



# Parent Handbook 2022-2023

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**SonShine Academy is a Ministry of  
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## SonShine Academy PARENT HANDBOOK

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## 1. Welcome to SonShine Preschool!

Thank you for choosing SonShine Christian Academy Preschool for your child. We realize that you have entrusted us with your most valuable treasure. Our entire staff is committed to promoting your child's physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual development in a Christ-centered environment where each child is guided in growth through age-appropriate activities.

This Parent Handbook was written with you in mind. Please read it and become familiar with all of the sections. If you have any questions, please feel free to call or email the Director at [sonshine@rivervalley naz.org](mailto:sonshine@rivervalley naz.org) or call 479-646-2671

Sonshine Academy is fully licensed through the Arkansas Department of Human Services division of Early Care and Education Childcare Licensing Unit.

## 2. Hours of Operation

### Standard Day

Standard preschool hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Children should arrive between 7:30 and 8:00 a.m. Classroom activities begin promptly at 8:15 a.m. Please give our office a courtesy call if you know you are going to be late or absent. Children may be picked up from 3:00 to 3:30 p.m. **Accounts may be assessed a late fee of \$1.00 per minute for pick-up times beyond 3:30 p.m.**

Note that the beginning of a school day can be an exciting but difficult period for children. To facilitate a smooth separation from parents, encourage your child to play and relax with the other children upon arrival. It is desirable that parents not linger at the classroom door or windows unnecessarily. Maintaining an efficient drop-off routine with your child will help everyone in the class remain positive and allows class to begin on time. Know that we will do everything possible to comfort and sooth your child if he or she experiences separation anxiety.

## 3. Payment Policy

All tuition fees are due by the 5th of each month and a \$20.00 late fee is assessed from accounts not current after the 10th of the month. SonShine charges a fee of \$25.00 for any returned checks. **Students will not be allowed to return to class for accounts that are delinquent past the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month. Once the account is in good standing the student will be allowed to return to class.** Your prompt payment each month is vital for the financial well being of our preschool operations.

At this time, SonShine is only able to accept checks or cash. All checks should be made payable to "SonShine Academy" and include the child's name on the memo line. A black tuition drop-off box is located at the SonShine check-in area.

## **2022-2023 Weekly Tution Rate**

Monday-Friday 7:30-5:30 = \$150.00

Mon./Wed./Fri. 7:30-5:30 = \$120.00

### **4. Registration Fee**

A non-refundable registration fee of \$150.00 is due at enrollment. In addition Sonshine families will pay a curriculum fee of \$100.00 per semester. Curriculum fee is due in August for fall semester and January for spring semester.

Each year, students must re-enroll into the program and the designated registration and curriculum fees must be paid.

These fees cover your child's curriculum materials, payment for all Sonshine staff CPR and First Aid certification, staff background and child maltreatment checks.

### **5. School Calendar and Closings**

Sonshine typically follows the Fort Smith Public Schools calendar (with a few exceptions). See the Sonshine school calendar for details. School closings include professional development days, holiday breaks and school closings due to inclement weather. Weather related closings will not be refunded and days will not be added at the end of the school year. Parents should tune in to local radio and/or television stations for weather-related school closing information. If Fort Smith Public Schools are closed for inclement weather, Sonshine will also be closed.

### **6. Daily Check-in and Check-out Procedures**

Each class has a sign-in sheet posted at the classroom door. Your child must be signed in and out upon arrival and departure. You will be asked to sign your name and time in the space provided along with any special instructions or notes your child's teacher will need for the day.

### **7. Authorized Child pick-up and Arrangements**

Because your child's safety is of the utmost importance to us, only adults listed on your child's authorized pick-up list may pick up your child, unless we receive a written note from you. All authorized individuals should be prepared to show picture ID. The Sonshine office must have written consent for any changes to your child's pick-up list. Parents may call or e-mail the office for immediate changes.

## 8. Learning Curriculum

SonShine learning curriculum meets and exceeds all state standards and provides a strong foundation for a child's early years, inspiring a love for learning. Children learn through play, interaction, and instruction. We encourage learning by providing an environment that promotes higher order thinking skills and creativity. See the SonShine Curriculum Handbook for further detail.

## 9. Educational Philosophy

At SonShine Academy we value...

- A Christ centered learning environment
- Teaching children to have a biblical world view
- Each child, their individual needs, and learning style
- Children's thoughts, feelings, and ideas
- Family involvement in their child's early educational experience
- A positive early education experience for each child

At SonShine Academy, we believe that children learn best...

- Through play
- Using authentic materials and through authentic learning experiences
- When they are actively engaged in the learning process
- By asking questions
- Experiencing the natural world
- Engaging in conversations with teachers and peers

At SonShine Academy, we will strive to...

- Teach your child to early know and love the Lord
- Provide a safe and secure environment where each child knows they are loved and cared for by God and our staff members
- Provide authentic learning experiences that promote higher order thinking skills and creativity
- Guide your children in growth through age-appropriate activities
- Meet each child at their level and provide learning experiences that will enhance their growth and development in all areas of their life
- Partner with parents and families of children in our care to provide the best possible experience for each child
- Build each child's confidence, self-esteem, academic curiosity, and belief in God's love for them

## 10. What Your Child Should Bring to SonShine

SonShine requests that parents supply their child with the following items:

1. Nutritious lunch. Please no beverages. Sonshine will provide milk, juice and water
2. Seasonal change of clothes, including socks and underwear
3. Crib-sized fitted sheet and blanket for naptime (cots are provided)
4. Sunscreen
5. Coat or jacket in cooler weather

Personal items should be stored in each child's cubby. It is important that everything brought from home be labeled with the child's first and last name.

Your child's teacher will communicate with you concerning the replacement of any of the required items or other items needed for your child.

Children are not to bring toys from home except for show-and-tell days. SonShine is not responsible for lost or broken toys.

## 11. Student Dress

SonShine requests that parents send your child in comfortable clothing. Dress appropriately for the weather and for going outside. Washable play clothes and tennis shoes are the most suitable for Preschoolers.

A complete change of clothes, including underwear and socks, are to be kept in your child's cubby. Please label a zip-lock bag containing these items and regularly check to make sure the clothes are appropriate for the season.

## 12. Hot Weather, Outdoor play and Sunscreen

a. In order to provide a safe outdoor experience in hot weather conditions, SonShine recommends parents apply SPF 15+ sunscreen prior to their children's arrival when weather requires. Parents are also asked to provide sunscreen that staff can put on children before going outside. If your child has a sunscreen allergy or sensitivity, please let your child's teacher know and provide sunscreen specific for your child to use.

b. Staff encourages children to play in shaded areas whenever possible and remind children to drink plenty of water as they can dehydrate quickly in hot weather.

c. The length of time spent outdoors will be appropriate to the weather conditions and at the discretion of the Director. If the temperature outside is 90 degrees or above, outdoor playtime should be limited to 15 minutes for children ages 3-5 years old.

d. Play during extreme temperatures will be held indoors in our gym.

e. Children will not play outside if the temperature is 32 degrees or lower.

### **13. Meals and Snacks**

- a. At this time SonShine does not provide meals.
- b. Lunches must be brought from home. Lunches should be of a nutritious and healthy manner. Please do not send beverages with children's lunch. SonShine will provide milk, juice or water with each lunch. A cold pack should be sent in the child's lunch box.
- c. All allergies should be listed on your child's registration form. Please discuss any food allergies and/or dietary restrictions with the SonShine office and your child's teacher.
- d. SonShine is a peanut/nut free environment.
- e. SonShine provides a nutritious snack each day for all children.

### **14. Open Door Policy**

SonShine maintains an Open Door Policy. Parents and family members are invited to visit their child's classroom at any time. We encourage families to participate in all SonShine activities. We welcome families to assist in the classroom with special projects, story time, etc. See your child's teachers for opportunities to get involved.

### **15. Classroom Parties and Special Events**

Birthdays, holidays and special events that occur during the school year are recognized in each child's classroom. If you wish to provide a "Birthday treat" you must schedule this at least one week prior to bringing it to class. Due to Health Department rules homemade treats are NOT permitted. Holiday and special events will have sign-up sheets prior to the event. Please remember that SonShine is a peanut/nut free environment. Other restrictions may apply according to each classroom.

### **16. Immunizations**

All children must have proper immunizations, according to age. A current immunization record for your child must be kept on file in the SonShine office. SonShine follows Arkansas requirements for immunizations. It is the parent's responsibility to provide verification of up- to-date immunizations in a timely manner as their child receives them. According to our licensing requirements, a child has ten days to be fully immunized following enrollment. After the 10<sup>th</sup> day, your child may not attend class until record of the immunizations is turned into the SonShine office. See the immunization schedule in Appendix A for a listing of required vaccinations.

## **17. Medication**

All medications, including over-the-counter medications, require written instructions and must be authorized by a parent or guardian. This form is available from the SonShine office and must be on file before medication will be given.

All prescription medications must be in the original container, have a prescription label attached to it with the name of the prescribing physician, your child's name, the date issued, the name and strength of the medication, the dosage amount, and the time(s) of day it is to be given.

Medications must not be expired and must be age-appropriate. If necessary, dosing instructions for prescription medications may be faxed from your physician's office.

## **18. Medical Care Plan**

Pertinent medical information about your child should be included on their enrollment form. If your child has a severe allergy or medical condition, a medical action plan from your doctor should be given to the SonShine office, along with any medication. A medication form should be filled out and placed with the medication. Staff members will be advised of your child's medical care plan in order to best serve your child. A confidential medical alert sheet will be in all SonShine classrooms. If your child requires an Epi-Pen, please bring one to the SonShine office so we will have it in the event of an emergency.

## **19. Child Assessment**

All SonShine children will be given two forms of assessment during the school year. The Ages and Stages assessment is done to identify special needs. The Student Observation Form is an assessment in support of learning. Assessment results will be shared with parents during conferences in October and February.

The Ages and Stages assessment is composed of 21 questionnaires designed to be completed by parents at any point between 1 month and 5 ½ years of age. These questionnaires can identify accurately infants or young children who are in need of further assessment to determine whether they are eligible for early intervention services.

The Student Observation Form is based on the Arkansas State Frameworks for Early Childhood Education. This assessment is designed to evaluate children's progress in the areas of development. The assessment is based on child observations and classroom performance.



## 20. Health Check and Illness Policy

A daily health check of each child is made on the child's arrival to school. This check is carried out in the presence of the parent(s) by the teacher, or teacher's assistant; it is a routine part of the greeting process. We can only accept well children into our care. If a child is not well enough to play outdoors or take part in gym time activities, he or she should be cared for at home. You will be notified if your child becomes ill at school. We will provide short-term care until your child can be picked up. On occasion, this examination may lead to a decision that a child is not well enough to attend the program.

The school is not licensed to care for sick children and neither the facilities, nor staff to care for them. Fever control medication should not be given to a child in order to attend school. If a child is found to have lice or to be ill, the child is sent home with the parent or brought to the office for the parent to be called. The child may be readmitted when the illness clears up.

Your child may not attend class if he or she has:

1. Sudden change in behavior, such as: Lethargy or lack of responsiveness, unexplained irritability or persistent crying, difficulty breathing, a quickly-spreading rash
2. Fever over 101 degrees/oral or 100/auxiliary (or equivalent method)
3. Diarrhea, defined as watery/runny stools, if frequency exceeds 2 or more stools above normal for that child, and is not related to a change in diet or medication
4. Blood or mucus in stools (unless caused by hard stools)
5. Vomiting illness (2 or more episodes of vomiting in the previous 24 hours)
6. Abdominal pain which lasts more than 2 hours
7. Mouth sores with drooling
8. Rash with fever or behavior change
9. Purulent conjunctivitis or "pink eye"- with white, yellow, or green eye discharge and red ("bloodshot") eyes
10. Pediculosis (head lice), until after the first treatment
11. Active tuberculosis, until a health care provider or health official states that the child is on appropriate therapy and can attend school
12. Impetigo, until treatment has been started
13. Strep throat, until 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has been started
14. Chicken pox, until all lesions have crusted (usually 6 days after the rash appears)

15. Rubella, until 6 days after onset of rash
16. Pertussis (whooping cough); until 5 days of antibiotic treatment
17. Mumps, until 5 days after onset of gland swelling
18. Measles, until 4 days after onset of rash
19. Hepatitis A, until 1 week after onset of illness or as directed by the health department
20. Covid 19, We will follow the current CDC guidelines for quarantine and mask procedures

Parents or guardians of all children shall be notified of contagious illness as soon as possible. If your child develops a communicable illness or infestation at home (such as chicken pox, conjunctivitis, pin worms, fifth's disease, or head lice), notify the SonShine office as soon as possible.

## **21. Head Lice Policy**

If a child enrolled at SonShine is found to have head lice, the parent will be required to remove the child immediately. When the infected child is found to be nit free, he/she may be allowed back into the classroom.

## **22. Accidents and Injury**

SonShine Academy staff monitors all children to reduce the risk of injury; however, accidents occur. If your child is involved in an accident, immediate attention and appropriate medical and emotional action will be taken to meet your child's needs. Parents will be notified of all injuries in writing. If the injury is moderate to serious, a parent will be notified by phone as well. Signed reports of the accident will be kept on file by the director.

## **23. Nap Policy**

DHS Minimum Licensing requires that there shall be an opportunity for a supervised rest period. This rest period should be at least one (1) hour, but shall not exceed two (2) hours. If children do not fall asleep, they shall be allowed to participate in a quiet activity either on their mats or in a supervised area.

Each child should bring a blanket for nap time. These will be sent home every Friday to be laundered.

## **24. Emergency Drills**

SonShine Academy will hold fire and tornado drills monthly, per DHS regulations.

## 25. Safety and Security

- All volunteers and visitors are required to sign in at the SonShine reception desk. The entrance to SonShine will remain locked except during the times of arrival, dismissal, and outside play time.
- All staff members must have completed and approved applications, background checks, and child maltreatment checks on file.
- SonShine is equipped with an entrance security camera that can be viewed by the Director at any time.

## 26. Standards of Conduct for Staff and Parents

We believe it is vital to your child that close communication exists between our teachers and parents. We will strive to treat each other with respect and courtesy, give encouragement and support, and show each child that he or she is our first priority. Parents will be allowed admittance to SonShine at any time during the school day and given immediate access to their children. You are invited to ask for a conference with the staff any time you feel it is necessary or desirable.

## 27. Behavior Guidance

SonShine Preschool believes that Behavior Guidance is not a punishment, but a way to help teach children appropriate ways to meet their needs and stop inappropriate behavior.

Behavior Guidance shall be individualized and consistent for each child, appropriate to the child's level of understanding, and directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.

The length of time a child is placed in time out shall not exceed one minute per year of the child's age. A child may be placed in a supervised area away from the group or situation. Brief separation from the group is acceptable when the child's behavior places others at risk of harm.

### Behavior Guidance techniques include:

1. Look for appropriate behavior and reinforce the child with praise and encouragement when they are behaving well.
2. Remind the child on a daily basis of the rules by using clear, positive statements regarding how they are expected to behave rather than what they are not supposed to do.
3. Attempt to ignore minor inappropriate behavior and concentrate on what the child is doing properly.
4. Use brief supervised separation from the group only when the child does not respond to a verbal command which instructs the child as to how he or she is supposed to behave.
5. When a misbehaving child begins to behave appropriately, encourage and praise small steps rather than waiting until the child has behaved for a long period of time.
6. Attend to the children who are behaving appropriately and other children will follow their example in order to obtain your attention.

## **20. CHILD MALTREATMENT, ABUSE, AND NEGLECT**

SonShine Preschool is a mandated reporter of suspected child abuse and/or neglect. Our staff will report anything we may suspect as being abuse under the child abuse laws. The staff will consult the Director and will be directed to the proper authorities. Arkansas law allows a DHS representative to interview a child without obtaining parental consent. If you have any questions or concerns about this, please ask the Director for more information. The child Abuse Hotline number is 1-800-482-5964

## **29. WITHDRAWAL POLICY**

It is our policy that a 2-week written notice is given for withdrawing a child. SonShine reserves the right to refuse service to any child and/or family member for any reason including those exhibiting unacceptable behavior.

## **30. Nondiscrimination Policy**

SonShine Academy admits students of any race, color, national origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school.

# Appendix A: Immunization Schedules

## Recommended Immunization Schedule for Persons Aged 0 Through 6 Years—United States • 2009

*For those who fall behind or start late, see the catch-up schedule*

Vaccine ▼	Age ►	Birth	1 month	2 months	4 months	6 months	12 months	15 months	18 months	19–23 months	2–3 years	4–6 years
Hepatitis B <sup>1</sup>		HepB	HepB		see footnote 1		HepB					
Rotavirus <sup>2</sup>				RV	RV	RV <sup>2</sup>						
Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis <sup>3</sup>				DTaP	DTaP	DTaP	see footnote 3	DTaP				DTaP
Haemophilus influenzae type b <sup>4</sup>				Hib	Hib	Hib <sup>4</sup>		Hib				
Pneumococcal <sup>6</sup>				PCV	PCV	PCV		PCV			PPSV	
Inactivated Poliovirus				IPV	IPV			IPV				IPV
Influenza <sup>5</sup>								Influenza (Yearly)				
Measles, Mumps, Rubella <sup>7</sup>								MMR		see footnote 7		MMR
Varicella <sup>8</sup>								Varicella		see footnote 8		Varicella
Hepatitis A <sup>9</sup>								HepA (2 doses)			HepA Series	
Meningococcal <sup>10</sup>											MCV	

 Range of recommended ages

 Certain high-risk groups

This schedule indicates the recommended ages for routine administration of currently licensed vaccines, as of December 1, 2008, for children aged 0 through 6 years. Any dose not administered at the recommended age should be administered at a subsequent visit, when indicated and feasible. Licensed combination vaccines may be used whenever any component of the combination is indicated and other components are not contraindicated and if approved by the Food and Drug Administration for that dose of

the series. Providers should consult the relevant Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices statement for detailed recommendations, including high-risk conditions: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/acip-list.htm>. Clinically significant adverse events that follow immunization should be reported to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). Guidance about how to obtain and complete a VAERS form is available at <http://www.vaers.hhs.gov> or by telephone, 800-822-7967.

## Catch-up Immunization Schedule for Persons Aged 4 Months Through 18 Years Who Start Late or Who Are More Than 1 Month Behind—United States • 2009

The table below provides catch-up schedules and minimum intervals between doses for children whose vaccinations have been delayed. A vaccine series does not need to be restarted, regardless of the time that has elapsed between doses. Use the section appropriate for the child's age.

CATCH-UP SCHEDULE FOR PERSONS AGED 4 MONTHS THROUGH 6 YEARS					
Vaccine	Minimum Age for Dose 1	Dose 1 to Dose 2	Dose 2 to Dose 3	Dose 3 to Dose 4	Dose 4 to Dose 5
Hepatitis B <sup>1</sup>	Birth	4 weeks	8 weeks (and at least 16 weeks after first dose)		
Rotavirus <sup>2</sup>	6 wks	4 weeks	4 weeks <sup>2</sup>		
Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis <sup>3</sup>	6 wks	4 weeks	4 weeks <sup>4</sup>	6 months	6 months <sup>3</sup>
Haemophilus influenzae type b <sup>4</sup>	6 wks	4 weeks if first dose administered at younger than 12 months of age 8 weeks (as final dose) if first dose administered at age 12–14 months No further doses needed if first dose administered at age 15 months or older	4 weeks <sup>4</sup> if current age is younger than 12 months 8 weeks (as final dose) <sup>4</sup> if current age is 12 months or older and second dose administered at younger than 15 months of age No further doses needed if previous dose administered at age 15 months or older	8 weeks (as final dose) This dose only necessary for children aged 12 months through 59 months who received 3 doses before age 12 months	
Pneumococcal <sup>5</sup>	6 wks	4 weeks if first dose administered at younger than 12 months of age 8 weeks (as final dose for healthy children) if first dose administered at age 12 months or older or current age 24 through 59 months No further doses needed for healthy children if first dose administered at age 24 months or older	4 weeks if current age is younger than 12 months 8 weeks (as final dose for healthy children) if current age is 12 months or older No further doses needed for healthy children if previous dose administered at age 24 months or older	8 weeks (as final dose) This dose only necessary for children aged 12 months through 59 months who received 3 doses before age 12 months or for high-risk children who received 3 doses at any age	
Inactivated Poliovirus <sup>6</sup>	6 wks	4 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks <sup>6</sup>	
Measles, Mumps, Rubella <sup>7</sup>	12 mos	4 weeks			
Varicella <sup>8</sup>	12 mos	3 months			
Hepatitis A <sup>9</sup>	12 mos	6 months			
CATCH-UP SCHEDULE FOR PERSONS AGED 7 THROUGH 18 YEARS					
Tetanus, Diphtheria/ Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis <sup>10</sup>	7 yrs <sup>10</sup>	4 weeks	4 weeks if first dose administered at younger than 12 months of age 6 months if first dose administered at age 12 months or older	6 months if first dose administered at younger than 12 months of age	
Human Papillomavirus <sup>11</sup>	9 yrs	Routine dosing intervals are recommended <sup>11</sup>			
Hepatitis A <sup>9</sup>	12 mos	6 months			
Hepatitis B <sup>1</sup>	Birth	4 weeks	8 weeks (and at least 16 weeks after first dose)		
Inactivated Poliovirus <sup>6</sup>	6 wks	4 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks <sup>6</sup>	
Measles, Mumps, Rubella <sup>7</sup>	12 mos	4 weeks			
Varicella <sup>8</sup>	12 mos	3 months if the person is younger than 13 years of age 4 weeks if the person is aged 13 years or older			

# SonShine Academy PARENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*Please sign and return to the SonShine Academy Office*

Child's (Children's) Name:

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I, \_\_\_\_\_, acknowledge that I have received and read the Son Shine Christian Academy's Parent Handbook. I agree to follow all procedures as stated within it.

Parent Signature:

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_