

ZOOT ADVENTURE LEARNING ACADEMY

Parent Handbook

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WELCOME

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Welcome to Zoot Adventure Learning Academy (“ZALA,” “We,” or “Us”)!

We are thrilled to have you join us in creating a high quality academy. We believe quality care and education is a partnership between parents and providers. ZALA is passionate about offering an environment where families thrive. At ZALA, we provide reliable childcare at an affordable cost while implementing an innovative, creative curriculum. Through parent/child access during the work day, we encourage families to bond and promote a successful work/life balance.

ZALA is a play-based academy. Our approach allows children ample time to carry out their own ideas and enrich their knowledge through interesting and experiential ways. Our expert teachers intentionally guide children toward optimal development. We focus on building self-esteem, personal independence, and igniting life-long learners. At ZALA, your child will have the opportunity to explore and grow, create and discover, build genuine relationships with peers, and become a confident learner.

Thank you for becoming an active member of Zoot Adventure Learning Academy. Above all else, the safety and security of your child is our number one priority. These early childhood years are the cornerstone of your child’s foundation. We are honored to become a part of this journey and look forward to building a partnership with your family.

Sincerely,

Morgan Lindquist
Director

MISSION STATEMENT AND CORE VALUES

Igniting the future - one adventure at a time!

We provide high quality, reliable child care at an affordable cost while implementing an innovative, creative curriculum. Through parent/child access during the work day, we encourage families to bond and promote a healthy work/life balance.

Core Values

1. Safety – The safety and security of every child is our number one priority.
2. Accessibility – Care is affordable and physically accessible from Zoot Enterprises, Inc.
3. Integration – We support a healthy work/life balance.
4. Education – All programs focus on stimulating children to learn and grow.

GENERAL INFORMATION

ZALA is licensed by the State of Montana for children ages six weeks through six years old. As a licensed facility, we are committed to meeting and exceeding the standards set by the Department of Child Protection and Regulatory Services.

DAYS OF OPERATION AND HOURS

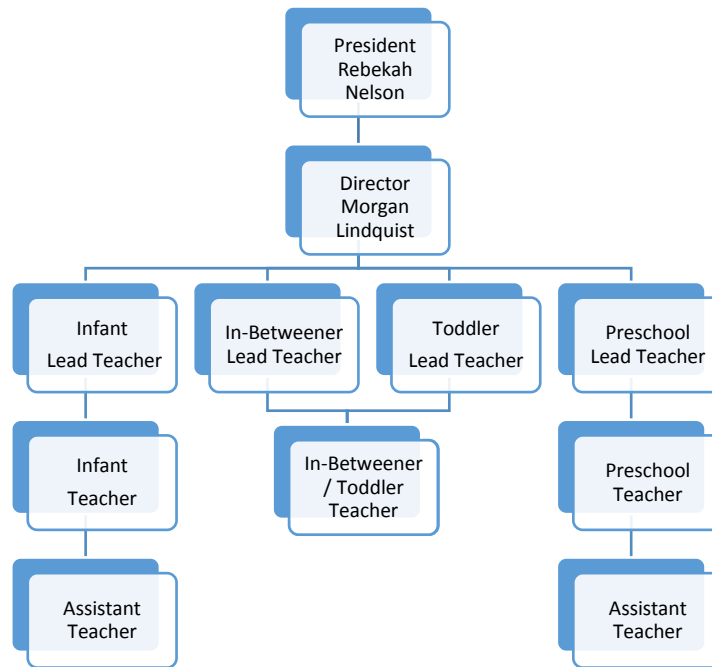
ZALA is open Monday through Friday: 7:30am – 5:30pm excluding holidays.

OBSERVED HOLIDAYS

ZALA will be open Monday through Friday with the exception of the following holidays: New Year's Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas. On Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, care may be

provided on an as-needed basis.

ORGANIZATION OF ZALA



ZALA STAFF ROLES

President – The President focuses on developing ZALA goals and initiatives that support ZALA’s vision and mission, while also providing transformational leadership to ZALA’s employees. The President focuses on overseeing project and product fulfillment and ensuring accurate, timely, and cost effective fulfillment of the development and production phases of ZALA’s services and facility.

Director –The Director is responsible for the daily operation of ZALA and for the daily care provided within the framework of appropriate child development principles and knowledge of family relationships. The Director assists the President in the goals and initiatives that support ZALA’s Vision and Mission. The Director ensures proper staffing, budgeting, and training. The

Director oversees the physical facilities, implements and manages curriculum, and guarantees compliance with all child care licensing requirements.

Early Childhood Lead Teachers – The Lead Teachers plan, implement, and assess curriculum and development. They work with the President and Director to implement ZALA’s mission, values, and goals. They provide direct care to the children who attend ZALA. Lead Teachers are responsible for the children in their designated classrooms. They communicate effectively with parents at all times to ensure high quality care. Lead Teachers also supervise teachers, assistants, or volunteers in their classroom.

Early Childhood Teachers – Teachers are responsible for the direct care and supervision of children who attend ZALA. They work with Lead Teachers to implement developmentally appropriate materials and care. Teachers also communicate effectively with parents at all times to ensure high quality care.

Assistant Teachers – Assistant teachers are responsible for supporting the highest quality child care throughout ZALA. They work with Teachers and Lead Teachers to ensure all needs of the facility and children are met. They interact regularly with the children and serve as positive role models throughout ZALA.

Substitute – Any person who is not regularly employed by ZALA, who takes the place of any approved staff person other than the President or Director, if the staff person is temporarily absent from their job.

VISION AND PHILOSOPHY

ZALA focuses on child development while giving children a safe, nurturing, and trusting environment to grow and explore. Our approach encourages self-reliance, confidence, problem-

solving, emotional well-being, and intellectual development. We believe in utilizing a child's surroundings to teach exploration, innovation, logic, and reasoning. Having indoor and outdoor spaces allows our children to interact with their natural environment. These interactions spark experiences that inspire curiosity and development.

ENROLLMENT AND ATTENDANCE

ELIGIBILITY TO ATTEND

ZALA is licensed to provide care for children ages six weeks through six years old.

Within this age range, a child's eligibility to attend ZALA, and ZALA's willingness to provide services, is determined by ZALA in its sole discretion. Relevant factors considered by ZALA in making admission decisions and decisions to provide services include, without limitation: whether ZALA has sufficient staffing for the appropriate age level of the child at any given time; whether the child's current stage of growth and development enables them to benefit from ZALA's program; whether the child has special needs or requires specialized care that ZALA cannot reasonably meet or provide; geographical location of the child's home and/or employer; and whether the child has behavioral or other issues that may be dangerous for the child or other children attending ZALA, in each case as determined by ZALA in its sole discretion. ZALA does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or any other class protected by applicable law. In addition to the foregoing considerations, admission and attendance priority is provided to parents who are employees of Zoot Enterprises, Inc. Preference may also be provided to other area employers who become members of ZALA's Employer Membership Program. The foregoing rules shall apply to both initial enrollments and to ongoing attendance at ZALA by any child, and shall not in any way limit the parents/guardian's or ZALA's respective rights to withdraw children or terminate services, as applicable, that are described below.

FEES

NUMBER OF DAYS PER WEEK	INFANTS Per Month	TODDLERS Per Month	PRESCHOOLERS Per Month
2	\$450	\$430	\$410
3	\$645	\$620	\$590
4 - 5	\$995	\$950	\$900
DAILY DROP IN	\$58/Day	\$57/Day	\$56/Day
HALF DAY*	\$35/Day	\$34/Day	\$33/Day

*Morning Half Day = 7:30am – 12:30pm

*Afternoon Half Day = 12:30pm – 5:30pm

ZALA is a for-profit academy. Our monthly tuition is based on a yearly tuition rate of 50 weeks, excluding two weeks for vacation and illness. A non-refundable registration fee of \$75.00 is payable upon initial enrollment and a subsequent fee of \$25.00 is due annually each September. With families enrolling more than one child, the enrollment fee is an additional \$25.00 per additional child for registration, and an additional \$10.00 per additional child for the annual fee. Once enrolled, tuition is due in advance. A monthly invoice will be emailed at the beginning of each month. Payment can be made by clicking on a link in the invoice. In the unlikely instance an invoice is not received, the set monthly tuition amount is still due. Any payment received after the 10th of each month will result in a late fee of \$10.00. Accounts must be kept current. Accounts more than one month in arrears may result in immediate de-enrollment.

There is no refund for days missed due to illness or other reasons. Each child receives two times their scheduled attendance for vacation or illness credit per year. This credit has already been figured into the monthly tuition.

Example: 5days/wk. schedule = 10 days per year; 3 days/wk. schedule = 6 days per year.

If your child will be gone for an extended period and you are unable to pay the tuition required to reserve his/her space, you may un-enroll your child. We will put your child's name on a waiting list for re-enrollment, but cannot guarantee a space at the end of the absence.

Accepted methods of payment include personal check, credit/debit card, bank ACH, or money order. Checks or money orders should be made payable to Zoot Adventure Learning Academy, LLC. Cash payments are not accepted. A fee of \$35 will be charged for any returned checks.

Additional transaction fees will apply for the following payment methods and will be shown on your invoice as a handling fee:

Credit/Debit Card 3.5% + \$0.30

Bank ACH \$1.00

Additional fees apply as follows:

Brightwheel Access - \$2.50 per child monthly

Please choose method of payment for invoices:

_____ Credit/Debit Card

_____ Bank ACH

_____ Check

INITIAL ENROLLMENT AND CHANGES IN ENROLLMENT

There are several forms that make up ZALA's enrollment packet. This packet may be obtained from the Director to initiate the enrollment process. The packet must be completed, reviewed, and in ZALA's possession before ZALA may assume the responsibility of caring for your child. This is to ensure your child receives the best care and ZALA satisfies the record keeping requirements of state licensing guidelines. All enrollment forms will be reviewed at least annually. ZALA may at any time, in its sole discretion, amend or add any enrollment forms. If ZALA amends or adds forms, we will provide you with a copy of such updated forms, and, if

applicable, you agree to complete and return updated/signed copies within the time period required by ZALA. If there are subsequent changes to any information you have submitted in the enrollment packet or any other form provided to ZALA, please notify the Director immediately to update your records. The types of information changes that must be identified to ZALA include, without limitation, the following:

- Address, phone numbers, and/or e-mail address
- Parent/Guardian employment
- Health/Immunizations updates, or;
- Other pertinent information related to your child
- Authorized escorts

You acknowledge and agree that ZALA is entitled to rely on the completeness and correctness of any information you have provided to ZALA.

If you have questions regarding the completion of any forms, please ask the Director.

Requests for schedule changes require two full weeks prior written notice for any change. This change must be approved by ZALA's Director and will be dependent upon availability of space.

WITHDRAWAL, TERMINATION AND RE-ENROLLMENT

Parent/Guardian's Right to Withdraw

The first 30 days of enrollment is regarded as a trial period (the "**Trial Period**"). Within the Trial Period, parents/guardians may withdraw their children from ZALA immediately by providing written notice to ZALA. [Any fees owed with respect to the Trial Period shall be prorated based on the actual number of days that services were provided.] Following the Trial Period, Parents/guardians may withdraw their child from ZALA by providing ZALA with at

least 30 days prior written notice (the “Notice Period”). Any such withdrawal will become effective on the last day of the calendar month in which the Notice Period ends. There will be no proration of fees except during the Trial Period.

ZALA’s Right to Terminate Services

During the Trial Period, ZALA may terminate services immediately for any reason by providing written notice to a parent/guardian. [Any fees owed with respect to the Trial Period shall be prorated based on the actual number of days that services were provided.] Following the Trial Period, except as otherwise provided in the Zoot Adventure Learning Academy Tuition Agreement or in any other enrollment forms, ZALA may terminate any or all services provided to the Parent/Guardian at any time in its sole discretion by providing the parent/guardian with at least 30 days prior written notice. There will be no proration of fees except during the Trial Period.

Re-enrollment

If at any given time a parent/guardian would like to re-enroll a child, they must follow the same enrollment process as a new family, as described above.

CHILDREN ENROLLED PART-TIME

If your child attends ZALA for three or fewer days per week, they are considered part-time. Part-time attendance is only granted when space allows and is at the discretion of ZALA.

WAITLIST

If the classroom appropriate for your child’s age is full due to state-mandated ratios, or for other reasons determined by ZALA in its sole discretion, such as staffing issues, your child

may be temporarily put on a waitlist. Being on the waitlist does not guaranty future enrollment.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

It is our intent to maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation and to provide you with a workable means of presenting problems without fear or hesitation of obtaining a prompt and fair hearing. You have the opportunity to present your concerns, questions, and complaints. As well as appeal decisions through this procedure:

1. Discuss the matter with the appropriate teacher within one week. Usually the concern can be met through an informal conference.
2. If resolution cannot be obtained, the parent and teacher are to schedule a formal conference with the teacher's direct supervisor or the Director.
3. If the grievance is pursued, a written grievance is to be directed through appropriate administrative lines. Ultimate decisions will be the responsibility of the ZALA President.

ZALA-WIDE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CLOSINGS

Emergencies due to weather or other unforeseen events may require ZALA to close. When Bozeman Public Schools, State of Montana and/or local emergency management officials advise closure, ZALA will close. Examples of these closings may include: communicated threats, weather emergencies, or infectious and communicable diseases. The decision to close ZALA will be made by the President and Director. In the event an emergency closing is necessary, parents or individuals designated as emergency contacts will be called and asked to pick up children immediately.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION

The objective of this plan is to reduce the possibility of harm to the children, employees, and visitors to ZALA in the event of an emergency. Evacuations route maps are posted indicating the following:

- a. Locations of the assembly area
- b. Fire Alarm Manual Pull stations
- c. Fire detection and suppression devices, such as: smoke detectors, heat detectors, sprinkler heads, sprinkler control valve

Care must be taken to ensure all occupants are aware of the following basic procedures:

1. Upon direction/instruction of the alarm or Director or trusted designee, immediately evacuate the building. The Director or emergency personnel will identify which assembly area/safe haven to proceed to. Immediately proceed to the chosen assembly area and take

attendance once there. Each classroom will take an emergency bag with a roll sheet, emergency information, and medications. Upon reaching the assembly area, the Director, in consultation with the Emergency Personnel will determine if parents should be asked to pick up children.

- a. The decision to have parents pick up their children will be made based on expected time out of ZALA or the nature of the emergency. The Director will notify parents. In case of emergencies that do not warrant evacuation outside of the building (natural disasters [tornadoes, for example], chemical spills, bombings, etc.), proceed to designated shelter in place.
2. The Director will assign a staff member/Safety Coordinator to inspect ZALA each morning to ensure the following:
 - a. All exit doors are unlocked and accessible
 - b. All exit lights are working properly
 - c. All corridors and doors leading to exits are clear
 - d. There are no items hanging from sprinkler heads or fire alarm devices
 - e. Fire alarm devices, extinguishers, and sprinkler heads are not obstructed
 - f. All evacuation maps are in place and current

All faculty members will be trained on fire protection and evacuation practices.

1. Fire drills will be conducted eight times a year. The drill will be recorded on the posted Department of Public Health and Human Services Fire Safety Record.
2. In case of emergency or drill, all personnel should leave the building in an orderly manner - Walk, Don't Run. Lead Teachers should search their rooms and close all doors before leaving. Additionally, the Director or designee will search all areas within ZALA and

ensure all occupants have been safely evacuated. Teachers will refuse assistance from anyone not previously identified as a support person. This does not include Federal Protective Service Police or emergency personnel.

3. Physically challenged children will be provided assistance to help exit the building. Infants will be evacuated in designated evacuation cribs. Evacuation supplies (extra blankets) are located under each evacuation crib.
4. At the assembly area, names of any missing children or missing personnel must be given to Director.
5. Parents will not be allowed to remove their child from the custody of ZALA during the evacuation. Once all children are accounted for at the safe haven, parents may be allowed to sign out their children.

Stocking First Aid Supplies (Responsibility of Director)

- Items are checked on a monthly basis.
- Each classroom (infant/toddler/preschool) has an emergency backpack with information binder, First Aid Kit, and emergency supplies.
- List of Zoot kitchens with additional First Aid Supplies:
 - i. Apollo/ZALA
 - ii. Seminar Area
 - iii. Help Desk
 - iv. Downstairs by Bridger
 - v. Downstairs by Dave
 - vi. Downstairs by Vanguard

TRANSPORTATION

The safety of enrolled children is our top priority. Prior to providing transportation, a consent form will be filled out for each child and signed by the parent/guardians. If transportation is provided by ZALA, proper restraint systems and the correct use of those systems will be ensured at all times. Children will be transported in a seat belt, car seat, or booster seat according to current Montana regulations. Parents/guardians will be required to supply a compliant booster or car seat as needed for their child. The number of passengers in the vehicle will not exceed the manufacturer's stated capacity for the vehicle. Children will never be left unattended in a vehicle, even for brief periods. All children will be accompanied by an adult to and from the vehicle to ensure safety. All children will be accounted for before leaving the facility and again before returning. Children with special needs will have their transportation plans addressed in their special care plan. A staff member who is familiar with the child's special needs will accompany the child during the transportation. All travel routes will be planned in advance. Drivers will be legally-licensed and shall not be under the influence of any chemical substance that may alter their ability to drive safely. They must meet staff qualifications including a criminal history and motor vehicle check. The driver must have evidence of a safe driving record for the past five years. They will not be permitted to use any electronic handheld device or play loud music. Prior to any transportation, parents/guardians will be reminded of these policies.

HOME BASE POLICIES

BRIGHTWHEEL

To ensure the safety of your child, we ask you digitally sign your child in and out each day. ZALA uses Brightwheel software for attendance, daily reports, and signing in and out. Brightwheel is a free app that can be used on any device and offers many features. Brightwheel takes data privacy and security very seriously. Their engineers have worked hard to protect and encrypt your personal information, which helps keep it secure. They do not sell personal information to any third parties and will only use your information in accordance with their privacy policy. In terms of access, parents can only see the information for their own child in their personalized feed, and cannot see items that are marked as “Staff Only”; guardian's access is even more limited, as they cannot edit student profiles, view or make payments, or add new users. This is much more secure than general blogs or social media groups that are often used in early education. For staff, general staff members can only access rooms to which they are assigned. All your data - whether for ZALA or family - is secure with brightwheel. Please let us know if you have further questions!

COMINGS AND GOINGS

When signing your child in each morning, walk your child to the designated classroom or area. Make verbal contact with a teacher so we know your child has arrived. We cannot be responsible for a child that we do not know has arrived.

Separation anxiety is not unusual for children, especially in their first weeks of attendance. We work hard to reduce this anxiety and ask for your help and patience in the

process. Sneaking away or slipping out increases anxiety. Prepare your child for departure, tell them it is time for you to go to work, and do not prolong the process. If your child is upset when you leave, please know children usually calm down before a parent reaches their office. Our teachers are there to help and will encourage an activity to settle the child.

Some families find it beneficial to gradually phase their child into ZALA. If you are interested in this approach, please speak with your Director to determine a schedule.

When picking up your child each day, please check their cubby or mailbox for messages, art work, or other take-home items.

AUTHORIZED ESCORTS

Parents and guardians may authorize other individuals to drop off or pick up their child. A child will only be released to individuals listed on the authorization form kept in the child's file. Parents and guardians are responsible for informing ZALA of the days alternative individuals will drop off or pick up their child. This is for the safety of your child and in alignment with child care regulations.

VISITORS TO ZALA

A ZALA staff member will greet visitors in the lobby. Prior to entering ZALA, visitors must be issued a guest badge and escorted at all times by a ZALA employee. For authorized escorts picking up or dropping off a child, who do not have a Zoot employee badge, they may wait in the lobby without being issued a visitor badge. A ZALA employee will guide the child to the lobby to meet the authorized escort or greet the child in the lobby for arrival.

CHILDREN’S DIAPERS AND CLOTHING

Parents/guardians are responsible for providing diapers and diaper cream for their child. ZALA provides Kirkland Baby Wipes for all enrolled children. If the parent/guardian would like different wipes used, it is their responsibility to provide, label, and maintain stock. Each child has a clearly labeled diaper bin in their changing area where their supplies are stored. It is the parent/guardians’ responsibility to check these bins periodically to see if or when their child needs more diapers or cream. ZALA staff will do their best to remind families when they are running low. ZALA stocks disposable diapers that may be used in emergency situations if your child is out of supply. Diapers are changed every two to three hours or when needed. Bowel movements are changed immediately to prevent discomfort.

We believe outdoor play is vital to children’s development. All children go outside every day (weather permitting). Please send labeled clothing appropriate for the weather. Rain coats are recommended and on winter days, we require you send your child with snow pants, boots, hats, gloves, and layers of warm clothing. During the summer months, we will have water play. Rubber-soled shoes are best for outdoor activities. Sandals, crocs, and flip-flops hinder a child’s play and create safety hazards. Please do not ask that your child stay inside, we are not staffed for one-to-one care.

All children need at least one complete, labeled, change of clothing kept at ZALA. As the seasons change, please update your child’s change of clothes to reflect the weather.

BELONGINGS FROM HOME

If your child has a favorite security item, they are welcome to bring them to ZALA. Often children may want to bring in items related to the curriculum or from a vacation. We ask you

check with your child's lead teacher before bringing items to ZALA. Appropriate media and books enrich children's lives and may be brought in at any time. The following belongings are prohibited at ZALA:

- Toys
- Toy Weapons of Any Kind
- Money
- Gum/Candy
- Cosmetics
- Jewelry

**Please label ALL belongings brought to ZALA.*

BIRTHDAY PARTIES

Birthdays are milestones in our children's lives. We enjoy celebrating and encourage parents/guardians to communicate with Lead Teachers to coordinate on-site events. If you are planning a birthday party outside of ZALA, teachers may only aide in the distribution of invitations if all children in the classroom are invited.

NAPS

Children who attend ZALA for five hours or more are required to nap or rest. This will be decided at the time of enrollment based on the family routine and classroom schedule. Rest time begins after lunch and lasts 20 to 30 minutes. Children who rest are not required to sleep, but lie quietly out of respect for the children that do sleep. Infants are provided a crib and mattress that meet safety regulations. Older children are given a cot and may bring a blanket from home.

SAFE SLEEP POLICY

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the unexpected death of a seemingly healthy

baby for whom no cause of death can be determined based on an autopsy, an investigation of the place where the infant died, and a review of the infant's medical history.

We believe a safe sleep environment for infants helps lower the chances of an infant dying from SIDS and that parents and caregivers can work together to provide a safe sleep environment.

ZALA will implement the following safe sleep practices:

1. All child care staff are required to complete a Safe Sleep Training course prior to their first day and will receive specific training on ZALA's policy their first day of employment.
2. Infants will always be placed on their **backs to sleep**, unless there is a signed *Alternate Sleep Position Waiver*- Health Care Professional Recommendation in the infant's file. A waiver notice will be posted at the infant's crib. ZALA does not accept *Alternate Sleep Position Waiver* – Parent Request. Waivers will be retained in the children's record as long as they are enrolled.
3. When babies can easily turn over from the back to the stomach, they will be placed to sleep on their backs and then allowed to adopt the sleep position they prefer. This is in accordance with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommendations.

Teachers can further discuss with parents how to address circumstances when the baby turns onto their stomach or side.
4. Sleeping infants will be visually checked daily, every 10-15 minutes, by assigned staff.

The sleep information will be recorded on a Sleep Chart. The Sleep Chart will be kept on file for one month after the reporting month. We will be especially alert to monitoring a sleeping infant during the first weeks the infant is in child care. We will check the infant for:

- Normal skin color
 - Normal breathing by watching the rise and fall of the chest
 - His or her level of sleep
 - Signs of overheating: flushed skin color, increase in body temperature (touch the skin), and restlessness
5. Staff will reduce the risk of overheating by not over-dressing or over-wrapping the infants.
 6. All parents/guardians of infants cared for in the facility will receive a written copy of our Infant/Toddler Safe Sleep Policy before enrollment. Parents/guardians will review the policy with staff and sign a statement saying they received and reviewed the policy.
 7. The temperature in the room where the infant(s) sleep will be kept between 68-75°F and monitored by the thermometer kept in the infant sleeping room.
 8. To promote healthy development, awake infants will be given supervised “tummy time” for exercise and for play.

ZALA will additionally maintain the following for a safe sleep environment:

1. Infants' heads will not be covered with blankets or bedding. Infants' cribs will not be covered with blankets or bedding. We may use a sleep sack instead of a blanket.
2. No loose bedding, pillows, bumper pads, etc. will be used in cribs. We will tuck any infant blankets in at the foot of the crib and along the sides of the crib mattress.
3. Toys and stuffed animals will be removed from the crib when the infant is sleeping.
4. Pacifiers will be allowed in infants’ cribs while they sleep. When the pacifier falls out of the sleeping infant’s mouth, it will not be reinserted into the infant’s mouth. The pacifier is the only object we will allow in a crib.

5. A safety-approved crib with a firm mattress and tight fitting sheet will be used.
6. Each infant will sleep have his or her own crib. Only one infant will be in a crib at a time, unless we are evacuating infants in an emergency.
7. No smoking is permitted in the infant room or on the premises.

CHILDREN WITH CHALLENGES OR SPECIAL RIGHTS

Acceptance of children with special rights and any program accommodations will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

PROGRAMS

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

ZALA has adopted the Creative Curriculum. This supportive curriculum has embraced sound research and theory for nearly three decades. The Creative Curriculum believes young children learn best by doing and it emphasizes the role of the child, the teacher, the family, and the community. No one piece is more important than the other. This play-based curriculum is based on five fundamental principles:

1. Positive Interactions and Relationships
2. Social-Emotional Competence
3. Constructive Purposeful Play
4. Quality Learning Environments
5. Teacher-Family Partnerships

INFANT/TODDLER CURRICULUM

Designed with the very youngest learning in mind, The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Twos combines research with best practice. Our teachers use three volumes to implement developmentally appropriate practices and meaningful experiences. Using this curriculum, we focus on responsive care and experiences. Routines provide the opportunity to build positive relationships with children and promote trust. Too often, time spent diapering, toileting, feeding, and helping children fall asleep are missed opportunities for development and learning. Our infant and toddler teachers seize these moments and create genuine relationships with your children.

PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM

With three decades of research and implementation behind the 6th edition of the Creative Curriculum for Preschoolers, we are able to prepare our preschoolers for a lifetime of learning! In full alignment with the Montana Early Learning Standards, it focuses on four core domains; Emotional/Social, Physical, Communication, and Cognition. This curriculum uses hands-on, project-based investigations called, “studies.” The twelve studies are topics relevant to children’s everyday experiences and they tap into children’s natural curiosity in a learning environment that is fun and intentional. Our teachers use exploration and discovery as ways of learning and enable children to develop confidence, creativity, and critical thinking skills.

GUIDANCE AND SOCIALIZATION

(DISCIPLINE) POLICY

ZALA is a Conscious Discipline Academy. Conscious Discipline is an early child care program that integrates social-emotional learning and discipline. It is based on current brain research, child development information, and developmentally appropriate practices. This program empowers adults to consciously respond to daily conflict, transforming it into an opportunity to teach critical life skills to children. Conscious Discipline helps children achieve success by increasing safety, connection, and problem solving. It is proven to enhance the quality of student-teacher interactions and the social and emotional behavior of children. Our discipline policy advocates that behavior is governed by connectedness, and conflict is an opportunity to teach.

Our teachers encourage children to empathize with one another's feelings and see the results of their actions. We discourage inappropriate behavior. When additional support is needed to discourage inappropriate behavior, our teachers first apply the adult proximity rule. A teacher will actively sit with the child to create connectedness. If this does not halt the behavior, teachers will ask children to visit the **Safe Place**. This is an area where children can remove themselves from the group in order to become calm, regain composure and maintain control when upset, angry, or frustrated. We teach and help children use the Safe Place as a resource to change their internal state from upset to calm or as a way to stay above the fray. As a constant partnership with families, we keep parents informed of their child's behaviors and work together on an appropriate plan for positive behavior. Conscious Discipline is evidence-based, and was named a national model for character education. To learn more about this unique classroom management philosophy, talk to your child's lead teacher or visit ConsciousDiscipline.com.

ZALA MEALS

GENERAL INFORMATION

Zoot Enterprises' Cafeteria will provide breakfast and lunch for enrolled children. Meals are a healthy balance of fruit, vegetables, proteins, grains, and milk. Meals are no additional cost. We encourage and welcome parents/guardians to eat with their children when possible. Parents/guardians may choose to pack a lunch for their child if desired. ZALA will provide one afternoon snack per day. If an enrolled child has a food allergy, we will take all necessary precautions in creating a safe food environment for every child. Please speak with your Director and Lead Teacher regarding dietary restrictions prior to your child's first day and as soon as new allergies are identified.

FOOD FROM HOME

From infancy until a child can eat from ZALA'S menu, the parent must provide the necessary food for their child. The following examples can be given to your child's Lead Teacher during drop off:

- *Breastmilk/Infant Formula* – Provided daily, bottled, and labeled with the child's first and last name and the date. Parents/guardians must also provide a one-day's emergency supply of breastmilk/formula to keep at ZALA. ZALA may freeze breast milk for up to two weeks.
- *Baby & Toddler Food* – Provided daily, unopened, and labeled with the child's first and last name.

PARENTS IN THE PROGRAM

CHILDREN AND PARENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. All children receiving child care at ZALA have the following rights:
 - a) The right to be free from physical, mental, or verbal abuse.
 - b) The right not to be subjected to abusive language or abusive punishment: and
 - c) The right to be in the care of adults who shall meet their health, safety, and developmental needs.
2. Parents/guardians of ZALA Children have the following rights:
 - a) The right to have access to their children at all times the child is in care and access to the provider caring for their children during operating hours.
 - b) The right to receive this handbook containing written information on ZALA's policies and procedures; and how to file a complaint.
 - c) The right to file a complaint against a child care provider without any retribution against the parent, guardian, or child: and
 - d) The right to review and discuss with the provider any state reports and deficiencies revealed by such reports.

DAILY COMMUNICATION

ZALA believes in a partnership between the teachers and the parents/guardians. With this belief, daily communication is essential. For infants, parents/guardians will receive a daily report via Brightwheel sharing diapering, feeding, napping, as well as any other events that happened

while in care. For children age two and older, you will receive weekly notes detailing what the current curriculum is teaching so you can encourage learning experiences at home. Lessons, menus, and other information will be available on Brightwheel and ZALA's bulletin board. Please note, teachers cannot accept verbal messages from children. Please send a note or call ZALA at (406) 556-7439.

SCHEDULED CONFERENCES

ZALA reserves a month for formal parent teacher conferences. Parents/guardians will meet with their child's Lead Teacher confidentially. We ask both parents attend this meeting regardless of living situations so everyone is on the same page and no information gets lost in translation. This is an opportunity to discuss the progress each child has made, their development, and parental or teacher concerns. Ages and Stages Questionnaire results will be reviewed at this time and education plans will be assessed. This meeting will be documented and kept in your child's file. Our goal is to provide the best care for your child. The better the communication, the better child care service we can provide. While we offer these scheduled opportunities annually, we welcome the opportunity to meet with families anytime. Please speak with your child's Lead Teacher to schedule an additional conference.

Along with formal conferences, ZALA hosts an annual open house. This is a time to meet your children's teachers, see their classrooms, work, and meet other families enrolled at ZALA.

NEWSLETTER

ZALA emails a monthly newsletter. In this informative bulletin we share upcoming events, reminders, themes, letters from each class, recognized teachers and students, and general

information. Parents/guardians will be automatically subscribed to ZALA Newsletters after enrollment.

PETIQUETTE

ZALA is located within rented space inside Zoot Enterprises, Inc.'s headquarters. The ability to bring a pet to work is a unique part of Zoot's culture. Due to the safety of ZALA children, pets are not permitted inside ZALA's rented space, unless previously approved by state licensing, and the ZALA President or Director. ZALA children may encounter pets while transitioning through public spaces inside Zoot. While in the care of ZALA, children are prohibited from coming into contact with Zoot pets.

VOLUNTEERING OF TIME AND DONATIONS

Parents, guardians, grandparents etc., are encouraged to volunteer! Volunteer opportunities range from special events and festivals to daily classroom helpers. We require our volunteers to successfully complete a comprehensive background check. Please see your Director or Lead Teacher if you are interested in volunteering.

If you have items your child has outgrown or is no longer interested in, we are grateful for donations. Please discuss the items with your child's teacher before bringing them to ZALA.

SENSITIVE ISSUES

ZALA is an energized, busy academy. When speaking with your child, teachers, or other parents in ZALA, we ask you be aware of who may be listening. When addressing sensitive issues, please ask whomever you are talking with to find a confidential area before speaking.

Another caregiver may cover the teacher's class so these conversations may occur in the appropriate setting.

PARENTS' BEHAVIOR AT ZALA

We believe parents are a child's first teacher and most often their biggest role models. We ask our parents/guardians be aware of this when at ZALA. Your behavior and emotions towards our teachers and environment are noticed by all children. If parents/guardians remain positive and respectful while at ZALA, your children will mimic that behavior. We understand not all interactions can be positive, so we ask you find a private space for discussion when conflicts arise. Our staff is always happy to have these conversations in an appropriate area. We thank you in advance for your emotional support of our academy!

DIVORCED OR SEPARATED PARENTS

At ZALA, our responsibility is to support children through all circumstances. If you and your partner are divorced or experiencing a separation, please provide the necessary information to your child's teacher or Director. While ZALA employees will not be in the middle of divorces or separations, it is vital we are aware of changes in your child's home care. These changes may affect who picks up or drops off your child, who we call in case of emergencies, or who covers your child's tuition fees. Changes in a family structure most likely affect your child's social-emotional well-being. If aware, our teachers are better able to work with your child through this difficult time. All information will be handled with the highest level of confidentiality and respect. Our ultimate goal at ZALA is to help your child reach their fullest potential and we are committed to working with all family structures to accomplish this goal!

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

As mandatory reporters, child care providers **MUST** report any suspicion of abuse/neglect. The Director, or any staff member of ZALA who has reason to suspect that any child is or has been abused or neglected is required to personally report the matter promptly to the department child abuse hotline at 1 (866) 820 – 5437. The staff member shall make the report within 24 hours of receiving information concerning suspected child abuse or neglect.

HEALTH CARE AND EMERGENCIES

CHILDREN'S HEALTH RECORD

It is required that ZALA remains up-to-date on all records of health for children attending ZALA. During the enrollment process, parents/guardians will be asked to complete an intensive health history for their child. A health care provider will also be required to complete a pediatric health statement prior to the child's first day. In addition, all immunization records must be obtained and updated in alignment with further immunizations. These forms and regulations are for the safety of your children and we take our health records very seriously. When there are any changes to your child's health, please notify your child's teacher immediately.

SICK CHILDREN

A child who is displaying possible signs of illness must be picked up from ZALA as soon as possible (within one hour maximum). When children are sick, they will be separated from direct contact or activities with other children. Parents will be notified immediately. If parents cannot be contacted, staff will call emergency contacts. No child is allowed to be readmitted into ZALA until the reason for the illness is known and until the child has been without a fever of 100.5 degrees (without the aid of fever reducing medication) and free of vomiting, diarrhea, or any bacterial infection for 24 hours.

MEDICAL EXCLUSION FROM ZALA

When a child becomes ill while in our care, but does not require immediate medical attention, we must determine whether or not exclusion from group care is required. By exclusion,

we mean the parent/guardian must come get their child from ZALA. Most illnesses do not require exclusion. We base our decision on the policies outlined in two publications by the American Academy of Pediatrics: Caring for Our Children and Managing Infections Diseases in Child Care and Schools. We encourage all families to have a backup plan for child care in the event of short or long term exclusion. A child displaying any of these symptoms will be excluded:

- Appears to be severely ill.
- Has a fever of 100.5 degrees or higher and behavior changes or other signs and symptoms (sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea). An unexplained temperature above 100.5 degrees in a child younger than 4 months should be medically evaluated. Note: an infant younger than 2 months with a fever should get medical attention within one hour.
- Diarrhea – defined by more watery stools, decreased form of stool that is not associated with changes of diet, and increased frequency of passing stool that is not contained by the child’s ability to use the toilet, usually after 3 or more episodes– until the diarrhea resolves.
- Blood in the stools not explained by dietary change, medication, or hard stools.
- Vomiting more than 2 times in the previous 24 hours, unless the vomiting is determined to be caused by a non-communicable condition, and the child is not in danger of dehydration.
- Abdominal pain that continues for more than 2 hours or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs and symptoms.
- Mouth sores with drooling.

- Cough that is severe, rapid or difficult breathing, wheezing, cyanosis (blue color of skin and mucous membranes).
- Rash with fever or behavioral changes.
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye mucus drainage (signs of a bacterial infection), often with matted eyelids after sleep and eye pain, or redness of the eyelids or skin around the eye, until 24 hours after treatment has been started.
- Tuberculosis, until the child's physician or local health department states child is on appropriate treatment and can return.
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment has been started.
- Strep throat, or other streptococcal infection, until 24 hours after treatment has been started.
- Head lice or nits, until after the first treatment, and no live lice or visible eggs (nits) are present.
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment has been given.
- Chicken pox, until all lesions have dried or crusted (usually about six days).
- Pertussis, until five days of appropriate antibiotic treatment.
- Mumps, until nine days after onset of parotid gland swelling.
- Measles, until four days after onset of rash.
- Hepatitis A Virus, as directed by the local health department and pediatrician.
- Any child determined by the local health department to be contributing to the transmission of illness during an outbreak.

NOTIFICATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE

Immunization is a simple, safe, and effective way to protect individuals against harmful diseases before individuals come into contact with these diseases in the community.

Immunization not only protects individuals, but also others in the community, by reducing the spread of disease. Your child is required to have the appropriate immunizations for their age before entering child care. Please speak with your health care provider if you have questions regarding the required immunizations. If an infectious disease arises at ZALA we will respond to any symptoms in the following manner:

1. Isolate the child.
2. Ensure the child is comfortable and appropriately supervised by educators.
3. Contact the child's parents. If the parents or guardians cannot be contacted, the child's emergency contacts will be called.
4. Ensure all bedding, towels, and clothing which have been used by the child are disinfected. These items will be washed separately and if possible air dried in the sun.
5. Ensure all eating utensils and toys used by the child are disinfected.
6. Inform all ZALA families and employees of the presence of an infectious disease.
7. Ensure confidentiality of any personal health related information obtained by ZALA and employees in relation to any child or family.
8. Notify the State Health Department of an infectious disease within ZALA.

**If a child or employee has been unable to attend ZALA due to an infectious disease, the individual must provide a doctor's certificate, which specifically states the child/employee is able to return to ZALA.

MEDICATION POLICY

If your child requires **over the counter medication** (diaper rash cream, insect repellent, sunscreen, anti-itch cream, medicated leap cream, etc.) while at ZALA, a *Non-Ingestible Over The Counter (OTC) Medication Authorization Form* must be completed annually and remain in your child's file. If your child is under two and requires OTC medication, written instructions for dosing must be provided by a health care professional.

If your child requires **prescription medication** while at ZALA, a *Medication Authorization Form* must be completed. A separate authorization form is required for each medication and each episode of illness. Each form must remain in your child's file. Please note if your child requires prescription medication, ZALA will not administer the first dose. The first dose must be administered by the parents or guardians at home and the child must be kept home for a minimum of two hours after the first dose. Please speak with your child's Lead Teacher or Director if you have any further questions regarding our medication policy.

EMERGENCY CARE PROCEDURES

In the event a child needs transportation to Bozeman Health Deaconess Hospital, the following procedures will be applied:

1. The Teacher/Director will immediately call 911 and be on the phone until help arrives.
2. The Teacher/Director will contact the parents by phone immediately while another individual remains on the phone with emergency dispatchers. If parents cannot be reached, emergency contacts in the child's file will be called.
3. The Teacher/Director will take the child's file and accompany them in the ambulance.
4. The Teacher/Director will not leave the child until parents/guardians or emergency

contacts arrive at the hospital to be with the child.

PROTECTING YOUR CHILDREN FROM HARM

ZALA employees are responsible for notifying the child care licensing department of any environmental or facility hazard which affects the health, welfare, or safety of children in care. Our number one priority is to keep your children safe and protect them from harm. We take this very seriously and hold all individuals accountable.

THANK YOU

Thank you for your time and attention in reviewing our policies and procedures. We provide the highest quality care for every child enrolled at ZALA. Families are encouraged to communicate with us on a daily basis to ensure your needs are being met and exceeded. Thank you for entrusting us with your most prized possessions. We are honored to begin this journey with you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND AGREEMENT

By executing below, you acknowledge that you have read and understand this Parent Handbook and all other enrollment forms, policies and procedures provided to you, and you agree to abide by the terms, conditions, and rules set forth herein and therein. You also represent and warrant that all information provided in your enrollment forms or otherwise provided to ZALA is accurate and complete as of the date set forth below.

The terms, conditions, and rules set forth in this Parent Handbook are not exhaustive. Additional terms, conditions, and rules are set forth in the other enrollment documents and in other ZALA policies and procedures. ZALA may amend, restate, or replace this Parent Handbook, the enrollment forms, and all other ZALA policies and procedures in its sole discretion at any time.

ACKNOWLEDGED AND AGREED

Parent/Guardian Signature

Printed Name: _____

Dated: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature

Printed Name: _____

Dated: _____