



FAMILY HANDBOOK

First Impressions Learning Academy 758R Colonel Ledyard Hwy Ledyard, CT 06339
(860) 381-5537 (Main)/File758r@gmail.com

Version October 2022

WELCOME FILA FAMILIES!

First Impressions Learning Academy (FILA) provides exceptional learning opportunities in a joyful, nurturing and safe environment. Our mission aims to lay the foundation for each child's cognitive, emotional and social success. Through our hands-on learning experience and intentional teaching approach, children ignite their curiosity and build a sense of identity and belonging during the most influential time in their development.

We believe that every child deserves the most positive early childhood learning experience where their independence, curiosity, confidence and overall well-being is our paramount concern. These positive experiences in the formative years create life-long learners and critical thinkers who impact and inspire our world.

This handbook is designed to inform families of FILA's policies and procedures that are implemented in support of children's healthy development and to enable a successful home to school partnership. The involvement of family and community is integral to the success of our mission.

Thank you for choosing First Impressions Learning Academy!

Warmly,

Davette Stephens, Executive Director – davette.fila@gmail.com

Tinisha Garnett-Ainsley, Director of Operations & Programs – tgarnettainsley.fila@gmail.com

STATEMENT ON INCLUSION

First Impressions Learning Academy, LLC is an inclusive school where students, families, caregivers, teachers and staff are supported equally and where each unique identity, voice, ideological viewpoint and experience is valued. We honor all members of our community ability, age, appearance, belief system, citizenship, culture, family structure, gender, gender identity, language, learning style, national origin, political view, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic level and all other protected characteristic.

We are committed to sustaining an environment free from harassment in any form, including bullying and discrimination, we maintain that the work of inclusion is a responsibility held by all and done for all, person to person. We embrace this challenging yet rewarding opportunity and understand that this as an evolving work which enriches our lives.

MISSION

FILA provides exceptional learning experiences in a nurturing and safe environment for children six weeks through Pre-Kindergarten. We are committed to educating, empowering and inspiring students to be confident, conscience, independent, innovative, critical thinkers in a challenging and ever-changing world.

VISION

We develop each child's potential through:

- Personalized learning that addresses each child's unique learning style
- Differentiated instruction, curriculum and assessment
- Fostering meaningful relationships with children and families
- Providing rich opportunities socially focusing on mutual respect and open-mindedness
- Cultivating independent thought that builds character and confidence

CORE VALUES

We affirm that children learn through play. Play is structured to maximize a child's success and minimize failure, which allows children to meet their needs for acceptance, affection, and approval. Children gain a strong sense of self-esteem and social competence through hands-on experience in a safe and supportive environment that respects individual needs, cultures and preferences. These core values are the essential and enduring tenets of First Impressions Learning Academy. These guiding principles have a profound impact on how we think and behave.

We believe:

1. Children need to express themselves through interactions with nurturing adults and peers while being encouraged to be themselves.
2. Children need an environment that responds to their individual needs and development, while maintaining a safe and healthy atmosphere.
3. Children need to be respected, with the opportunity to make choices within a planned age appropriate and individually appropriate activities.

We adhere to the philosophical approach that is grounded in solid research, theory and practice and promotes the standards set by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

FILA PROGRAMS

Our center is a joyful and nurturing setting that sets the foundation for each child's academic, social, and emotional success. We foster a warm environment where young children can ignite their curiosity and grow during the most powerful time in their development. The more hands-on experiences children are offered, as research shows, the more confident and engaged they become in their learning. The younger that can happen, the better. At FILA, we help children become independent lifelong learners who learn to trust their intellect and instincts and are risk-takers.

Our thoughtful curriculum, created by our own students, and intentional teaching approaches are designed to inspire children to explore, innovate, plan, problem solve, think critically and learn how to learn. We are keen observers of children and are trained to act on each child's interest to make the learning more personal. We foster an inquiry base environment, where the students are free to ask questions and investigate further. Each program works towards these goals at the appropriate development stage for its students with the CT Early Learning Development (ELDS) Standards in mind.

TADPOLES – Toddler Program (ages 12 – 36 months)

FROGLETTS – Preschool Program (ages 3 – 4 years)

FROGS – Pre-Kindergarten Program (ages 4 – 5 years)

CERTIFICATIONS

Connecticut State Child Care Center License – 70659

Connecticut State head teacher and director certifications

HOURS OF OPERATION

First Impressions Learning Academy 758R Colonel Ledyard Hwy Ledyard, CT 06339
(860) 381-5537 (Main)/Fila758r@gmail.com

Version October 2022

First Impressions Learning Center provides care for children from 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday.

HOLIDAYS & CLOSURES

First Impressions Learning Academy will be closed on the following days. Tuition is due in even monthly installments covering 188-190 school days provided, and monthly payments as outlined for summer program tuition.

Labor Day, Indigenous Peoples Day, Thanksgiving Day and the day prior and after, Winter Break per yearly school calendar, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day. We are also a week in August for annual trainings and maintenance.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

First Impressions Learning Academy will follow the Ledyard Public School's decision on inclement weather days. If Ledyard has a 2hr delay, we will open at 10:00 am. Please see specific time postings and notices to alleviate parking concerns.

If Ledyard dismisses students early, we will notify families of a closure time, and staff will remain until all children have been picked up.

If Ledyard is not in session, such as a holiday that we are scheduled to be open or in the later afternoons, FILA will make out own decision and notify parents directly. Email notifications will be sent for all decisions.

Tuition is due regardless of inclement weather cancellations. Due to our year round program we do not provide makeup days for school cancellations due to inclement weather.

PANDEMIC PLANNING

In the state of CT, Child Care is considered a critical component of the public health emergency response. To this end, FILA will make all attempts to remain open and available to all enrolled students during any pandemic response when it is deemed safe to do so. We will look to state and local authorities, public health agencies, our liability coverage mandates, and our licensing department, to follow all guidelines set forth, making the best possible decisions for all families and teachers in our community, each step of the way.

Tuition will be due in full for any and all COVID-19 interruptions to our schedule. This includes staffing shortages, quarantines, isolations, and short COVID-19 ordered closures with anticipated reopening dates. This will allow us to meet expenses during these interruptions, potentially avoiding full and permanent closure and keeping your children's teachers employed. In the event that FILA closes without an anticipated reopening date, parents will not be obligated to pay tuition.

Complete elimination of injury and illness risk is not a guarantee and continued attendance, while in our program is open to all, is a decision made by each family.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Unless we receive written consent, information regarding your child will not be released with the exception of that required by our regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children at our program are confidential.

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

Our teachers are hired in compliance with the state requirements and qualifications as a base minimum.

All caregivers participate in an orientation class and ongoing training in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism.

STUDENT TEACHER RATIOS

Children are supervised at all times. All teachers receive scheduled breaks which reduce fatigue and help to ensure alertness.

We maintain the following state standards for student to teacher ratios:

Age	Student to Teacher	Maximum Group Size
Tadpole Classes	4 to 1	8
Froglets Class	10 to 1	15
Frogs Class	10 to 1	20

Although the state sets these standards, First Impression Learning Academy tries to keep these numbers even lower with the help of additional classroom teachers.

ADMISSION & ENROLLMENT

Online registration must be completed and submitted with the listed non-refundable tuition payment to confirm your child's space. There will not be an enrollment fee, registration is on a rolling basis throughout the school year. All admission and enrollment is based on a first come basis. The enrollment deposit is not refunded for any reason as it reserves a space for your family as admittance is based on availability and others are turned away.

Provisional enrollment is provided for the first two-week time frame, allowing a family and our program to determine if it is an appropriate fit for the child.

FILA is a year-round program, all families participating in our preschool programs will have an option of a traditional school year (September – June) program, or a full year program with sessions continuing on throughout the summer. Parents will have the opportunity to select which option

best for their child in January and February to allow for planning. A family electing to take the summer off but would like to re-enroll for the following school year will place a non-refundable tuition deposit for September. The deposit is not refunded for any reason, as it reserves a space for your family and others are turned away.

Enrollment Requirements

Enrollment Form

Families must submit a Child Enrollment form for the current school year at the start of registration to FILA. This form needs to be renewed each year of enrollment. Please have at least one trusted individual listed as an authorized pick up and emergency contact. Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. If you want a person who is not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick-up your child, you must notify us in advance, in writing. Your child will not be released without prior written authorization. The person picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy.

Two additional forms are required to be signed and submitted – Discipline Policy and Permission to Publicize.

Health Forms

As part of the enrollment process, the State of Connecticut requires that we have on a file a current health form signed by a physician, including an up-to-date immunization record. This form needs to be renewed each year of enrollment and when your child has an annual physical.

*All students are enrolled for the agreed upon arrival and dismissal schedule at the time of admissions. Any time beyond this agreed upon schedule must be requested and will be provided if staffing allows. Tuition rates cover a maximum of nine (9) hours daily.

Upon enrolling, we ask that parents bring all of the requested items, so their child is properly prepared for school.

Children are admitted without regard to race, culture, sex, national origin, or disability. We do not discriminate on the basis of special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided.

Tuition & Fees

Tuition payment is due on the first day of each month for the upcoming calendar month with no exceptions. Please refer to the tuition fee schedule. School closure days are listed in this handbook and the school calendar is uploaded on Procure and will be posted outside classrooms.

Tuition can be paid directly via Procure. First Impressions Learning Center also accepts personal checks and bank checks.

Tuition installments cover the 188-190 schooldays provided and is due regardless of any cancellations due to inclement weather.

Discounts

There is a sibling discount for families who enroll two (2) or more children – 5% off the lesser tuition payment.

Late Payments

Late payments can pose serious problems for our programs. Therefore, we have put procedures in place to reduce their impact. A \$20 late tuition payment charge will be assessed if tuition is over five (5) days due. If tuition payment is over 10 days due, we may ask that your child not return to school until payment is received. This may result in a loss of your enrollment space. Please speak with Tinisha Garnett-Ainsley, Director of Operations, if you require specific payment arrangements, or if you anticipate that your tuition payment will be late.

Returned Payments

All returned app requests, checks or rejected ACH (automatic debits) or credit card transactions will be charged a \$20 fee. This charge may be collected electronically. Two (2) returned checks or rejected transactions will result in your account being placed on “cash only” status.

Additional Important Tuition Details

- Extended Vacation - to retain your child’s spot during vacation, your regular tuition is due. Tuition must be paid prior to going on extended leave. These fees are non-refundable if you choose not to return.
- Withdrawals - if a child is suddenly withdrawn from the program without a 4-week written notice of withdrawal, the deposit will be applied. Families who withdraw and later re-enroll will be charged the enrollment deposit.

Releasing Families from Enrollment

FILA makes a strong effort to work with families in crisis, to find real and reasonable solutions that will support children and parents. We understand that in some situations, things do not pan out exactly how we expect. A 30-day written notice is expected for all withdrawals from our program with tuition paid in full. If you have placed a deposit on a future time frame, your 30-day notice applies to the first 30 days of that program, making your tuition deposit non-refundable.

Additionally, FILA reserves the right to terminate a family’s enrollment without notice for the following reasons:

- Non-compliance with policies and procedures,
- Non-payment of tuition as stipulated in the enrollment contract,

- Adults choosing to exhibit behavior that threatens the physical or emotional safety of the children and teachers.
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COMMUNICATION & FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

Parent-teacher communication is the primary co-held responsibility for families, staff and teachers. Through verbal and written communication of information, thoughts and ideas, and by collaborating on activities and events, parents and teachers strengthen their relationship and understanding. Parent communication is essential to effective partnership in advocacy for the child. Parents are asked to read the communication provided by teachers.

Parents are strongly encouraged to attend the scheduled Parent-Teacher Conferences two times each year. Additional conferences may be requested.

FILA practices communication through various strategies, including:

- **Daily Communications.** Parents and teachers exchange greetings during arrival and dismissal and may convey essential information. Longer conversations are scheduled when teachers are not directly supervising children.
 - **Written Communication.** Calendars, Daily Notes, Incident Reports and Newsletters.
 - **Conferences.** Normally held in November, parents have the opportunity to meet with their child's teacher for a 30-minute conference two times a year to share perceptions of your child's development and review your child's areas of challenge and growth.
 - **Family Visits.** Family participation is encouraged. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic family visits inside the classroom is prohibited until further notice.
 - **Conferences.** Family & teacher conferences occur twice a year. During these conferences, we will discuss your child's styles of learning, strengths and areas of development. We will work together to set goals for your child growth and development. You may request additional conferences regarding your child's progress at any time. We also encourage you to communicate any concerns.
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CENTER POLICIES & PRACTICES

Babysitting

FILA understands the added benefits babysitting opportunities bring individuals however, we discourage families from entering employment arrangements with teachers (i.e. babysitting). Any arrangement between families and our teachers outside the programs and services we offer is a private matter, not connected or sanctioned by First Impressions Learning Academy.

Birthday Celebrations

There are many ways to celebrate your child's birthday. Celebration suggestions include creating a special activity in honor of the child (favorite story, music or craft) or providing goodies to share, such as bubbles, washable "tattoos" or face-painting. Many of our children have varying nutritional needs and food allergies. Parents may opt to bring in store bought miniature "bite size" treats. We cannot share any items that are homemade. Please discuss the birthday celebration in the classroom with the teachers in advance to learn about specific class restrictions.

If there is any parent who wish for their child(ren) not to participate in these celebrations or wish to have them excluded from having the birthday treats, please discuss with your child's teacher.

Cultural Celebrations & Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is vital for all children as it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment we inhabit. We utilize books, music, games, and a wide range of activities as aids to teach our children respect for our world and the diversity of life on it.

Our school policy encourages an enhanced understanding of and respect for different cultures and beliefs of children, families, teachers and community.

Our goal is to strive for presentation of a variety of cultural traditions, keeping in mind the diversity of our children. Learning about diverse customs and celebrations is meant to promote cultural understanding. Classroom activities associated with holidays and other festivities are intended to be appropriate to the learning situation, the age and background of the students involved, and to serve the goals of respect for diversity, tolerances to differing ideas and perspectives, and inclusiveness.

Diapering

Children requiring diapers will be checked at least every two hours, or whenever the child indicates discomfort or exhibits behavior that suggests a soiled or wet diaper. The child shall be changed when found to be wet or soiled. A diaper changing area shall be provided and located separate from any food preparation, storage or serving area.

Discipline & Positive Guidance

FILA assures parents that an undesirable behavior indicates an opportunity for the child to develop an important skill; it is not a "morals" issue. It is possible that some children may exhibit consistent behaviors that are detrimental to the ongoing safety and security of the other children in the classroom. This may include aggression towards peers, such as biting, hitting and kicking. First

Impressions Learning Academy will handle these situations discreetly and with compassion, and in partnership with the family. The policy on discipline is a Connecticut State Licensing rule and regulation.

Thoughtful direction and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of others, of property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions.

Acts of Aggression - Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness. When a child becomes physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all of the children.

Our usual to helping children with challenging behavior is to show them how to solve conflicts and problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary it is clear, consistent and understandable to the child.

Physical restraint is not used or permitted for discipline. There are rare instances when we need to ensure a child's safety or that of others and we may restrain a child by gently holding her or him only for as long as is necessary for control of the situation.

Notification of Behavioral Concerns to Families - If a child's behavior/circumstances are of concern, communication will begin with the parents as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to elevate these needs in the context of our program.

On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Examples of such instances include:

- A child appears to be a danger to others.
- Continued care could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of the child as determined by a medical, psychological, or social service personnel.

Undue burden on our resources and finances for the child's accommodations for success and participation.

Lost & Found

You can look for lost items and bring found items to your child's classroom. Please note that we are not responsible for lost personal property.

Quiet/Rest Time

After lunch, all children participate in a quiet rest time. Generally, rest time lasts for two (2) hours. Children are not required to sleep and may be given quiet activities while on their cot during this time. We will often use this time to provide one-to-one instruction for students in the Pre-K classroom.

Please provide child size bedding to be used to dress their assigned cot during rest time. Only ONE soft item conducive to resting should be brought in. The bedding will remain at school for the week and be taken home on Friday for cleaning. The bedding should be returned on your child's first day of the following week.

Suspension & Dismissal

Discipline is an ongoing process embedded in the child's experience and relationships. We understand that children, especially pre-verbal children, use physical expression to share their feelings and needs. In the event that a child's ongoing behavior in school poses a risk to themselves or to the other children in the program the parents will communicate weekly with the Director to develop a plan, discuss the efficacy of the plan, validate progress and/or modify strategies.

In the unlikely event that behaviors do not respond to the efforts of the teachers and parents to correct the behavior, FILA will provide the family with 30-days written notice to determine a more appropriate childcare setting.

Teacher Appreciation

Parents coordinate teacher appreciation activities as a learning community. These delightful events happen throughout the year, with particular festivities in December for holidays and May for Teacher Appreciate Day.

Toilet Training

The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Most positive training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate the interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.

Transitions

Your child's transition to school should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. We will work with you and your child to ensure the smoothest possible transition occurs as new routines and new people are introduced. The best way to say goodbye to your child is inform them you are leaving, that you will come back, say goodbye, and promptly leave. We understand that the beginning of a child's transition to school can be difficult for parents and encourage phone calls from parents to check in during the day.

Children are transitioned to the next program based on age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. During the transition, current and future teachers will

meet and develop a plan to propose to families on a transition or “phase-in” timeline weeks leading up to the expected transition date.

Toys From Home

We request that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home into the center unless they are part of a special show-and-tell activity. This is to ensure that your child’s belongings do not become broken or lost.

SCHEDULES

Daily Schedule

Each class is expected to develop, write, and post a daily schedule. The schedule needs to provide a balance of active/quiet, teacher-directed/child-directed, and group/individual work time.

Outdoor time must be at least 30 minutes per day (weather permitting). Teachers need to ensure that adequate transitions take place between parts of the day. Giving verbal warnings is important. Teachers need to be consistent enough with the schedule to allow children to predict what comes next, but flexible enough to make adjustments if appropriate.

Supplies Needed

Please label all items brought from home with your child’s name (i.e., clothes, bottles, diapers, sheet and blanket, etc.) to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost. We are not responsible for lost or damaged items.

All student must haves:

- A family picture
- Spare clothing in a zip lock bag (to be left at school). Please provide:
 - Two (2) bottoms; two (2) shirts and one (1) pair of socks.
- Supply of diapers and/or pull ups daily (Tadpole 1 & 2)
- Supply of wipes (Tadpole 1 & 2)
- Lunch box clearly labeled with child’s name on the inside
- Lunch and/or feeding bottles
 - **Insulated container (thermos) for hot food items is required (Tadpole 2-Pre-K)**
 - Bottles must be labeled with child’s first and last name
 - Sippy cups must be labeled with child’s first and last name

- Cold freezer pack (State regulation for lunch box)
 - Please make sure the cold pack is in the lunch box each day
- Tissues (for runny noses)
- Child size bedding sheet or blanket for nap/quiet time
 - Comfort items are welcomed for napping/resting (no toys)
 - Bedding is sent home and cleaned weekly
- Refillable, spill proof water bottle or canteen (Preschool 3 & Pre-K)
- Up-to-date physical health form

DAILY ATTENDANCE

Arrival & Dismissal

An adult must accompany your child to the school building door each day. We ask that you sign your child in with a classroom teacher at the door, answering all health and safety protocol questions and providing any further information we need for the day.

If you have not made arrangements for an early drop off, please do not drop off your child earlier than your scheduled start time. Teachers will not be available until the start of the program. When picking up from the noon or 2pm dismissals, please wait outside the classroom doors until the dismissal time to allow for closure activities to finished as a class.

We will only dismiss a child to their parent/guardian, or to individuals listed on your enrollment form. We must have written permission from you to dismiss your child to anyone else, and we will ask all those picking children up for positive identification.

Per state regulations, all children in your vehicle must come with you when dropping off your student, and your vehicle must be turned off when unoccupied. For the safety of all we ask that speeds are kept under 5 miles per hour in our driveway and parking areas, and that all cars use the parking area as designated. Cars may not park in the driveway area or by the fence in front of the schools for any reason.

Absences/Late Arrival

Please communicate planned absences and extended absences by contacting the school (860) 381-5537 or email tgarnettainsley.fila@gmail.com. If your child is absent for more than two days due to illness, a written note from your child's physician is required upon return to school.

Late Pick Up/Fees

Late pick-up is not a normal program option and will only be considered an exceptional occurrence. FILA's policy is to charge a late fee of \$15 for every 15 minutes late beyond a 5-minute grace period. When a child is not picked up before closing time, at least two teachers or staff members, over the age of 18, will remain present with the child. After 15 minutes, the parents will be called and if parents are unable to be reached, we will then try to contact alternate individuals listed on your enrollment form. If after an hour parents or alternate contacts cannot be reached, the Ledyard Police Department will be contacted, and we will work with the local authorities to determine the best course of action at that time.

Obligation To Inform Law Enforcement

If we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child, to protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up the child or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Reoccurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

ILLNESS POLICY

Health

Children must be able to engage in the daily rhythm of the program to attend. Parent partnership with our center is necessary to comply with our policies. FILA's goal is to keep well children at school and parents at work. However, the health of all children is paramount and takes priority over the inconvenience to one family asked to remove their ill child.

Communicable Diseases

When an enrolled child or an employee of the center has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health. We will take care to notify the families about exposure so children can receive preventative treatments through email.

Physicals

Routine physicals are required according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. A copy of your child's physical should be received before your child begins the program. Families are responsible for assuring that their child's physicals are kept up-to-date, yearly, and that a copy of the results of the child's health assessment is given to the program.

Immunizations

Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. FILA and our nurse consultant check with the public health department or the American Academy of Pediatrics for updates of the recommended immunization schedule. Our state regulations regarding attendance of children who are not immunized due to religious or medical reasons are followed. Unimmunized children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness as directed by the state health department.

Allergies & Prevention

Families are expected to notify us regarding children's food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide us a letter detailed the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments and care. A list of the children's allergies will be posted. (They need to make sure when posting any medical/health information they are in accordance with HIPPA laws). We are trained to familiarize ourselves and consult the list to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

Medication Authorization (MAR)

Administration of any medication to children in our center requires us to comply with all requirements regarding the Administration of Medication described in the Connecticut State Statutes and Regulations. Parents/guardians requesting medication administration to their child shall provide the center with appropriate written authorization(s) and the medication before any medications are administered.

Medications must be in original container and labeled with the child's name, name of medication, directions for medication's administration, and the date of the prescription from the child's pediatrician. Our teachers will ensure that the medication is recorded along with the directions and proceed to dispense the medication as directed and will document every occurrence of the medication administration per state regulations.

To administer prescribed medication:

- Prescription medications require a note signed by the family and a written order from the child's physician. The medication must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and the name and phone number of the physician. All medications must be in the original container (you may request pharmacies to fill your prescription in two labeled bottles). Please specify the dosage and time(s) to be administered for each medication.
- Non-prescription medications require a note signed by the parent and physician.

Non-prescription topical ointments (e.g., diaper cream) require a note signed by the parent and physician, specifying frequency and dosage to be administered.

Additionally, medications marked as needed will not be dispensed. Parents will be required to fill out a medication form before medication will be administered. This form will be completed by the Director before medication can be administered. These slips will be kept in the child's file after completion. Medication will be kept in a secure container. Children must have been taking the medication for a minimum of 24 hours before it is administered at the school.

MONITORING OF DIABETES POLICY

Prior to attending the Center, the parent(s) of a child with diabetes mellitus will meet with the Director and Nurse Consultant to review the Center's Monitoring of Diabetes Policy and discuss how the individual needs of the child will be met while at the Center.

An individualized plan of care for the child will be developed with the child's parent(s) and health care provider and updated as necessary. The plan will include appropriate care of the child to prevent and respond to a medical or other emergency and will be signed by the parent(s) and staff responsible for the care of the child.

While the child is in attendance at the Center, a staff person who has been trained in an approved First Aid course and in the specific needs of the child with diabetes will be on site.

At the time of enrollment, the child's parent(s) will provide the necessary equipment and supplies to meet the child's individualized needs. The glucose testing supplies and (necessary equipment and supplies) will be labeled with the child's name and will remain inaccessible to other children when not in use.

A signed agreement from the child's parent(s) will be provided agreeing to check and maintain the child's equipment in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, restocks supplies, and removes material to be discarded from the facilities on a daily basis. All materials to be discarded will be kept locked in the Director's office until it is given to the child's parent(s) for disposal.

The Center will keep the following records as part of the child's medical record and will be updated annually or when there is any change in the information.

A current written order signed and dated by the child's physician, physician assistant or advanced practice registered nurse indicating:

- The child's name
- The diagnosis of diabetes mellitus
- The type of blood glucose monitoring test required
- The test schedule
- The target ranges for test results
- Specific action taken and carbohydrates to be given when results fall outside range

- Diet requirements and restrictions
- Any requirements for monitoring child's recreational activities
- Conditions requiring the immediate notification of the child's parents, emergency contact and physician

Authorization form signed by the child's parent(s) which includes the following information:

- The child's name
- The parents name
- The parents address
- The parents contact information – work, home and cell
- Two adult emergency contacts – including names, addresses and telephone numbers
- The name of staff designated to administer finger stick blood glucose test and provide care to child during testing
- Additional comments relative to the care of child, as needed
- The signature of parents
- The date the authorization is signed
- The name, address, and telephone number of the child's physicians

The Center will notify the child's parent(s) daily in writing via email of the results of all blood glucose tests and any action taken based on the test results. Incidents and emergencies will be reported to the child's parent(s) and the child's physician. Blood glucose testing will be conducted away from the other children in the classroom respecting the child's privacy and safety needs.

ILLNESS & PREVENTION

Hand Washing

Hand washing is the #1 prevention practice in place at FILA to support health and wellness. Teaching children healthy hygiene practices help to minimize the spread of illness.

Children will wash hands throughout the day as needed. Critical time for hand washing is the following:

- Upon entering the classroom
- Before and after mealtime
- Before and after toileting and diaper changing
- After each transition activity

Illness Policy

We ask that parents assess their child's health and wellness based on the child's behavior as a first indicator of ill health before arriving at the school. Children may not come to school if they are not well. If upon arrival teachers identify that the child is not well enough to attend school, the child will be sent home with the parent.

If a child or anyone in their household is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 they must remain out of school and follow all guidelines in regard to testing and tracing. Please report any test results to us at the school. FILA will follow all Health Department recommendations regarding closure and quarantining related to any infectious disease. All families are notified of any contact concerns without identifying information.

If the child becomes ill while at school, parents will be notified and asked to come pick up the child as soon as possible (within the hour). A teacher will remain with your child in a separate space from other children. You will be called and asked to pick up your child if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms.

Below is a list of common symptoms. This list is not all-inclusive, but any communicable illness will be assumed.

- Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities
- Illness that results in greater need for care than we can provide
- Fever (above 100.1)
- Diarrhea – 2 loose stools during the day, stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet.
- Conjunctivitis: Commonly termed Pink Eye
- Vomiting – during a 24-hour span
- Lice: The child must have a full treatment and be louse and nit free to be able to attend school. Please notify us of any instance of lice so we can notify, with confidentiality, all families for monitoring.
- Mouth sores caused by drooling
- Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease

Unless your child's physician signs a note stating the child's condition is not contagious your child and the involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage, your child may return to school.

Otherwise, children who have been ill may return when:

- Symptom free for 24-48 hours depending on the condition.
- They have been treated at home with antibiotics for 24 hours
- They are able to participate comfortably in usual activities.

- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (unrelated to teething).

If a child has a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required.

**The parent must provide a signed and dated pediatric release within 48 hours, stamped by a medical office that implicitly states that the child was examined by a physician and poses no risk of contagion to the other children and adults and is well enough to attend school.

FOOD & NUTRITION

Foods Brought from Home

Food brought from home is permitted under the following conditions:

- Baked goods from home are not permitted to share with other children.
- Foods should be labeled with the child's name, date, and type of food.
- Children will not be allowed to share food provided by the child's family.

Prepared Food

Food prepared for or at the center will be properly planned, prepared and portioned according to the Child and Adult Care Food Program and the state requirements for food service (<http://www.uconnruddcenter.org/cacfp>).

Lunch & Snacks

FILA will provide a nutritious morning (approx. 9:30 – 10:30 am) and afternoon (approx. 2:30 – 3:30 pm) snack. A monthly menu of snacks will be posted on the refrigerator. Tadpole 1 children bring their snacks from home. You are welcome to pack a different snack if you have any allergy concerns related to the listed snack for any given day.

FILA is not a peanut free environment. Food brought from home for breakfast or lunch will not be shared between children, and uneaten food will be placed back in the child's lunch box when possible to allow parents to monitor how much their child is eating at school.

It is a state regulation for families provide an ice pack with your child's lunch daily to keep items fresh until lunch time. Children enrolled in Tadpole 2, Froglets and Frogs must be sent with food that is ready to eat. A thermos is a great way to send a warm meal from lunch time. Tadpole 1 students are the only group that may have food warmed prior to serving for lunch.

Toddler children are encouraged to self-feed to the extent that they have the skills. Children are encouraged, but not forced to eat a variety of foods. Round, firm foods that pose a choking hazard

for children less than 3 years of age are not permitted. These foods include hot dogs, whole grapes, peanuts, popcorn, thickly spread peanut butter and hard candy.

Please refrain from sending candy in with your child's lunch.

SAFETY

Respectful Behavior

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. Teachers and staff will not utilize any punishment procedures, including abusive, neglectful, humiliating, harmful, or corporal punishment, under any circumstances.

In return, we expect the same from all of our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your children from our care.

Clothing

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including painting, outdoor play, sand, weather, and other sensory activities. Our playground is used as an extension of the center, and daily programs are conducted outside whenever weather permits.

One particular aspect of concern is the risk associated with children's clothing that may become entangled with climbing or sliding equipment that could lead to choking or other serious harm. All drawstrings from children's clothes should be removed as a precaution.

Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for center play and make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities.

Communal Water-Play

Communal, unsupervised water play is prohibited. Supervised children are permitted to engage in water-play. Precautions are taken to ensure that communal water-play does not spread communicable infectious disease.

Injuries

Safety is a major concern in childcare and so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. First aid will be administered by a trained caregiver in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will

receive an incident report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit meeting the state regulations. In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, while we will try to contact you or an emergency contact.

Biting

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once. When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the biter to learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting. Notes will be written to the family of the child who was bitten and the biter's family. We will work together with the families of each to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change.

Prohibited Substances

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on the center's premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited. Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind altering or polluting substances is required to leave the premises immediately.

Child Custody

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation.

Mandated Reporting

The policy regarding the reporting of child abuse (see Connecticut General statute, Section 46b–120) and Reporting Requirements (see Connecticut General statute, Sections 17a-101, 17a-101a, 17a-101b, 17a-101c, and 17a-101d.)

The Department of Children and Families Hotline telephone number to call for reporting abuse or neglect is (1-800-842-2288.)

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation.

It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

EMERGENCY PROCUDURES

The procedures for responding to emergencies such as lost children, fires, pandemics and tornadoes is a Connecticut Child Care Licensing rule and regulation.

Facility Evacuation & Safety

Our school doors are automatically locked at all times. Enrolled families can knock on their child's classroom door, a teacher will identify the person through the peep hole before allowing access. All visitors will be asked to ring a doorbell at our main office entrance and access to the building will only be given once a teacher or staff member has identified the person and the reason for the visit. All doors are also equipped with bells that ring when a door is opened from the inside. In case of an emergency requiring evacuation (fire, weather hazard, or other facility problem), all children will be escorted by foot to Holdridge's greenhouse, where we will then contact all families. Our team practices shelter in place drills to move students to available spaces in our buildings in the event of danger outside.

Medical

In case of a medical emergency, a qualified staff member will attend to first aid as needed. Another staff member will notify the family of the child. Attempts will be made to consult with the child's physician/dentist. If neither is available, the program's medical consultants will be contacted. For extreme emergencies, 911 will be called.

An ambulance will take the child and a staff member to the nearest hospital. The child's emergency permission form will be brought with them. A staff member will notify the family or alternate pick-up person to meet the child at the emergency room. Additional staff will be called in if necessary to maintain required ratios.

In the event a child becomes ill while at the Center, parents will be notified and the child will be moved to a designated area where the child will be made comfortable. A staff person will remain with the child at all times.

Lost or Missing Child

In the unlikely event that a child becomes lost or separated from a group, all available staff will search for the child. If the child is not located within 5 minutes, the police will be notified.

Emergency Transportation

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called

for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

WEATHER POLICY

We encourage gross motor activity even when the temperature becomes colder. Parents should expect that their child's class will go outside every day, morning and afternoon, unless there is inclement weather or environmental danger. Any cancellations of outdoor activities shall be made by the administration as guided by local health officials.

Outdoor Protection

Children always have the opportunity to go into the shade when they are in the sun. When in the sun they wear sun protected clothing. To protect children's skin while in the sun, sunscreen must be applied prior to going outside. Each child must have his/her own container of sunscreen. Parents/guardians must complete, sign and submit a "Non-Prescription Topical Medication" form. The sunscreen container must be labeled with the child's name.

Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play

Outdoor play will not occur if the outside temperature during extreme weather advisory. Additionally, outdoor play will be cancelled if the air quality rating is poor.

COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

Please be sure to talk with your teachers or with Tinisha Garnett-Ainsley tgarnettainsley.fila@gmail.com or (203) 559-7075 if you have any comments, concerns or questions. We are here to serve your family, and want to work with you and partner with you to ensure that you and your child has an optimal foundational experience!

FAMILY HANDBOOK & INFORMED CONSENT

1. I have received and read a copy of the First Impressions Learning Academy Family Handbook. I understand the policies and procedures described within.
2. All policies, including the Discipline Policy and the most recent COVID Health and Safety protocols were explained and provided to me. I fully understand when my child can and cannot attend FILA during a pandemic. I now that I can discuss questions or concerns with a any outlined policy with the Director at any time.
3. I understand that health nd accident coverage for my child is my responsibility as a parent or guardian. I will not hold First Impressions Learning Academy, LLC, its owners/representatives, or staff liable for any injury or illness incurred by my child when care has been provided in good faith.
4. I understand that I am fully responsible for tuition regardless of my child’s reason for absence. I understand that this includes any interruptions to the programs available related to COVID-19 closures, quarantines, and staff shortages. I understand that this is necessary to support financial obligations including teacher compensation so that a program is available to return to.
5. I sign below to acknowledge that my consent given by enrolling my child at First Impressions Learning Academy is both informed of all potential risk and given voluntarily and in agreement with all outlined policies.

STUDENT NAME: _____

PARENT SIGNATURES:

_____ Date: _____

_____ Date: _____