual evaluation of the

early childhood program and are encouraged to participate in the ongoing improvement of the program.

## 8. Enrollment

- 8.1 The school determines class sizes based on the philosophy and mission of the program and the needs of the students. The school must adhere to the following guidelines for each class:

<i>Age/Grade Level</i>	<i>Max.Student:Teacher Ratio with aide available at all times</i>
Birth - 1 yr.	4:1
1 year olds	6:1
2 year olds	10:1
3 year olds	15:1
4 year olds	20:1
Kindergarten	25:1

Programs that participate in state or federal voucher/scholarship programs will satisfy the applicable child to staff ratio required for such participation.

## 9. Curriculum

- 9.1 A written curriculum guide including goals, objectives, a scope and sequence of skills and developmental levels that is supported by research-based studies in early child-hood is used for each age group. (Note from several: The state has not mandated such and neither should FAANS. Schools use curriculum materials widely which are not research based.)
- 9.2 The instructional personnel develop daily, written lesson plans that are correlated with the curriculum guide and are reviewed periodically by the director.

## 10. Student Assessment

- 10.1 Ongoing assessment of student performance occurs and is recorded with supportive documentation that is consistent with the school's philosophy and methodology. Age-appropriate assessments to note student progress include the following: physical health and development, approaches to learning, social and emotional development, language and communication, cognitive development, general knowledge, and motor development.
- 10.2 Age-appropriate assessment instruments and strategies are administered by qualified personnel.

## 11. Nutrition and Food Services

- 11.1 The school is in compliance with all applicable state and county health codes.
- 11.2 Parents /guardians have access to written menus that are posted in a public location. Meals provided by the school meet nutritional guidelines that have been established by government authorities.
- 11.3 During mealtimes, staff members engage in pleasant interactions with the children. Social conversations, which encourage the use of appropriate table manners and healthy eating habits, cultivate the development of relational skills for the children.
- 11.4 Infants are held while bottle-fed and are not placed with bottles into cribs at any time.
- 11.5 The amount of food, type of food consumed, and time of feeding is recorded and made available to parents/guardians of infants and toddlers on a daily basis.

## 12. Physical Environment

- 12.1 The classrooms are of sound construction, provide sufficient light and ventilation and be properly cleaned on a daily basis.
- 12.2 Classrooms are designed to provide a physical environment appropriate for the age and activities of the children in the program. The floor space meets or exceeds a minimum of thirty-five square feet of usable space per child or that are required under statute if the buildings were constructed prior to the implementation of the thirty-five square foot standard.
- 12.3 Infants are provided with a protected space for crawling and playing apart from more mobile babies.
- 12.4 Interactive items (mirrors, pull-up bars), which stimulate learning for infants, are placed on the walls at babies' eye level.
- 12.5 All equipment is kept clean, safe, and well maintained.
- 12.6 All furniture and equipment is appropriate for the ages being served and shall sufficiently provide for the needs of the children and the implementation of the instructional objectives of the program.
- 12.7 Children are provided with designated individual spaces in which to store their work and personal belongings.
- 12.8 The size and number of bathroom facilities are adequate for the size and number of children in the program. Toilets, sinks, soap, and paper towels are readily accessible to the children.
- 12.9 The diapering area is in good repair and is sanitized after each use. Soiled diapers are stored in a sealed container. Gloves, as well as running water and soap for hand washing, are accessible and utilized by the staff during diapering.
- 12.10 Water for drinking is always available and readily accessible to the children.
- 12.11 The facilities include an isolation space for children who are ill.
- 12.12 The outdoor physical environment includes forty-five square feet per child on the playground at any given time.
- 12.13 The playground equipment is age-appropriate and designed to provide optimal learning experiences for the children. Routine inspections of all playground equipment are conducted and recorded indicating timely repairs of any potential hazard.
- 12.14 Children are supervised at all times. The student:adult ratio (section 8.1) is maintained during outdoor play periods.
- 12.15 The outdoor play area includes a balance of sun and shade. Appropriate ground covering to cushion falls is provided near swings and climbing apparatus.
- 12.16. A written process is in place to ensure proper maintenance of the buildings, grounds, and equipment.

## 13. Health and Safety

- 13.1 Schools are in compliance with all applicable state and county health, safety, fire, and sanitation codes, including immunization schedules and any other county regulations. Completed inspection documents are on file. If the program is exempt from licensing, voluntary inspection has been sought, and recommendations for improvement have been followed.
- 13.2 Attendance is taken and recorded before children board a vehicle for transportation on a field trip, and again, upon return to the school.
- 13.3 The school has a written emergency / crisis plan that is reviewed annually with faculty and staff.
- 13.4 The school has a written policy regarding visitors to the school campus.
- 13.5 Current emergency information is maintained for each child enrolled in the school.
- 13.6 Policies and procedures are in place to protect the staff and children from blood-borne pathogens. Annual inservice training in protective procedures is required for all faculty and staff. "Universal precautions" are used when encountering children's body fluids.
- 13.7 Faculty and staff are alerted to special health conditions of children and are equipped, when applicable, to handle such concerns.
- 13.8 A written policy that complies with governmental regulations for the administration and storage of medications is established and made available to the parents/guardians of the children in the program.
- 13.9 A detailed medical log that includes a record of all medications given to children, the time the medication was given, and the person who administered the medication is maintained.
- 13.10 Children and adults wash their hands after using the toilet, before eating or handling food, and as otherwise necessary to prevent the spread of disease.
- 13.11 A clean set of clothing, for children ages four and younger, is kept on the school site to ensure children are provided with a change of clothing in case of an emergency.
- 13.12 The bedding used by children is washed at a minimum of once per week and when soiled, it is washed before a second use. It is used by only one child between washings. The bedding is stored in individual containers.
- 13.13 An arrival and dismissal plan is in place to ensure a safe arrival and departure for children. All children are accounted for throughout the day and are released only to authorized adults.
- 13.14 The faculty and staff are trained to recognize signs of child abuse and neglect. They know the laws and procedures for reporting abuse to the appropriate agency.
- 13.15 Practices are in place for the prevention of child abuse. These practices may include viewing windows in the classrooms or classroom doors, bathroom doors left open, a minimum of two teachers assigned to a group of children, and random walk-through inspections by supervisors throughout the school day.
- 13.16 An appropriate number of staff are properly trained and prepared to administer First Aid and CPR. At least one staff member with First Aid certification and

child (infant, if applicable) Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training is present on the school site during all times that children are in school.

- 13.17 First Aid supplies and a Universal Precaution Kit are conveniently available to teachers and staff, but not to the children.
- 13.18 All cleaning supplies, chemicals, gardening, and maintenance tools are stored out of the children's reach.
- 13.19 All chemicals, medicines, and other "dangerous if swallowed" materials are stored in their original containers and labeled accurately.
- 13.20 Appropriate safety precautions are taken while children are being transported in a school vehicle. Current documentation on all vehicle safety inspections and driver qualifications verify that the school is in compliance with current state and local regulations regarding the transportation of children
- 13.21 The program for infants and toddlers has a written procedure for sanitizing toys and equipment. The plan is implemented daily.

#### **14. Family and Community Relations**

- 14.1 The school has an open-door policy providing parents/guardians access to and observation of their child. Scheduled and unscheduled visits are conducted on site without disruption to the learning environment.
- 14.2 A Parent Handbook containing school information and policies is provided for all families with children enrolled in the program.
- 14.3 Parent/guardian conferences with the teacher are scheduled at least twice during the school year. Information regarding the child's progress in areas of growth and learning are shared during the conference.
- 14.4 Parents/guardians receive written communication regarding their child's progress at least twice during the school year.
- 14.5 The director is familiar with community services and resources. Information regarding services that are available to support the development of children enrolled in the program is shared with the parents/guardians.

#### **15. School Improvement**

- 15.1 The school has a systematic plan for improvement. The plan includes short and long term goals and objectives to improve student learning.
- 15.2 The school improvement plan has a timeline with projected target dates for the completion of identified goals.
- 15.3 Items of priority for improving student learning are included in the financial planning for the early childhood program of the school.