

Growing Acorns Parent's Day Out

Parent Handbook

Est. 2026

Oak Ridge Baptist Church
1451 Bethel Valley Rd.
Oak Ridge, TN 37830

Phone: 865-272-9290

Email: HeidiYoung@orbc4u.org

Table of Contents

- 1. Our Mission & Purpose**
 - 1.1 Mission Statement
 - 1.2 Philosophy and Goals
 - 1.3 Curriculum
 - 2. Program Overview**
 - 2.1 Hours of Operation
 - 2.2 Opening and Closings
 - 2.3 Inclement Weather Policy
 - 2.4 Classes and Age Groups
 - 2.5 Waiting List
 - 2.6 DHS Licensing Information
 - 2.7 Staff Qualifications and Background Checks
 - 3. Enrollment & Financial Policies**
 - 3.1 Registration Fee
 - 3.2 Annual Supplies Fee
 - 3.3 Mat Fee
 - 3.4 Monthly Tuition
 - 3.5 Payment Methods
 - 3.6 Financial Hardships
 - 3.7 Insufficient Funds Policy
 - 3.8 Withdrawal Policy
 - 4. Arrival, Dismissal & Security**
 - 4.1 Arrival and Drop-Off Procedure
 - 4.2 Pick-Up Procedures
 - 4.3 Late Pick-Up Policy
 - 4.4 Class Security
 - 4.5 Divorce and Separation Policy
 - 5. Health & Safety**
 - 5.1 Immunization and Health Records
 - 5.2 Absence and Illness Policy
 - 5.3 Return to School After Illness
 - 5.4 Medication Policy
 - 5.5 Emergency Procedures
 - 5.6 Abuse Reporting Policy
 - 6. Daily Care & Classroom Procedures**
 - 6.1 Diapers
 - 6.2 Potty Training
 - 6.3 Bathroom Breaks
 - 6.4 Rest Time
 - 6.5 Lunch and Snack
 - 6.6 What to Bring Each Day
 - 6.7 Student Attire
 - 6.8 Personal Items
 - 7. Behavior & Student Support**
 - 7.1 Behavior Policy
 - 7.2 Discipline Philosophy
 - 7.3 Biting Policy
 - 7.4 Parent Communication Regarding Behavior
 - 7.5 Termination of Care
 - 8. Communication & Community**
 - 8.1 Communication Policy
 - 8.2 Parent Involvement / Volunteer Policy
 - 8.3 Birthdays and Celebrations
 - 8.4 Photo and Video Policy
 - 8.5 Confidentiality Policy
 - 8.6 Grievance Policy
- Appendix A:** Communicable Disease List
- Appendix B:** Emergency Response Plans
- Appendix C:** Supply List
- Appendix D:** Donation List

Dear Parents,

Welcome to *Growing Acorns Parent's Day Out (PDO)* program! I am so honored that you have chosen to entrust us with your child. We understand that choosing a program for your little one is an important decision, and we do not take your decision lightly.

Here at *Growing Acorns PDO*, our desire is to provide a safe, nurturing, and engaging environment where children feel safe, valued, and encouraged to grow. Each day we strive to create fun and exciting experiences that support your child's development.

As Director, my goal is to build strong relationships with you and your family. Open communication and partnership are very important to us. We want you to feel confident and at peace knowing that your child is cared for while at our program.

I look forward to getting to know each of you and walking alongside your family. If you ever have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for allowing us to invest in your child's early years. It is our privilege to serve your family.

Heidi Young

Director of Growing Acorns PDO

1451 Bethel Valley Road

Oak Ridge, TN 37830

Office Phone: 865-272-9290

Heidiyoung@orbc4u.org

1. Our Heart & Vision

1.1 Mission Statement:

The mission of *Growing Acorns Parent's Day Out* is to provide a safe, nurturing, and Christ-centered environment where young children are loved, valued, and encouraged to grow spiritually, socially, emotionally, and academically. We partner with families to lay a strong foundation rooted in God's truth, love, and grace

"Train Up a Child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." - Proverbs 22:6

1.2 Philosophy:

We believe that every child is a gift from God, created in His image and worthy of love, respect, and care. Early childhood is a foundational season of growth, discovery, and spiritual foundation. Our philosophy is centered on nurturing the whole child through developmentally appropriate learning experiences, meaningful relationships, and Christ-like guidance.

We believe that children learn the best through:

- Play-Based Exploration
- Consistent Routines
- Encouragement and Positive Reinforcement
- Faith-based Teaching in Every Day Moments

We view *Growing Acorns PDO* as a ministry opportunity supporting families and reinforcing biblical values in a joyful, age-appropriate way.

Our Goals at *Growing Acorns PDO* are to:

- Provide a safe and secure environment where children feel loved and protected.
- Encourage spiritual growth through prayer, Bible Stories, songs, and Christ-centered Character development
- Foster social and emotional development through guided interaction and positive communication.
- Support early learning skills through play-based and hands-on activities
- Promote independence and confidence appropriate to each child's age.
- Partner with families through clear communication and mutual support.

1.3 Curriculum:

Growing Acorns PDO will use *Pathways for Preschool* from Bob Jones University Press as the foundation for our classroom learning. This curriculum provides age-

appropriate activities designed to introduce preschoolers to early academic skills in a fun and engaging way. Children ages 3–5 will practice letter recognition, colors, shapes, and numbers 1–10 through hands-on activities, songs, crafts, and guided play. Our goal is to create a positive learning environment where children can build confidence, develop social skills, and begin forming a strong foundation for future learning.

1.4 Bible Curriculum:

As a ministry of the church, *Growing Acorns PDO* will include a daily Bible time. Each week we will focus on a major Bible character and learn a simple biblical truth connected to that story. Children will also work on memorizing a short Bible verse throughout the week. Bible time may include storytelling, songs, discussion, prayer, and simple activities that help reinforce the lesson. Our desire is for children to grow in their understanding that God loves them and to begin building a strong biblical foundation at an early age.

2. About Our Program

2.1 Hours of Operation:

- Tuesday and Thursday 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

2.2. Calendar, Holidays, and Closures:

School Year Calendar: 2026-2027

- Open House: July 30, 2026
- First Day (First Semester): August 4, 2026
- Fall Break: October 5 - October 9, 2026
- Thanksgiving Break: November 23-27, 2026
- Christmas Break: December 21 - January 4, 2027
- Back To School (Second Semester) January 5, 2027
- Spring Break: March 5 - 12, 2027
- Growing Acorns Spring Program/Graduation: May 20th, 2027
- Last Day of School: May 27, 2027
- First Day of Summer Semester: June 1, 2027
- Last Day of Summer Semester: July 29, 2027

Opening and Closings

Accept as noted above Growing Acorns PDO follows the Anderson County School System calendar for holidays, scheduled breaks, and weather-related closures.

Closure information due to inclement weather will be communicated via email and social media

- If Anderson County Schools are closed: *Growing Acorns PDO* will be closed
- If Anderson County Schools operate on a one-hour delay: *Growing Acorns PDO* will begin at 10:00 a.m.
- If Anderson County Schools operate on two-hour delay: *Growing Acorns PDO* will begin at 11:00 a.m.

Dismissal will always remain between 2:45 p.m. - 3:00 p.m., even on delayed start days.

2.3 Classes and Age Groups:

	Classes	Student/Teacher Ratio	Max Student	Age Group
1.	Seedling	1:5	10	12-24 mo
2.	Sprouts	1:9	18	2-3 y/o
3.	Saplings	1:10	20	4-5 y/o

Transitioning Children - Moving children up to the next classroom usually occurs in August of each new school year.

While we will make every effort to maintain the student/teacher ratio they are not guaranteed.

2.4 Waiting List:

When enrollment is full, children may be placed on a waiting list. Placement will be offered as space becomes available and is determined by the date of registration.

2.5 DHS Licensing Information:

Growing Acorns PDO is not licensed through the Tennessee Department of Human Services (DHS), as licensure is not required for programs that operate fewer than 12 hours per week. However, we strive to closely follow DHS guidelines and best practices to ensure a safe and high-quality environment for all children.

2.6 Our Staff and Background Checks:

All staff at *Growing Acorns PDO* are certified in CPR and First Aid, and maintain their certifications throughout their employment. Each team member undergoes thorough background checks and a careful selection process prior to being hired

To ensure the highest quality of care, staff participate in monthly meetings and ongoing professional development opportunities. They also receive training in emergency procedures and participate in all required emergency drills at least twice a year.

We are committed to having a team who are skilled, caring, and fully prepared to nurture, guide, and love each child in our care.

3. Enrollment & Tuition Information

3.1 Registration Fee: \$50 per child/per year + \$250 First Month's Tuition

A \$50 registration fee is required per child, per year. This fee is non-refundable and secures your child's spot in our program, ensuring that we can plan for an appropriately sized class and provide a quality experience for every student. In addition, the first month's tuition is collected at the time of registration and is applied toward your child's initial month of attendance. Collecting both the registration fee and the first month's tuition in advance allows us to effectively prepare for each class, including staffing, supplies, and curriculum planning, so that every child can begin their experience ready to learn and thrive.

3.2 Supplies Fee: \$75 per child/per year

This fee is due once per school year (August 1st) and supports classroom materials and educational resources.

3.3 Cot Fee: \$15 per child/per year; *Applicable to Seedlings and Sprouts classes only.*

Each child will have their own personal cot for rest time. This helps us maintain a clean, sanitary, and consistent sleep space for your child. The fee covers the purchase, cleaning, upkeep, and replacement of cots as needed throughout the year.

3.4 Monthly Tuition: \$250 per child

Tuition is due on the first school day of each month. A grace period extends through the 10th of the month. Payments not received by the 10th will incur a \$25 late fee. *Full monthly tuition is due regardless of the number of days attended during that month.*

3.5 Payment Methods:

We use QuickBooks Online (QBO) to issue invoices and accept electronic payments. Accepted payment methods through QBO include ACH (bank transfer), credit card, PayPal, and Venmo.

We also accept cash or checks. Please make all checks payable to *Oak Ridge Baptist Church* and include your child's full name and "PDO" in the memo line (e.g., *John Smith – PDO*). Cash payments must be submitted in the exact amount.

Insufficient Funds: If a payment is returned due to insufficient funds, a \$35 fee—or the amount charged by our bank—will be applied. Future payments must then be made by cash, cashier’s check, or money order until the balance is cleared.

3.6 Financial Hardships:

In case of extraordinary financial hardship, the director may establish a written payment plan and determine a reasonable timeframe for payment. Families anticipating financial difficulty are encouraged to speak with the director before payments are missed. All financial discussions will remain strictly confidential.

3.8 Withdrawal Policy:

If you choose to withdraw your child before the end of the school year, we ask that you provide at least two weeks’ notice. If notice is not given, the family’s monthly tuition payment will be retained.

4. Arrival, Dismissal, and Security

4.1 Arrival and Drop Off Procedure:

Teachers will start to receive children at 8:55 a.m. each day. The time prior to 8:55 a.m. is reserved for classroom preparation. Doors will be unlocked promptly at 8:55 a.m., and children are expected to arrive no later than 9:05 a.m. If your child will be arriving late, please notify their teacher in advance. Parents must sign their child in each day before leaving school premises.

Please park in the designated parking lot and walk your child inside. For safety reasons, do not use the drop-off lane under the canopy.

After entering, please escort your child directly to their classroom and say goodbye at the classroom door. Parents are asked not to enter the classroom beyond the gate and to keep conversations brief. This allows teachers to focus fully on supervising the class and helps children transition smoothly into their day.

Drop Off Tips:

- Offer your child a hug and reassuring goodbye.
- Let them know you will return by 3:00 p.m.
- Depart promptly. Remaining in the classroom may prolong separation anxiety and disrupt the classroom routine. While some children may cry at drop-off, this is a normal developmental response. With consistency, children quickly learn that their parents always return.

Some children may require several weeks to adjust to the routine. With consistency and partnership between parents and teachers, most children adapt successfully. If you have questions or concerns, please contact your child's teacher or the director.

4.2 Pick-Up Procedures:

Doors will unlock at 2:45 p.m. Children will be ready for pick-up between 2:45 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. Please park and enter the building to pick up your child at the same classroom door used at drop-off.

If early pick-up is necessary, please notify the teacher at drop-off.

Parents or authorized individuals must present the child's security card and sign the child out at pick-up. For safety reasons, children must remain with their parent or guardian at all times from the classroom all the way out to their vehicle.

4.3 Late Pick-Up Policy:

Our program ends promptly at 3:00 PM. Families are allowed one late pick-up without penalty. Otherwise, If a child remains after 3:00 p.m., a late fee will be assessed and added to the following month's tuition. Late fees will be enforced to ensure staff members are able to leave on time. After three late pick-ups, enrollment may be reviewed, and the child/ren may be dismissed from the program.

4.4 Class Security

Each classroom maintains a daily sign-in and sign-out sheet. Families will receive two security cards labeled with their child's name. A security card must be presented at every pick-up.

If another authorized adult (such as a spouse or family member) will be picking up your child, they must present the assigned security card and sign the child out. Children will not be released to anyone without a security card. Our priority is your child's safety, and we appreciate your understanding of these procedures.

In the event of an emergency, the director may authorize release with verbal consent from a parent.

For the safety of our children and staff, all exterior doors remain locked throughout the school day. Entry into the building requires the director or staff member to physically open the door. We ask that families do not hold the doors open for others and allow a staff to grant access instead. These procedures are in place to ensure a secure and protected environment for everyone in our program. All visitors must check in at the office.

4.5 Family Circumstances:

Growing Acorns PDO cannot legally deny a parent access to their child without a court-issued legal document specifying such restrictions. Any legal documentation regarding custody or access must be provided directly to the director and will be kept on file.

Staff will follow the instructions online in the legal documentation and cannot act on verbal agreements or requests from parents that are not legally documented. Both parents with legal access are entitled to receive communications regarding their child, unless otherwise specified by the court. To ensure the safety and well-being of all children, only parents or authorized individuals listed on the child's enrollment form may pick up a child, and a valid photo ID must be presented. Staff members will remain neutral and will not become involved in parental disputes.

In the event of any conflict or uncertainty regarding custody or pick-up, the director will contact the appropriate parent or legal authority before releasing the child.

5. Health, Wellness, and Safety

At *Grown Acorns PDO*, we are committed to caring for the whole child in a safe and healthy environment. We recognize that illness is sometimes unavoidable, especially with young children. We ask families to partner with us in following the health guidelines below so that we can protect all students and staff and provide a consistent, safe learning space.

5.1 Absence and Illness Policy:

Regular attendance supports consistency and classroom routine. If your child will be absent due to illness, please notify the director.

To Protect all children and staff, please keep your child home if they are experiencing any of the following:

- Fever (100.0 F or higher)
- Sore throat with fever
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Rash of unknown origin
- Persistent or severe cough
- Thick green or yellow nasal discharge accompanied by other symptoms
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Head Lice

- Any communicable illness

If a child develops symptoms while at *Growing Acorns PDO*, parents will be contacted for immediate pick-up.

5.2 Return after Illness Guidelines:

Children must be fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication before returning.

Children who have been prescribed antibiotics may return after 24 hours of treatment unless otherwise directed by a physician.

Children experiencing vomiting or diarrhea must remain home and may return after 48 hours symptom-free.

During flu or COVID season, families are encouraged to use caution, as children may be contagious prior to showing symptoms.

If a child has seasonal allergies that mimic cold symptoms, a physician's note confirming the condition is not contagious may be required.

Growing Acorns PDO reserves the right to make final decisions regarding return to school in order to protect the health of all students and staff.

5.3 Communicable Disease Exclusions Guidelines:

Growing Acorns PDO works to maintain a healthy environment for all children and staff. If your child is diagnosed with a communicable disease, please notify the director immediately.

Children diagnosed with a contagious illness must remain home for the exclusion period recommended by current public health guidelines or their healthcare provider.

In general:

- Children may return once they are no longer contagious and are well enough to participate in normal classroom activities.
- Children prescribed antibiotics for a contagious illness may return after 24 hours of treatment unless otherwise directed by a physician.
- Certain illnesses may require physician clearance before returning.
- *Growing Acorns PDO* reserves the right to require documentation from a healthcare provider to ensure the safety of all students and staff.

Detailed communicable disease exclusion guidelines are provided in Appendix A.

5.4 Medications Policy:

All medications should be administered before or after school hours whenever possible. If medication must be given during the school day, a parent or guardian is required to return to the school to administer it. Staff members are not permitted to administer medication.

5.5 Medical Emergencies:

If a child or staff member requires immediate medical attention:

- Staff will administer appropriate first aid within the scope of their training.
- Emergency medical services (911) will be contacted if necessary.
- Parents or guardians will be notified as soon as possible.
- An incident report will be completed and provided to the parent or guardian.

5.6 Emergency Operations:

The safety and well-being of our children and staff is our highest priority. *Growing Acorns PDO* maintains established emergency procedures for a variety of situations. All students and staff will participate in safety drills for Fire, Tornado/Severe Weather, Bomb Threat, or Intruder/Lockdown at least once per semester to ensure familiarity and preparedness.

In the event of any emergency, staff will remain with children at all times and follow established procedures until the situation is resolved or emergency personnel provide further direction.

In the event of an emergency requiring relocation or early dismissal:

- Parents will be notified via phone, text message, email, or the designated parent communication system.
- Children will only be released to authorized individuals listed on the child's enrollment form.
- A valid photo ID may be required for release.
- Staff will document the time and authorized person picking up each child.

General Safety Procedures

- Emergency contact information for each child will be kept on file and accessible during evacuations.
- First aid supplies will be maintained on site and readily available.
- Staff members will receive training in emergency response procedures.
- Emergency exits and routes are posted in each classroom.

Growing Acorns PDO is committed to maintaining a safe, prepared, and responsive environment for every child in our care.

5.7 Mandated Reporting of Abuse:

All staff members are mandated reporters and are required by law to report any suspected cases of abuse or neglect to the Department of Children's Services (DCS). Reports will be made in accordance with state law, and all investigations will follow DCS procedures.

6. Daily Classroom Life

6.1 Diapering:

If your child wears diapers or pull-ups, a new package of diapers/pull-ups and wipes must be provided and kept at the school. Families will be notified when supplies are running low, and replacement items must be provided by the next school day.

6.2 Potty Training:

Potty training is an important developmental milestone, and we are committed to working alongside families during this process. Due to space and staffing limitations, children must be fully potty trained prior to entering the 3-year-old class.

A child is considered potty trained when they can:

- Tell an adult they need to use the restroom before an accident occurs
- Pull down and pull up underwear and clothing independently
- Wipe themselves after using the toilet
- Get on and off the toilet independently
- Wash and dry their hands independently
- Return to the classroom without assistance
- Wait briefly if the restroom is occupied

Three-Accident Policy: If a child has three accidents at school, they will be required to take a one-week break from the program to allow additional time for potty training at home. After the break, the child may return, and progress will be reassessed as needed.

6.3 Bathroom Breaks:

Each class will have designated bathroom breaks scheduled throughout the day to ensure children have regular opportunities to use the restroom. Teachers will also allow children to use the bathroom as needed outside of these scheduled times.

Staff members will provide appropriate supervision and assistance while respecting each child's privacy. Children are encouraged to practice independence and self-care, such as washing their hands thoroughly and maintaining proper hygiene. For safety and consistency, staff will accompany children to the bathroom and remain nearby but will not enter stalls unless assistance is required.

Parents are encouraged to communicate any specific bathroom needs or concerns to their child's teacher to help support a positive and comfortable experience for every child.

6.4 Rest Time:

Children have a designated rest time toward the end of each day. Sleeping is not required, and children who are not tired may engage in quiet time activities such as reading books, doing puzzles, or other calm activities.

Children will not be forced to take a nap; however, parents may request that their child be encouraged to rest during this time.

Each child will have their own assigned cot, which is cleaned and sanitized each day to maintain a safe and hygienic environment.

Parents may provide a small blanket, sheet, and/or comfort item from home, but all items should be clearly labeled with the child's name and taken home each week to be laundered. This helps us keep cots clean and safe for all children.

6.5 Lunch and Snack Information:

Growing Acorns PDO is a nut-free facility due to the seriousness of nut allergies. The health and safety of all children is our top priority.

- If a child brings a nut-based product, or an item that appears to contain nuts, the item will remain sealed in the lunchbox and will not be served.

One snack will be provided each school day. At the beginning of the year, families will complete an approved snack list for their child.

Parents are responsible for sending lunch each day. Lunch boxes must be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name. Please avoid foods that require heating, as we are unable to warm individual meals.

You may include a beverage other than water in your child's lunch; however, soft drinks are not permitted. A non-spill, refillable water bottle must be sent daily and

clearly labeled with the child's first and last name. Water bottles will be used throughout the day, including during snack and recess.

Breakfast is not provided. Please ensure your child eats breakfast prior to arrival.

All personal items, including lunch boxes and water bottles, must be labeled with the child's first and last name.

6.6 What to Bring Each Day:

Seedlings

- Diapers or pull-ups
- Wipes
- A complete change of clothes
- Labeled lunchbox and cup
- Crib sheet/Rest Time Items

Sprouts

- Pull-ups (if needed)
- A complete change of clothes
- Labeled lunchbox and cup
- Rest Time Items

Saplings

- A complete change of clothes
- Labeled water bottle
- Labeled lunchbox
- Rest Time Items

All items must be clearly labeled with your child's first and last name.

6.7 Student Attire:

Children should wear comfortable clothing suitable for active play. Rubber-soled, closed-toe shoes are required for safety. Flip-flops are not permitted.

Clothing should be appropriate for messy activities such as arts, crafts, and outdoor play, and layers are recommended to accommodate changes in temperature throughout the day.

For safety, clothing with long drawstrings, cords, or small detachable pieces is not allowed. Parents are encouraged to label all personal items, including jackets, hats, etc., to help prevent loss. Hats and sun-protective clothing are recommended for outdoor activities.

For outdoor activities, parents are encouraged to provide sunscreen for their child. Staff may apply sunscreen with parental consent, using only the product supplied and labeled by the parent. Parents may also choose to apply sunscreen themselves at drop-off. Sunscreen will not be shared between children, and staff will follow the instructions provided by the parent to ensure safe and proper use.

6.8 Personal Items:

Children are asked to leave personal toys and unnecessary items at home. This includes toys, trinkets, and other non-essential belongings. If your child requires a small comfort item (such as a lovey or small blanket), it must fit inside their backpack and remain stored there during school hours unless otherwise directed by the teacher.

7. Guidance and Behavior

7.1 Behavior Policy:

We recognize that children experience both positive and challenging days as they learn and grow. If a child continues to engage in inappropriate behavior after being redirected, age-appropriate time-out procedures may be implemented.

7.2 Our Discipline Policy:

At *Growing Acorns PDO*, we believe discipline means teaching — not punishing. Our goal is to guide children toward self-control, kindness, and appropriate behavior in a safe, structured, and loving environment.

We use positive behavior guidance techniques that are developmentally appropriate for each child's age. Our approach includes:

- Redirection to appropriate activities
- Clear and consistent expectations
- Positive reinforcement of positive behavior
- Modeling respectful and kind behavior
- Offering choices when appropriate
- Helping children identify and express emotions in healthy ways

If a child displays inappropriate behavior, staff will:

- Gently remind the child of expectations.
- Redirect the child to a different activity.

- Provide a brief, supervised separation from the activity if needed to allow the child to calm down (this is not a punishment, but a time to regroup).
- Communicate with parents if behaviors are ongoing or concerning.

We will never use:

- Physical punishment
- Harsh or degrading language
- Humiliation or shaming
- Withholding food, rest, or restroom access
- Threats or intimidation

If a child's behavior becomes harmful to themselves or others, parents may be contacted for early pick-up.

7.3 Biting Policy:

Biting is common in early childhood and is often related to communication, teething, frustration, or developmental stages. If a biting incident occurs:

- The child who was bitten will receive immediate care and comfort.
- The child who bit will be calmly redirected and reminded that biting is not acceptable.
- Both sets of parents will be notified of the incident.
- Incident reports will be completed and kept on file.

If biting becomes a repeated behavior, staff and parents will work together to create a plan to help the child develop alternative skills. In cases of persistent biting that jeopardizes the safety of others, further action may be necessary.

7.4 Communication with Families Regarding Behavior:

Parents will be informed by the teacher of any specific behavioral concerns. If behaviors persist despite intervention and partnership with the family, *Growing Acorns PDO* reserves the right to dismiss a child from the program.

We believe children thrive when parents and caregivers work together. Open communication is essential. If ongoing behavioral concerns arise, a meeting will be scheduled to discuss strategies and develop a plan of support tailored to the child's needs.

7.5 Termination of Care:

While our desire is to work through challenges together, *Growing Acorns PDO* reserves the right to suspend or terminate enrollment if:

- A child's behavior poses a consistent safety risk to themselves, other children, or staff.
- Parents are unwilling to collaborate in addressing behavioral concerns.

- Policies are repeatedly disregarded.

Every effort will be made to communicate concerns and attempt resolution prior to termination, except in cases involving immediate safety concerns.

8. Communication and Community

8.1 Communication:

Clear and consistent communication between families and staff is essential. Parents are responsible for ensuring that all contact information remains current on enrollment forms and within the parent communication system.

If you have a concern regarding your child, please address it first with your child's teacher. If additional clarification or resolution is needed, the director may be contacted.

To ensure meaningful conversations, we ask that lengthy discussions not take place during drop-off or pick-up times, as these are busy transition periods. Please schedule a meeting by email, text, or phone so that the teacher or director can give you their full attention.

Weekly communication from your child's teacher will be provided after school hours through the designated parent communication platform.

8.2 Birthdays and Celebrations:

Outside food may be brought into the classroom for celebrations with prior approval from the director. A written notice must be sent home to all families in the classroom at least one week in advance. Written consent from each child's parent must be received before any celebration food is served.

8.3 Photo and Video Policy:

Growing Acorns PDO respects the privacy of every child and family. Your child's safety and your family's privacy are our top priority.

Photographs and videos may be taken during program hours for classroom documentation and promotional purposes, including but not limited to social media, website content, marketing materials, and advertisements.

At enrollment, families are required to complete a *Photo and Video Consent Form* indicating whether they grant or decline permission for their child's image to be used for promotional or public purposes. Children without written consent will not have their image used publicly.

All photos and videos will be used respectfully, will not include sensitive identifying information, will not be shared with third parties, and will be stored securely.

Parents are welcome to photograph their own children at program events. However, photos or videos including other children may not be posted or shared publicly without permission from those children's parents. Event photos are intended for personal use only.

8.4 Confidentiality:

Growing Acorns PDO is committed to protecting the privacy of each child and family enrolled in our program.

All personal information, including enrollment forms, medical information, emergency contacts, behavioral concerns, and family details, will be kept confidential and stored securely.

Information will only be shared with outside agencies when legally obligated to do so, such as in cases involving child safety or mandated reporting.

Parents are also asked to respect the privacy of other families and refrain from discussing other children's behaviors, needs, or circumstances outside of the program.

8.5 Grievance Policy:

If a parent has a concern regarding a teacher, classroom, or the director, it is important that the matter be addressed promptly and respectfully. Concerns should be directed only to the individual(s) involved and/or the director.

Grievances should not be discussed with other parents, staff members not involved in the situation, or in the presence of children. The teacher and/or director will schedule a meeting to work toward a resolution that is satisfactory to all parties.

If a parent publicly harasses or disrespects *Growing Acorns PDO* program, staff, or leadership—including through social media—a written warning will be issued by the director. A second offense may result in dismissal of the family from the program.

Appendix A: Communicable Diseases

The following are general return-to-school guidelines. Final decisions may be based on physician or public health department recommendations.

- Chicken Pox: May return when all lesions have crusted over (typically 5–7 days)
- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye): May return 24 hours after treatment has begun and symptoms are improving.
- COVID-19: May return after completing recommended isolation per current health guidelines and being fever-free for 24 hours without medication.
- Rubella (German Measles): May return 7 days after rash onset.
- Giardia, Salmonella, Shigella, Campylobacter: May return with physician clearance and/or as directed by public health authorities.
- Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease: May return when fever-free for 24 hours and well enough to participate. Open sores should be healing.
- Head Lice: May return after appropriate treatment has begun and no live lice are present.
- Hepatitis A: May return one week after onset of illness and fever-free, with physician clearance.
- Herpes Simplex: May return when fever-free and well enough to participate. Lesions must be covered if possible.
- Measles (Rubeola): May return 4 days after rash onset.
- Meningococcal Disease: May return with physician clearance and completion of recommended treatment.
- Molluscum Contagiosum: May return; lesions should be covered if possible.
- Mumps: May return 5 days after onset of swelling.
- Pinworms: May return after treatment has begun.
- Ringworm: May return after treatment has begun; affected areas must be covered.
- Roseola: May return when fever-free for 24 hours and rash is resolving.
- Rotavirus: May return when diarrhea has resolved for 48 hours.
- Scabies: May return after treatment has been completed.
- Shingles: May return when lesions are crusted over and can be covered.
- Strep Throat / Scarlet Fever: May return after 24 hours of antibiotics and fever-free.
- Tuberculosis (Active TB): Must be excluded until physician documentation confirms the child is not contagious.

Parents are required to notify the Director if their child is diagnosed with a communicable illness.

Appendix B: Emergency Response Plans

In the event of any emergency, staff will remain with children at all times and follow established procedures until the situation is resolved or emergency personnel provide further direction.

Fire Emergency

- In the event of a fire alarm or fire emergency:
 - Staff and children will evacuate the building immediately using the designated primary exit route.
 - If the primary route is inaccessible, the secondary evacuation route will be used.
 - Teachers will take attendance sheets and account for all children upon exiting the building.
 - The designated meeting location for fire evacuation is: The Playground.
 - Children and staff will remain at the meeting location until clearance is given by emergency personnel to re-enter the building or further instructions are provided.

Tornado or Severe Weather

- In the event of a tornado warning or severe weather emergency:
 - Children will be escorted to the designated severe weather shelter area: The Main Hallway/Bathrooms.
 - Children will kneel facing the wall, bending forward with hands covering their heads.
 - Staff will remain with the children and provide reassurance.
 - Children will remain in the designated area until an “all clear” is issued by local authorities or administration.

Bomb Threat

- In the event of a bomb threat:
 - Emergency services will be contacted immediately.
 - Staff and children will evacuate the building and move to a safe location away from the premises.
 - Attendance will be taken to ensure all children are accounted for.
 - A parent notification system will be activated, and families will be instructed to pick up their children at a designated relocation site.
 - Children will only be released to authorized individuals in accordance with established security procedures.

Intruder or Lockdown

- In the event of an intruder or lockdown situation:
 - A predetermined code word will be announced to alert staff.
 - Teachers will immediately secure classroom doors, turn off lights, cover windows, and move children to a safe location within the classroom away from doors and windows.
 - Children will remain quiet and seated with staff supervision.
 - No one will open the classroom door until an official “all clear” is given by law enforcement or administration.

Emergency Communication and Reunification

- In the event of an emergency requiring relocation or early dismissal:
 - Parents will be notified via phone, text message, email, or the designated parent communication system.
 - Children will only be released to authorized individuals listed on the child’s enrollment form.
 - A valid photo ID may be required for release.
 - Staff will document the time and authorized person picking up each child.

General Safety Procedures

- Emergency contact information for each child will be kept on file and accessible during evacuations.
- First aid supplies will be maintained on site and readily available.
- Staff members will receive training in emergency response procedures.
- Emergency exits and routes are posted in each classroom.

Growing Acorns PDO is committed to maintaining a safe, prepared, and responsive environment for every child in our care.

Appendix C: Supply List

Daily Essentials:

- Backpack (Small Enough for Child to Carry)
- Extra Set of Clothing (Shirt, Pants, Underwear, and Socks)
- Comfortable shoes (Closed-Toe Required, Non-Slip Recommended)
- Jacket or Coat (Seasonally Appropriate)
- *Growing Acorns PDO* ID Card (Required for Pickup)

Diapering/Toileting:

- Diapers or Pull-ups (One Package Dropped Off, Staff Will Inform When You Need More)
- Wipes (Three Packages Dropped Off, Staff Will Inform When You Need More)
- Diaper Cream

Mealtime/Snack:

- Reusable Water Bottle (Labeled with Child's Name)
- Any Special Snacks (If Child Has Allergies)

Nap/Rest Time: (Only for Seedlings and Saplings)

- Small Blanket
- Crib Sheet
- Small Comfort Item (Stuffed Animal, etc.)

Other Optional Items:

- Sunscreen
- Hat for Outdoor Play
- Seasonal Items (Hats, Boots, Gloves)

Please make sure every item brought for your child is clearly labeled with child's first and last name and what class (i.e. John Doe, Seedlings)

Appendix D: **OPTIONAL: Donation List**

Classroom Supplies:

- Crayons, Markers, Colored Pencils
- Glue Sticks
- Construction Paper, Card Stock, or Craft Paper
- Stickers, Foam Shapes, or other Craft Extras
- Play-dough
- Popsicle Sticks, Pipe Cleaners, or Other Simple Craft Items

Cleaning and Hygiene Supplies:

- Disinfectant Wipes
- Hand Sanitizer
- Paper Towels
- Tissues

Snack Supplies (non-perishables):

- Goldfish
- Graham Crackers
- Ritz Crackers
- Club Crackers
- Pretzels
- Applesauce Pouches
- Applesauce
- Fruit Cups
- 100% Fruit Snacks