



PARENT HANDBOOK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WELCOME TO ODYSSEY!	1
I. GENERAL INFORMATION	2
A. ABOUT ODYSSEY	2
B. CORPORATE INFORMATION	2
C. SCHOOL INFORMATION	2
D. HOURS OF OPERATION, HOLIDAYS & OTHER DAYS OF CLOSURE.....	2
E. INCLEMENT WEATHER AND EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS	3
F. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES	3
1. <i>Fire Drills</i>	3
2. <i>Tornado Drills</i>	4
3. <i>Infants – Cribs</i>	4
G. PHONE CALLS	4
H. STUDENT DRESS & “EMERGENCY” CLOTHING	4
I. OUTDOOR PLAY	5
J. FIELD TRIPS	5
K. ODYSSEY AFTERSCHOOL	6
L. ODYSSEY SUMMER CAMP	6
M. SCHOOL-AGE TRANSPORTATION	7
N. BIRTHDAY PARTIES	7
O. OUTSIDE FOOD	8
P. NAPS.....	8
Q. SHOW AND TELL	8
R. OPEN HOUSE	8
S. SCHOOL PICTURES	9
T. STATE OF ALABAMA: REQUIRED STATEMENT ON MINIMUM STANDARDS	9
U. BABY SITTING	9
V. ADVERTISEMENTS AND USE OF STUDENT LIKENESSES AND PROPERTY	9
II. ENROLLMENT	10
A. WAITING LIST	10
B. PRE-ADMISSION PROCESS	10
C. CONTACT INFORMATION CARD.....	10
D. ANNUAL ENROLLMENT AGREEMENT	10
E. RENEWAL OF CONTRACT	11
F. WITHDRAWAL	11
1. <i>Parent Initiated Withdrawal</i>	11
2. <i>Odyssey Initiated Withdrawal</i>	11
G. ANNUAL ENROLLMENT FEE	11
H. TUITION.....	11
I. IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE / DAILY TUITION RATE	12
J. TUITION DISCOUNTS	12
K. LATE PAYMENT FEES.....	13
L. APPLICATION OF PAYMENTS.....	13
M. NSF CHECKS	13
N. LATE DEPARTURE FEES	13
O. DIAPER FEES	14
P. TUITION AND FEES: RATE CHANGES, REFUNDS AND TRANSFERS	14
Q. EMERGENCY CONTACTS	14
R. PARENT HIRING OF ODYSSEY EMPLOYEES	14
S. COURT COSTS AND ATTORNEY’S FEES	14
III. ATTENDANCE	14
A. SCHEDULE	14
B. ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE	14

C. PARKING	15
D. NON-PARENT PICK UP	15
E. DIVORCE / NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS	15
IV. THE ODYSSEY PROGRAM.....	16
A. THE ODYSSEY CURRICULUM MODEL.....	16
B. RATIOS	16
C. TRANSITIONS.....	17
V. PARENT COMMUNICATION WITH THE TEACHERS	17
A. CLASSROOM VISITATION	17
B. TEACHER / PARENT RELATIONS	17
C. CHILD PROGRESS REPORTS	18
1. <i>Infants</i>	18
2. <i>Toddlers</i>	18
D. ODYSSEY'S FRIDAY NOTES.....	18
E. PARENT CONFERENCES	19
F. CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR.....	19
1. <i>Biting and/or other Aggressive Behavior</i>	19
2. <i>Uncontrollable Behavior</i>	19
G. DISCIPLINE	20
H. "POSITIVE" COMMUNICATIONS	20
I. REPORTING LESS THAN STELLAR PERFORMANCE TO THE DIRECTOR.....	21
VI. HEALTH AND SAFETY	21
A. HEALTH & RESOURCE ROOM.....	21
B. MEDICATIONS	22
C. NUTRITION	23
1. <i>General Information</i>	23
2. <i>Infants</i>	23
3. <i>Toddlers</i>	23
4. <i>Preschool</i>	23
VII. CLOSING	24

Welcome to Odyssey!

At Odyssey, our mission is to create a safe, inviting, spontaneous and challenging learning environment that enhances each child's innate desire to learn. Individuals who shared a dream of creating a school where children extend their knowledge through discovery, creative expression and play developed Odyssey over several years, and finally opened the doors at our first school in June 1995. Our program was developed to challenge each child's inquisitive mind, to promote self-directed learning and, most of all, to encourage children and to stimulate a genuine enthusiasm for learning.

From the moment you enter an Odyssey School, you will notice the nurturing climate and the positive attitudes of teachers. You will observe the abundance of stimulating resources and the beauty of children's work displayed throughout the school. You will notice children making choices, playing individually and in small groups and interacting with skilled teachers who respect children and are committed to their growth. I believe that this is the principal difference between Odyssey Early School and the other daycare options that you may have evaluated – at Odyssey, you will actually see the activities and other performance outcomes that our staff has promised you, happening every day, in every room, from the minute the doors open in the morning until they close at the end of the day.

The Odyssey Parent Guide contains information that is essential for making the partnership between Odyssey and its parents more effective in achieving our mission. Our staff depends on you to help us achieve that mission – there may be an occasion when you observe us not meeting the standards described herein. If that happens, we are 100% dependent upon you to notify us so that we can correct any issues. Please approach our administrative team immediately and the issue will be resolved promptly and professionally. You may not have experienced this approach at other schools (and may never experience it again!), but we are dependent upon your feedback and we are committed to providing the best experience possible.

You are encouraged to review this guide and to bring to our attention any questions or concerns. We hope that while your child attends Odyssey that we always will demonstrate our efforts not only to live up to the statements that we make about our school, but also to surpass them.

Sincerely,

Bob Mitchell

G. Robert ("Bob") Mitchell
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I. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. ABOUT ODYSSEY

Odyssey Early Schools is a professionally managed company specializing exclusively in providing developmentally appropriate learning experiences for children. Odyssey is dedicated to customer-driven practices and relationships that meet (and exceed) the high expectations of parents. Odyssey’s programs and practices meet or exceed all state certification guidelines and are consistent with guidelines established by all national accrediting associations for early childhood education.

B. CORPORATE INFORMATION

Odyssey’s administrative team wants to maintain close contact with the parents who enroll their children with us. Please feel free to contact us whenever you have some feedback related to our performance. Through such open communications, we hope to maintain an inviting, family atmosphere and to keep our parents more than satisfied with the quality service we provide. You can use any of the means provided below, but one of the best is to use the Suggestion Box on Odyssey’s website.

Odyssey Early Schools
Attn: Bob Mitchell
217 Country Club Park #114
Birmingham, Alabama 35213
Phone: 205.337.2012
Fax: 205.879.3368
E-mail: bobmitchell@odysseyearlyschool.com
Web: www.odysseyearlyschool.com

C. SCHOOL INFORMATION

Odyssey Early Schools – Inverness
Address: 104 Heatherbrooke Park Drive
Birmingham, Alabama 35242
Phone: 205.991.0039
Fax: 205.991.7005
Director: Annie Fine
afine@odysseyearlyschool.com

Odyssey Early Schools – Trace Crossings
Address: 401 Emery Drive
Hoover, Alabama 35244
Phone: 205.988.8829
Fax: 205.988.8505
Director: Amanda Bentley
abentley@odysseyearlyschool.com

D. HOURS OF OPERATION, HOLIDAYS & OTHER DAYS OF CLOSURE

As a general rule, Odyssey is open Monday through Friday, from 6:30 AM to 6:00 PM, every week of the year. However, Odyssey closes twelve days each year and modifies its calendar on several other days, based on when certain holidays occur. Odyssey’s website always provides a detail of both the current and the following years’ calendars so that all parents will know of our modified schedule with plenty of notice. A summary of Odyssey’s modified days is as follows:

New Year’s Day	Labor Day
Good Friday	The day before Thanksgiving (6:30 AM – 2:30 PM)
Memorial Day	Thanksgiving (Thursday & Friday)
Independence Day / Summer Break (Mon-Wed or Wed-Fri)	Christmas (3 days – the day before and after)
Friday Before Labor Day (6:30 AM – 12:00 PM)	Christmas to New Year’s (7:30 AM – 4:30 PM)

The two items from the above list at which some parents pause are Good Friday and Odyssey's three-day Summer Break that surrounds Independence Day each year. Odyssey observes Good Friday because of the length between New Year's Day to Memorial Day; without taking Good Friday off, five months would be a very long time for our staff to not have a single day scheduled off from work. Odyssey's decision to close for three days each year in observance of Independence Day is simply because our teachers deserve a summer vacation; by closing either Monday-Wednesday or Wednesday-Friday (depending on where July 4th falls each year), we give our staff the opportunity to have five consecutive business/weekend days to travel on vacation or to visit with family that might not live in Birmingham – everyone deserves a summer vacation! These policies are geared towards maintaining high staff morale and, the happier the staff, the more consistent their employment. Odyssey's goal is to have as little teacher turnover as possible and our vacation schedule on these two occasions is one small means of satisfying that objective.

Odyssey's schedule is subject to change with sixty (60) days notice.

E. INCLEMENT WEATHER AND EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

Occasionally, weather conditions such as hurricanes, winter storms and even high risk severe weather days may cause Odyssey to change its regular daily schedule with little notice. Odyssey will list any schedule changes in the following locations:

1. On the Odyssey home page – the main picture on the home page will be replaced with an announcement regarding the changed schedule;
2. On the outgoing voicemail message at each school; and,
3. On ABC 33/40 and 104.7 FM.

Odyssey's primary concern in evaluating closing decisions is the safety of its staff. Odyssey staff members are very dedicated, and we cannot place them in the position of feeling that they have to work despite dangerous driving and/or other conditions. However, Odyssey also has an obligation to its customers to be open whenever possible. Therefore, Odyssey will always try to wait as late as possible to make a schedule change announcement so that it will have the best possible information. Since 1995, there have been numerous occasions when other schools in the area closed at the weathermen's first mention of "snow" a few days out, only to find that nothing happened, so Odyssey has opened. On such days, whenever possible, Bob Mitchell will drive the roads of Birmingham and/or make his final determination at approximately 5:00 AM and then will post any schedule change with the information services in the order provided above. If you do not see or hear any schedule change, then Odyssey is open regular hours.

In the event of a local area emergency requiring the forced evacuation of the school, the safety of the children will be the first priority (before contacting parents) and the children will be moved to a safe location according to incident-specific instruction by local emergency authorities. Odyssey's director then will contact local radio and/or television stations regarding details of the evacuation. Finally, Odyssey will undertake an effort to contact the parents, using the numbers provided on each family's Contact Information Sheet. Odyssey will strive to contact each family, but will turn to the listed Emergency Contacts on the Contact Information Sheet if unable to reach the parents directly.

Odyssey does not grant tuition credits for emergency or unforeseen closings as such events are due to circumstances beyond Odyssey's control. Also, Odyssey pays its full-time staff for days that Odyssey is completely closed and for their time worked in the event of a delayed opening or early closing.

F. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

1. Fire Drills

Odyssey will conduct a fire drill on the first Wednesday each quarter (March, June, September, December). A master evacuation plan for the school is posted in each classroom. Established evacuation routes are marked and included as a part of the staff training program. After the school is evacuated, a roll call then will be taken by one teacher in each classroom to assure that every child is out of the building. Local fire code requires that all children be taken at least 50-feet away from the

front door of the building. A vehicle will be used to block the street and an administrator will time the evacuation, the results of which will be included in Friday Notes.

2. Tornado Drills

Birmingham is unusual in that there are actually two tornado seasons during the year, from March to May and October to November. Odyssey conducts tornado drills on the first Wednesday each month during those periods, starting in February and September, respectively. In each of the respective quarterly months in which both a fire and a tornado drill are scheduled, only the tornado drill will be held.

3. Infants – Cribs

Parents of infants are reminded that fire and tornado drills are the only two times that more than one child will ever be in the same crib; up to four children will be placed in one of our “evacuation cribs” and taken to the designated spot location for that respective drill type. After the drill (usually lasting not more than 3 to 5 minutes), each of the evacuation cribs will be completely disinfected and the sheets will be changed. We appreciate your patience with the inconvenience associated with our drill system; our goal is to be completely prepared for any emergency situation that may involve your children.

G. PHONE CALLS

Virtually every classroom at Odyssey has a phone so that parents can communicate with their child’s teacher when necessary. However, such phone calls should be kept brief, as the teacher cannot be expected to give the same degree of attention to your child or the classroom when they are on the phone that they can when they are not on the phone. Such phone calls should be limited to times when there is a specific concern about their child on a given day or on the child’s first few days in a new classroom. Parents should not make regular, recurring phone calls to “just check in” with their child’s teacher.

Parents must identify themselves when calling the school. No call will be forwarded to a classroom unless the parent identifies him-/herself to the administration.

Non-emergency calls from individuals other than parents will not be forwarded to a teacher or a classroom; rather, a message will be e-mailed to the requested staff member.

H. STUDENT DRESS & “EMERGENCY” CLOTHING

Odyssey believes that children develop through exploration of their environment. Whether they are building with blocks on the floor, becoming the next Monet at the art easel or participating in outdoor physical activities, it is best for them to be dressed in their most comfortable clothes.

Students will be most comfortable in loose-fitting clothing appropriate to the season. All children above our Infant 3 classrooms are required to wear shoes and socks throughout the day. Sandals are strongly discouraged due to the possibility that they may come off during active playground activities, making injury more likely.

During some seasons, sweaters or jackets are necessary for temperature changes during a given day. Except during extreme weather conditions, older infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers will spend some portion of each day outdoors.

Parents are requested to supply at least one extra (complete) change of clothing to remain in the child’s cubbie in the event of an “emergency.” Infant parents should provide at least two clothing changes. If there is no extra change of clothes at Odyssey, the parent will be called and asked either to pick the child up or to bring an extra change to the school immediately. In addition, a swimsuit, towel and water shoes will be needed by all toddler and preschool children for sprinkler pool activities during June and July.

In the event that an “emergency” occurs, requiring a child’s clothes to be changed, Odyssey will put their initial clothes in a ziplock bag and leave them in your child’s cubbie.

Label all clothing items with your child’s first and last name, using a permanent marker or other permanent attachment.

I. OUTDOOR PLAY

Odyssey is very proud of its outdoor play facilities and believes that outdoor exertion is another crucial element of a child's development and growth. Odyssey's staff is expected to engage the children playing outside and to supervise them closely; parents will notice that Odyssey does not have benches on its playgrounds for the teachers to take a break and let the children just run wild. Odyssey's teachers should always try to be within eyesight of every child while outside and should themselves be up on the playground equipment interacting with the children. Odyssey's philosophy towards outdoor play is that it is a different type of learning environment compared to what occurs inside; we strive to never go outside just to go outside – there should generally be activities organized by the teachers when outside and you should be able to observe our staff interacting with the children all over the playground.

Beyond the youngest infants, every Odyssey classroom has two daily outdoor play times, ranging in length from 20 to 30 minutes. The only exception to the twice-daily rule is when outdoor time is limited due to rain throughout the day; however, even in that event, most classes will get at least one outdoor time, as Odyssey has covered play areas that are completely under the roofline.

Odyssey will go outside whenever the “realfeel” temperature range is between 45° and 95°. Odyssey uses www.accuweather.com as its source for determining the realfeel temperature.

All children are expected to go outside with their class. If a child is not well enough to go outside, then they are not well enough to come to school. Parents should not ask their child's teacher to make alternative arrangements for their child while their class is outside. It would be extremely difficult and uncomfortable to explain to a parent in a classroom that their child was involved in an accident with a child from another classroom or that their child's classroom was out of ratio because a child from a different room was in their room because he was not well enough to go outside.

Odyssey also offers sprinkler pool water play areas in June and July. Parents should send a swimsuit, towel, water shoes and sunscreen on their child's classroom's assigned day(s).

Odyssey's Internet Video Monitoring service is not available for the playgrounds. Odyssey's promise regarding that service is that parents will be able to view only the children in their child's class. Because of the fluctuating playground schedules throughout the year and because of the proximity of the playgrounds, Odyssey cannot satisfy this limitation when it comes to the playgrounds, and therefore does not offer this service in those areas.

J. FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are a means of extending Odyssey's curriculum by providing children with experiences outside the school. Field trips may include attendance at local theaters, libraries, zoos, museums, botanical gardens, concerts and/or other area events. Odyssey typically schedules field trips on a quarterly basis, so that parents may arrange their schedule if they wish to go along with their child. Occasionally, Odyssey may schedule a field trip on shorter notice, but will try to provide at least one week's notice.

Part of the teachers' process when seeking administrative approval for any field trip is to solicit at least two (2) parent volunteers. Odyssey will not schedule any field trip for its children at or below Pre-K without these parent volunteers' prior commitment to attend. The parent volunteers are there to assist the teachers; the teachers cannot ask or allow any parent volunteer to take a group of children on their own – an Odyssey teacher must always be with Odyssey's children.

Absent an extremely special occasion and tremendous parent participation, field trips will not be scheduled for classrooms below our Pre-K program. While away from the school on a field trip, Odyssey will maintain its regular classroom ratios.

Parents will be responsible for paying the amount indicated on the field trip notice, which includes the basic admission price, the teachers' admission and a nominal amount to cover the cost of transportation. A special field trip meal and/or snack will be provided by Odyssey, if the field trip carries the children away from Odyssey during a scheduled snack or mealtime. The Odyssey Field Trip Authorization Form will inform parents of the cost on both a per child and per adult basis. Parents must pay field trip fees, by check, directly to their child's classroom teacher not later than the day of the field trip. Field trip fees will not be billed as a part of the regular monthly tuition and fee billings.

If Odyssey does not receive the signed field trip authorization form and fees, and cannot reach the parent, the parent will be contacted, but if they cannot be contacted, then the child cannot attend the field trip.

All children must be properly restrained while in an Odyssey van according to their age and size, whether by a car seat or by a seat belt. It is the parent's responsibility to provide and install any necessary car seats in their child's designated Odyssey van on the morning of the field trip. Odyssey assumes responsibility for neither determining whether a child requires additional vehicle safety restraint nor for ensuring that such restraint has been installed properly by the parents. The parent must notify Odyssey on the authorization form that their child meets or exceeds all requirements for riding without such a device if the child is to attend the field trip and must include that fact on the child's permission slip.

If a parent wishes to drive their own car to the event, they may transport their own child, but may not transport other parents' children in their personal car unless that child's parent also is in the car, or that other parent has provided Odyssey with written permission on the Field Trip Authorization form to transport their child in that particular parent's personal vehicle.

K. ODYSSEY AFTERSCHOOL

Odyssey provides AfterSchool and Summer Camp Programs for children from Kindergarten through Fourth Grade.

Odyssey's AfterSchool Program offers enrichment and play activities that extend the children's learning after school. Each weekday, Odyssey will pick up participating children from designated elementary schools and return to Odyssey. The children will be provided a snack and then will engage in a variety of learning and play activities.

Coordinating an AfterSchool Program can be difficult at times because different parents have different goals. Some parents, knowing that their children have been in a structured school environment throughout the day, want their child's after school program to be weighted towards play – they will do homework and other activities as a part of their family time each night. Other parents, knowing that they strive to balance their children's school needs with other activities such as sports, music and other interests that frequently take up time at night and with which the parents are very involved, ask that Odyssey help their child get their homework done each afternoon. Odyssey's staff has been trained to know this balance and to assist each family in meeting their individual needs.

Odyssey offers several strengths compared to after school programs offered by most elementary schools: (1) size – Odyssey's class is significantly smaller than most school programs; (2) age range – Odyssey's program cuts off at fourth grade (there is just too big a difference between a child in Kindergarten and a sixth grader); (3) Odyssey's certified teachers; and, among others, (4) the flexibility to meet the individual family needs outlined in the paragraph above.

Odyssey's AfterSchool tuition is billed monthly. On occasion, there will be days when the public schools are closed and on which Odyssey is open, and the AfterSchool parents will want their children to come for some or all of that extended day. Odyssey usually charges an Extra Day Fee of \$45. However, our AfterSchool parents have already paid a portion of that day via their regular AfterSchool monthly tuition payment. On those days, Odyssey will divide its regular monthly AfterSchool fee by 21 days (the average number of business days in each month during the year) and will reduce the \$45 Extra Day Fee by that amount. That additional charge will be billed on the family's ledger and will be reflected on the following month's tuition statement.

L. ODYSSEY SUMMER CAMP

Odyssey's Summer Camp is an extraordinary experience for children who have completed Kindergarten through Fourth Grade. The entire summer is packed with an abundance of fun educational and play activities that give the children a break from the structure of their regular school year, but keep them in engaged in learning activities so that they remain on pace and ready to return for their next grade the following school year.

Odyssey's Summer Camp offers all of the same benefits over many alternatives as our AfterSchool Program, while placing a significant emphasis on field trips that the children certainly will enjoy. Odyssey averages approximately four field trips each week during the Summer Camp.

The tuition is billed monthly, and includes all t-shirt, field trip and other fees; once the parent pays the monthly tuition, there will not be a single other item billed by Odyssey. Odyssey offers two payment options: monthly and lump-sum. Under the latter payment option, the family will receive a discount in return for making the June and July payments on or before June 1.

M. SCHOOL-AGE TRANSPORTATION

Odyssey's AfterSchool and Summer Camp children are transported on Odyssey vehicles. All parents must sign a "Transportation Authorization Form" that is used to inform the elementary school that Odyssey is authorized to pick up your child and that it is the parent's responsibility to provide a car seat (if required for your child). Each Odyssey vehicle is designed to carry a total of 15 passengers, including the driver and a second front seat passenger. No Odyssey child will be authorized to ride in the front seat next to the driver, making the effective child passenger limit 13 students on each vehicle.

If your child will not be picked up from school on a given day, the parent must call Odyssey and inform them of such. If we don't know that your child won't be on our van, then our staff will have to wait at the school, while calling back to Odyssey for further information and/or while waiting for the school to determine further information, and all of the children will be delayed in their arrival at Odyssey.

The procedure for picking up the children varies at (and is dictated by) each elementary school. However, as the children get onto the van, roll will be taken indicating which children are present. An additional roll call will be taken as the children exit the van upon their return to Odyssey. As the van driver passes through the lobby on the way to the AfterSchool room, they will pick up the sign-in/sign-out book on the front desk and will deliver it to an AfterSchool teacher who will sign in each child, signaling that they have received that child in the AfterSchool room. Parents are reminded that they are required to sign their child out each afternoon. Parents are asked to write their full signature (not initials) in legible handwriting and to include the time that they picked up their child.

With Summer Camp, the children will be departing the school for their trips away from Odyssey. Upon departing the school, Odyssey's staff will take a roll count in the room, a roll count upon loading onto the van, a roll count upon exiting the van at the destination, a roll count upon arrival inside the destination, several roll counts during the time of the activity, a roll count upon lining up to leave the activity, a roll count upon loading back onto the van for return to Odyssey, a roll count upon exiting the van and a final roll count upon return to the classroom. With the Summer Camp Program, parents are required to sign their child in at the sign-in book in the lobby and out in the afternoon when they pick up their child. Parents are asked to write their full signature (not initials) in legible handwriting and to include the time that they picked up their child.

N. BIRTHDAY PARTIES

1. Weekday Parties

Odyssey is happy to provide a convenient place for parents to have small birthday parties for their children. Our children make many friends during their time here and sharing birthdays with their Odyssey friends makes that special day even more fun. Parents, however, are asked to observe the following for all weekday parties held at school:

- Party will occur between 2:30 and 3:15 and will be the children's snack in that room that day;
- Notify the Director and the teacher at least one week in advance;
- The party will occur in the child's classroom – not outdoors or in the multi-purpose room;
- Neither party favors nor guest presenters (*e.g.*, Cinderella, Pooh, etc.) are allowed;
- No oversized, special equipment (*e.g.*, moonwalks, etc.) may be brought to the school;
- All food and drink must have been prepared in a commercially-licensed kitchen (no homemade items);
- Please bring no more than two food items and one drink (whole milk, fruit juice or punch) in individual containers; and,
- Parents are responsible for helping the teachers clean the tables, chairs and floors at the end of the party – party cakes and other food can sometimes get messy, especially during the excitement surrounding a birthday!

2. Weekend Parties

Odyssey also offers its customers the ability to use our schools for birthday parties on the weekends, under the following guidelines:

- The fee is \$100, paid to the Odyssey-selected staff member who attends to the building during the party;
- Odyssey selects the staff member who opens up the building (has a key, knows the alarm codes, etc.);
- Subject to agreement between the staff member and the parent (and not Odyssey), this staff member may also agree to perform additional services commonly occurring at children's birthday parties (*e.g.*, character dress-up, etc.)

- There is a \$25 fee paid to Odyssey for using the water play areas, if desired by the parent;
- The party is limited to four hours, *including* set-up and clean-up time;
- The parents should coordinate times with the Odyssey staff member; and,
- The parents are responsible for clean-up – Odyssey’s maintenance staff cleans the building on Friday evening and if the school gets dirty during the party, it will remain so on Monday morning when the children come back to school.

O. OUTSIDE FOOD

Odyssey generally prohibits outside food from being brought to the school. The primary reason for this is that there are children in rooms throughout the school that have specific (and sometimes very severe) allergies to certain foods. Odyssey cannot control (and is not willing to assume the liability for) the exposure of those children to such foods when a parent brings the item from home or elsewhere. Furthermore, we try very hard to keep the school as clean as possible and having children throughout the building with food outside the regular eating times increases this difficulty. Finally, if the other children see your child eating something from home or elsewhere, especially something from certain fast-food restaurants, the odds of them eating what we are serving decreases.

Because some parents arrive as early as 6:30 and want their children to eat something before Odyssey’s 8:30 breakfast, Odyssey will allow parents to bring food into the school if they will help their child eat it in the multi-purpose room before delivering their child to the classroom.

No food requiring any refrigeration or preparation at Odyssey may be brought from outside the school.

P. NAPS

In Infant 1 and 2, we will accommodate (to the greatest degree possible), naptime instructions provided by the parents. Parents of young infants can have certain expectations related to the start times and the duration of naps and we will do our very best to satisfy those expectations. Per DHR regulations, children may not have any blankets, toys or other items in their cribs.

Infant 3 is a transitional class in terms of naps. When children first transition into that room, naps probably will be managed in a fashion similar to that of Infant 1 and 2. However, as they get a bit older (probably close to or a bit over a year old), they will begin moving towards the single-nap period that is customary in Infant 4 and up.

Odyssey’s naptime is scheduled between 12:00 PM and 2:15 PM, and varies across the classrooms. Odyssey provides cots so that the children will not be directly on the floor, but DHR regulations require that parents must provide a top and a bottom covering for the cots. Parents can purchase specialty children’s-themed nap mats (which satisfy the bottom covering requirement, above) at Odyssey that are designed to fit our cots. They are machine washable and have a built-in pillow. Please see the office if you are interested in purchasing one.

Some children, especially in the older classrooms, will stop napping. As a DHR-regulated childcare facility, Odyssey is required to have all children at least attempt to nap for forty-five minutes during the day. A child refusing to nap during that time must rest quietly on their cot, and must not disturb their friends who do want to nap. If a child has quietly rested for forty-five minutes and still refuses to nap, they will be allowed to sit either on their cot or at a desk and entertain themselves with books, coloring or other quiet activities so long as they can do so without disturbing their friends who are napping. Odyssey expects its staff to engage such children and help them with remaining quiet; this effort may include patting them on the back during the initial phase of trying to nap and/or reading to them and interacting with them in other ways when not napping.

Q. SHOW AND TELL

Parents are encouraged to help their children pick out a toy, a picture or other belonging and to bring it to school to share with their friends. Show-and-Tell is a special event at Odyssey where the children learn how much fun it can be to share their belongings with others. Please make sure, however, that no toy weapons (*e.g.*, guns, swords, knives, etc.) or live animals are a part of show-and-tell. Ideally, parents should try to encourage their children to bring a Show-and-Tell item that is related to the theme of the week.

R. OPEN HOUSE

Odyssey has an Open House each year to which the parents are invited to come talk with administrators and teachers in a relaxed atmosphere where they can see more of their child's art and other activities that have been worked on during the year.

S. SCHOOL PICTURES

Twice each year, Odyssey will open its doors to a local photographer to come in to take school pictures over a two- or three-day period. The photographer will be an independent contractor who will set his own prices. Payment will be made directly to the photographer. Odyssey assumes no responsibility for the quality of the pictures.

T. STATE OF ALABAMA: REQUIRED STATEMENT ON MINIMUM STANDARDS

The Department of Human Resources of the State of Alabama determines the minimum standards required for licensed daycare centers in the state. A copy of these standards can be viewed at the school, or can be obtained from the Department of Human Resources.

U. BABY SITTING

Over the years, babysitting has been an issue that has tended to create difficulties at Odyssey. Odyssey strives to provide a professional, nurturing, teaching environment for every child. Our teachers are expected to engage in and adhere to the most professional of work conditions anywhere. Odyssey understands that it is natural for our parents to turn to their child's teacher (someone they trust to care for their child during the day) to help them when they need occasional assistance at home. This likelihood increases again when the parent is new to the area and does not yet know anyone in the area. However, the role of taking care of a parent's child in their family home can change the nature of the relationship between the parent and that teacher, and has occasionally strained the relationship between Odyssey and its customers and/or between Odyssey and its teachers.

When a teacher is given keys to a parents home, learns their home alarm codes, drives the family car, prepares meals for the children at home, gives them baths, reads them bedtime stories and engages in other activities that commonly occur in a babysitting relationship, that service raises the intimacy of the relationship between parent and teacher to a degree that can make it difficult for Odyssey when that employee does not satisfy certain employment aspects of their work. If Odyssey ever needs to discipline a teacher who is regularly tardy or absent, engages in unprofessional communications with other parents or staff, or in any other way does not satisfy our demanding employment standards, the parent who has such a close relationship to that teacher may care less about those employment-related issues than they will about the fact that the teacher they love is upset with Odyssey about being disciplined over a work-related matter. Should you use our staff for babysitting, Odyssey asks that you keep in mind the difficult balancing that must occur between wanting our staff to develop a close bond with all of our customers and the fact that occasionally a teacher will need some correction in terms of their job performance and that, in providing that correction, Odyssey is merely trying to guarantee that our high standards are consistently provided to all of our customers.

Over the years, members of our staff who do engage in babysitting have asked that Odyssey maintain a list of staff-babysitters to the parents. Odyssey wants to be helpful to its staff in every way, and therefore we usually will have such a list in the office. However, that is a list of teachers who are holding themselves out as independent contractor babysitters and should, by no means, ever be interpreted by any Odyssey parent as Odyssey making any direct or indirect endorsement of any employee's babysitting qualifications. The services provided by babysitters are substantially different than those services provided at Odyssey and Odyssey has no means of controlling what actions or events occur outside its business.

Odyssey asks that any parent seeking to use any of our staff for babysitting also provide Odyssey with a waiver and hold-harmless agreement for any liability that may arise from that independent babysitting service that occurs outside Odyssey. A copy of that agreement must be picked up at the front office before engaging any of our staff in a babysitting relationship.

V. ADVERTISEMENTS AND USE OF STUDENT LIKENESSES AND PROPERTY

Odyssey frequently takes pictures or videos of daily activities, highlighting the children in their daily activities at Odyssey. Odyssey often gives parents copies of those pictures for their baby books or family albums. Occasionally, a TV station or magazine will visit Odyssey and will capture various activities at the school. Odyssey includes a general waiver for all purposes in its Annual Enrollment Agreement executed upon their initial enrollment. Parents must notify the Director, in writing, of any change in status from that general release.

In the event that Odyssey takes pictures for use in its advertisements and other promotional efforts, Odyssey will seek the additional permission of the parents with children appearing in those images, regardless of any release signed upon the initial enrollment.

II. ENROLLMENT

A. WAITING LIST

Parents may reserve a future space for their child by completing the Waiting List Agreement and paying a non-refundable waiting list fee. The waiting list fee is applied in full to the first annual enrollment fee at the time of admission. A child on Odyssey's waiting list who already has a sibling enrolled full-time (*i.e.*, five days per week), and who is paying full current tuition, will have priority over all other children on the waiting list as space becomes available.

Odyssey takes an approach to its waiting list enrollment that is uncommon, if not unique, in the childcare industry: once a parent satisfies the waiting list process by completing the form and paying the fee. Odyssey will strive to come as close as possible to the "Preferred Start Date" indicated on the Wait List Agreement. Odyssey keeps close tabs on its paid wait list children and frequently has to refuse enrollment to other children (or offer them a modified wait list status) because a space that is available at a given time has been promised to a child on our paid waiting list. When this happens (and it happens frequently), Odyssey loses money that could have been earned by another family who was willing to enroll before the wait listed family. However, we promised the space would be available and therefore Odyssey is obligated to give up that space. However, if the wait list family then turns down an offered space corresponding to the enrollment date indicated on their waiting list form, within 30 days of that enrollment date, the parent is responsible for their first full month of tuition (with no proration).

In the event that a family notifies Odyssey with less than thirty days notice that it will not enroll, that family must pay the first full month's tuition required by the Waiting List Agreement (regardless of any enrollment incentive that they may have received if they had enrolled as planned), but Odyssey will credit that payment towards the family's first month of tuition and other fees should they decide to enroll at Odyssey at a later date.

The practice described herein allows Odyssey to guarantee that promised space will be available, compensates Odyssey for lost income should the wait list family change their mind at the last minute, and prevents the money from being "lost" should the family later decide to utilize our services.

B. PRE-ADMISSION PROCESS

Prior to the first day of attendance, Odyssey holds an orientation conference with both parents, at which time the parents will provide Odyssey with all required forms and will meet the teachers. The conference is scheduled for one hour, and provides the parents an opportunity to learn more about Odyssey and to share their own expectations with the director and teachers. At its conclusion, the parents and director initial all items and sign the Pre-Enrollment Checklist indicating that all enrollment requirements have been completed. Odyssey will not admit any child prior to the completion of each of the required items listed on the Pre-Enrollment Checklist.

C. CONTACT INFORMATION CARD

The Contact Information Card is Odyssey's sole source for contacting parents and their designated emergency contacts. Any person whose information is provided on that Card has what Odyssey refers to as "blanket permission" to pick up your child; if a person on that Card is going to pick your child up from school, you do not need to inform us separately on each such occasion. They will simply need to show their identification at the school and they will be assigned their own check-in/check-out code to take your child with them from school. If any information changes after the child's enrollment, the parent must complete a new Contact Information card.

D. ANNUAL ENROLLMENT AGREEMENT

All children at Odyssey will be admitted on an annual basis. If the first month is a partial month, then the Annual Enrollment Agreement will cover the remainder of that first partial month and the following twelve calendar months.

E. RENEWAL OF CONTRACT

Annual contracts renew automatically each year without any action by Odyssey or the parent. All provisions in the Annual Enrollment Agreement and in this Parent Guide are subject to change with sixty (60) days notice. Absent such notice, the same terms and conditions as were in effect at the time of expiration of the former contract will apply in the new, automatically-renewed contract.

F. WITHDRAWAL

1. Parent Initiated Withdrawal

Parents may withdraw their child from Odyssey during the term of the annual agreement. However, parents will be responsible for providing Odyssey with at least one full calendar month's notice. In no event should the phrase "full calendar month" be interpreted to mean "thirty days," or any other variation thereof; the notice period must begin on or before the first calendar day of the month and will not take effect until the last calendar day of the appropriate month. Odyssey will prorate tuition only during a partial month of initial enrollment, based on the equivalent daily rate for the child's particular tuition age level. With the single exception of a graduation in mid-August from Odyssey's Pre-K program, Odyssey will not prorate the last month's tuition payment, even if the child is not in attendance for the entire month.

When a parent decides to withdraw their child from Odyssey, they must retrieve a copy of the original "Promissory Note / Withdrawal / Release" form from their child's file in the office. The Director then will calculate the total amount due through the end of the required notice period and will give that to the parents. When the parent has paid that amount in full, Odyssey will provide them with the original of that form marked "Paid". No other written or verbal act or statement will satisfy Odyssey's withdrawal procedure.

2. Odyssey Initiated Withdrawal

Odyssey may ask that a child be withdrawn from the school if the child is deemed to be a threat to the health, safety or well-being of other children, teachers or staff, or if the child is deemed to be an on-going disruption to the learning environment. Every reasonable effort will be made to provide at least one week's notice of a withdrawal initiated by Odyssey, however, such notice cannot be guaranteed. If Odyssey initiates a child's withdrawal from the school for these reasons, the parent's tuition will be prorated according to the number of days attended during the withdrawal month.

G. ANNUAL ENROLLMENT FEE

If a child was on Odyssey's Waiting List prior to the date of their actual enrollment, the waiting list fee will be applied against the first year's annual enrollment fee. The annual enrollment fee will be billed with each anniversary month of the date the family actually enrolls. The annual enrollment fee is charged on a per-family basis. If a family eventually has multiple children attending Odyssey simultaneously, the Annual Enrollment Fee will continue to be billed in the oldest child's month, even after the oldest child has withdrawn from Odyssey.

The annual enrollment fee, whether originally paid as a waiting list fee or an enrollment fee, is non-refundable, in whole or in part.

The following policy is effective September 1, 2006: A family with a child in Odyssey's Pre-K program who plans to withdraw completely from Odyssey after graduation from that program (*i.e.*, the child will not attend Odyssey's AfterSchool program), and that family has no other child in any other Odyssey program, and whose Annual Enrollment Fee occurs after January, will be billed the Annual Enrollment Fee on a pro-rata monthly basis at \$10 per month starting in the month that their regular Annual Enrollment Fee is scheduled to be billed. For example, if a family's only child will graduate from Odyssey in August, and that family's Annual Enrollment Fee has been billed in May in the past, then their May, June, July and August billings would each include a \$10 pro-rated Annual Enrollment Fee.

H. TUITION

Odyssey's tuition and fee structure is intended to provide value to families. Parents making comparisons to tuition charged by other providers must consider several factors when making such comparisons:

1. Odyssey provides an overall school ratio of 6.11 children per full-time teacher – a ratio nearly twenty percent better than the average accredited pre-school;
2. Every Odyssey staff member is certified by DHR to teach in a childcare environment;
3. Odyssey is one of the very few (if not the only) childcare companies that guarantees that at least one teacher in each of its preschool classrooms will have a four-year college degree in a field related to teaching young children – at the time of publishing of this handbook, 18 of 22 preschool classroom teachers and another 10 of 20 toddler classroom teachers at Odyssey's two schools satisfied this high standard;
4. Our employment package is extraordinary – every full-time staff member earns paid leave from their first day on the job, earns full pay for every day Odyssey is closed after their sixth month and is eligible to participate in our group health and dental insurance program from their first full month of employment, not to mention the fact that our average teacher wage as of the publishing of the handbook is nearly twice the national average for childcare employees, and on par with (or above) starting salaries in many Alabama public school systems;
5. Our facilities are better than anyone's, anywhere; and,
6. Despite all of the above, our tuition is comparable with many schools offering few or none of the above. One thing that families should remember when comparing our monthly tuition to most other schools that charge weekly tuition is to multiply their weekly rates by 4.33 to get to a monthly equivalent. When you divide 52 weekly payments each year into 12 months, there are an average of 4.33 weeks per month (there will be at least four months during the year that five payments will be made during a given calendar month, greatly impacting the comparison between weekly and monthly payment systems).

Odyssey has four defined age plateaus at which point the tuition will decline. The age breaks are indicated on the tuition rate sheet included with the enrollment package, and take effect on the first month in which the child has reached the new age plateau by the first calendar day of the month; if a child reaches the plateau in the middle of a month (even if on the 2nd calendar day of that month), the tuition decrease will occur the next month. There will be occasions when a child, due to their own developmental rate, will progress to a more advanced classroom (with a higher ratio) prior to reaching the next age plateau and the child's parents will ask why, for example, they are still paying an Infant tuition when their child has advanced to a Toddler classroom. Because we cannot have a tuition schedule that fluctuates based on a child's development, Odyssey bases its tuition using a defined, clear and simple "black line" approach governing tuition changes – age.

Tuition is paid in advance on a monthly basis. There is no credit for absences, regardless of the nature or duration of the absence; if we hold your spot, you must continue to pay tuition. Odyssey staffs the room with its full complement of teachers, incurring its full cost, regardless of any given child's attendance.

I. IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE / DAILY TUITION RATE

Odyssey offers enrollment plans ranging from one to five days, on a full-day basis only. If enrollment is less than the full-time five-day plan, the parents and Director must agree on the specific days of attendance.

From experience, we know that parents who enroll their children for less than five days per week often request to attend on days other than the regularly assigned days. Provided that the request for irregular attendance is made with sufficient notice, and that there is sufficient space available in the classroom on the requested day, Odyssey will provide this service to parents and the parents will be billed for those irregular days on their next monthly statement.

The daily rate for irregular attendance, indicated on the tuition rate sheet, is the same regardless of the age of the child.

J. TUITION DISCOUNTS

If a family has two full-time children (*i.e.*, five days per week) in Odyssey's regular Infant through Preschool programs), and each pays the current tuition rates, the family will receive a 10% monthly discount off their oldest child's rate. If either child's

attendance falls below full-time status, or if any one child pays less than the full current Odyssey tuition rates, the discount will be discontinued effective with that month's tuition.

If a family has three or more full-time children (*i.e.*, five days per week) in Odyssey's regular Infant through School-age programs, including Summer Camp, all paying current tuition rates, the family will receive a 10% monthly discount off of each of the two oldest children. The discount will be adjusted if any one child's attendance falls below full-time status, or if any one child pays less than the full current Odyssey tuition rates, effective with that month's tuition.

K. LATE PAYMENT FEES

Tuition is due in advance each month. It is to be paid at the school by the twenty-fifth calendar day of each month. There is a grace period through the first calendar day of the month for which the tuition is due. If tuition is paid after 6:00 PM on the first calendar day of the month (even if the first calendar day of the month fell on a weekend or a holiday on which Odyssey is closed), then there is a one-time late payment fee of \$30 assessed on the family's bill. The tuition payment system has been crafted to coincide with when Odyssey's staff gets paid; we pay our staff on the last business day of each month, and having the parents' payments paid not later than the first calendar day of the month ensures that Odyssey will have not more than one "float" day between our payroll and the parents' payment.

In addition to the one-time \$30 late payment fee, a daily late payment fee of \$7 is assessed starting on the first business day following the assessment of the \$30 fee. The daily late payment fee will continue to be assessed until such time that the bill is paid in full.

If the bill is not paid in full, including all late payment fees, by the close of business on the 10th calendar day of the month, the child may not be permitted to attend beginning on the 11th calendar day until the bill, including the late fee, is paid in full. The child may be permanently withdrawn by the director should this occur a second time. Neither the temporary nor permanent withholding of attendance rights shall absolve parents of the responsibility for complying with all withdrawal provisions detailed in this guide (*i.e.*, compelled withdrawal due to non-payment will not result in an abatement of any tuition, fees, and/or withdrawal requirements).

L. APPLICATION OF PAYMENTS

Payments will be applied in the following order: (1) prior balance fees; (2) prior balance tuition; (3) current month fees; (4) current month tuition; (5) future month tuition and fees.

M. NSF CHECKS

Each and every check returned to Odyssey due to insufficient funds will be charged a one-time fee of \$30.00.

If a monthly payment was made within the required payment timelines, but then Odyssey learns of its NSF status after the first calendar day of the month, that family will be charged all NSF fees, plus a late payment fee, plus a daily late payment fee until such time that the account has been paid in full, including all added fees.

Odyssey reserves the right to insist on payment by cashier's check or money order from parents who submit multiple NSF checks during their time at Odyssey.

N. LATE DEPARTURE FEES

Odyssey closes at 6:00 PM each Monday through Friday. Parents are asked to arrive at the school for pickup not later than 5:50 PM each day to allow sufficient time to gather belongings, etc., and to sign out their children. If a parent intends to have a lengthy discussion with a classroom teacher or administrator, a conference should be scheduled at a time that will not prevent a timely closing of the school.

Parents who leave the building after 6:05 will be asked to sign a Late Departure Form indicating their actual departure time and the fees associated with the late departure fees will be reflected on the following month's statement. Odyssey will charge a late departure fee of \$2.00 for each minute after 6:00 PM checkout.

O. DIAPER FEES

All children at Odyssey who are not completely potty trained will be enrolled in Odyssey's diaper plan, with fees charged based on Odyssey's tuition schedule. For any child who requires "pull-ups" there will be an additional \$10 surcharge added to the normal monthly diaper fee.

Diaper plan fees are charged on a monthly basis, and are subject to change with sixty (60) days' notice.

P. TUITION AND FEES: RATE CHANGES, REFUNDS AND TRANSFERS

Except where expressly noted in this guide, all tuition and fees are non-refundable, in whole or in part, and are non-transferable.

All tuition and fees charged by Odyssey are subject to change with sixty (60) days' notice.

Q. EMERGENCY CONTACTS

The Contact Information Card that must be completed as a part of the initial enrollment process requires that the parent provide at least two (2), and up to four (4), emergency contacts. Status as an emergency contact is an important role; they are substitute parents when you cannot be reached and your child needs to be picked up from the school. Emergency contacts must agree to assume responsibility for this role whenever contacted by Odyssey. Odyssey will make every reasonable effort to contact the parent before calling an emergency contact.

R. PARENT HIRING OF ODYSSEY EMPLOYEES

Odyssey's teachers are its most valuable asset! If an Odyssey parent hires an Odyssey employee within ninety (90) days of the employee's last day employed at Odyssey, either for their personal or business employment, that parent must pay Odyssey a \$2,500 finder's / replacement fee to compensate Odyssey for finding and training a replacement employee. For purposes of this section only, Odyssey's teachers will be deemed to be Odyssey employees for ninety (90) days after their last day employed at Odyssey. Odyssey's teachers also have signed an agreement to refrain from interfering with the contractual relationship between Odyssey and its customers; any solicitation of employment by any Odyssey staff member of any Odyssey customer will be deemed to be a breach of that promise.

S. COURT COSTS AND ATTORNEY'S FEES

Parents agree to pay all reasonable court costs and attorney's fees required to enforce this Parent Guide, the Annual Enrollment Agreement, the Wait List Agreement and all other provisions pertaining to a child's enrollment, attendance and withdrawal from Odyssey.

III. ATTENDANCE

A. SCHEDULE

As a part of the enrollment process, parents are asked to provide an anticipated daily attendance schedule for their child. If that general schedule changes, please notify Odyssey.

If a child enrolls for fewer than five days per week, their days are assigned and do not fluctuate. Further, the fact that a parent misses one of their regular assigned days does not provide them with the option of attending on a different day as a "make-up" day. There is an "Extra Day Fee" that will be charged to any part-time family whose child attends on a day for which they are not scheduled to attend.

B. ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Odyssey opens at 6:30 AM and closes at 6:00 PM. For safety reasons, parents arriving before 6:30 AM cannot enter the building until the school is opened. Children may not be left in the lobby with the morning opener, as that person must ensure that the systems throughout the school are operating properly, and cannot attend to a child during those activities.

Parents must sign their children into and out of the school, using the computer in the lobby, upon each arrival and departure. DHR requires (and can sanction Odyssey if not satisfied) that all persons signing children into and out of the school each morning and afternoon provide a FULL and LEGIBLE signature.

Parents are expected to accompany their child to and from the classroom, unless special circumstances require otherwise.

Parents are encouraged to observe activities in their child's room by viewing the monitors in the lobby. Parents may visit the classroom during lunch, activity periods, field trips and all other times.

C. PARKING

As a courtesy to others, please do not park under the covered entry or in the driveway at the front door if you plan on being in the building longer than the few minutes required either to pick up or to drop off.

During rainy or stormy weather, please get in and out of the building as quickly as possible, so that other parents can park as close to the front door as possible and so that the front parking area does not become too congested.

Parents are asked to either park under or around the covered entry area or in the parking spaces designated for parents; Odyssey's staff has been assigned parking spaces and if you park in one of those spaces during the morning arrival period, you may prevent a teacher from parking in their space.

D. NON-PARENT PICK UP

In the event that a parent cannot pick up their child, written authorization must be provided for another adult to pick up their child from the school. In the event of an emergency, the parent may fax a written note to the school, after a phone call to the school director. School personnel will verify the identity of the adult by checking their driver's license.

Parents may avoid the need to provide individual written permission for every such pick up by designating persons who have blanket permission to visit or to pick up their child. Such persons will be given their own identification code that will grant them access to the child's classroom. However, if the parent wishes to cancel that grant of authority, it is the parent's responsibility to inform Odyssey, in writing, that they no longer are authorized to pick up the parent's child and to complete a new Contact Information Card.

E. DIVORCE / NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS

It is the responsibility of the custodial parent to inform Odyssey, in writing, of any change in the rights of persons previously authorized to pick up the child. Odyssey bears no responsibility for keeping up with custody and/or visitation arrangements between parents.

If the visitation arrangement between the parents requires alternating custodial rights (*e.g.*, each parent has the child every other weekend), such that Odyssey employees could have difficulty remembering which parent has the child on which weekend, the custodial parent must notify Odyssey on each and every day that the non-custodial parent has the right to pick up the child. A non-custodial parent will be allowed to pick up or visit the child only with the written permission of the custodial parent.

In the event of a divorce, all parents who signed the original Annual Enrollment Agreement remain responsible for tuition and fees at Odyssey. Any provisions to the contrary are up to the parents to work out. Odyssey will continue to look to both parents for payment.

IV. THE ODYSSEY PROGRAM

A. THE ODYSSEY CURRICULUM MODEL

The Odyssey Curriculum Model encompasses five major child developmental components and builds on constructivist concepts related to the childhood development. Those five components are as follows:

- Cognitive Development
- Communication and Language Development
- Fine Arts and Creative Expression
- Physical Development
- Social Development

Children develop at different rates and in different ways and the Odyssey Curriculum Model is implemented on an individual basis. Each student's progress will be monitored and activities will be provided according to the appropriate level of readiness, regardless of age.

The Odyssey Curriculum is implemented through a framework based on monthly and weekly themes. The themes will be general and will provide a guideline for all school activities. Each theme will be broken down into weekly sub-themes that extend school-wide, but which are structured by the lead teacher to be developmentally appropriate for that teacher's students. Teachers are encouraged to extend learning areas and activities within their own classrooms. All activities will be evaluated to provide a means for continuous curriculum revisions. Great care and consideration has been taken in choosing and recruiting the Odyssey staff, and we have great faith in their capabilities.

B. RATIOS

Odyssey is proud of its selection not only of the highest-quality teachers, but also of its ratios, which are among the lowest in the country. The combination of motivated, positive employees, combined with low classroom ratios, great facilities and a strong curriculum allows Odyssey to emphasize age-appropriate learning activities more than any other childcare facility. Odyssey wants its parents to know not only those ideal ratios that we strive to achieve, but also how we actually perform. Accordingly, we post our daily ratios, at specified time intervals, on the director's door every day.

The ratios provided below are general guidelines under the Odyssey program. They are not to be considered absolute numbers, as they may be different during the day due to any number of reasons, including: Odyssey's defined learning blocks, student attendance, staff break-times, accreditation guidelines and state regulations.

Odyssey *guarantees* its stated ratios between 8:30 – 11:30 AM and 2:30 – 5:00 PM, during its learning blocks. During all other times, Odyssey adheres to state ratios (at a minimum) while striving with tremendous effort on the part of our administrative and teaching teams to achieve Odyssey's ratios even outside our learning blocks.

Odyssey attempts to be as flexible as its parents need us to be; allowing parents to deliver and pick up their children to and from the school at any time during the day sometimes will result in an unexpected increase in the number of children in a room in the early morning or the late afternoon. If Odyssey were to fully staff its rooms to meet the extremely low ratios provided below during all hours of operation, tuition rates would be much higher.

Odyssey's staff recognizes how sensitive parents are to classroom student-teacher ratios; it is a direct indication of the level of care being provided to the children. Odyssey strives to manage its ratios better than any other childcare provider. However, the best way for parents to help us to do our job is to be as accurate as possible in your estimate of your child's usual hours of attendance. Those estimates, contained in Odyssey's Annual Enrollment Agreement, assist us in evaluating any necessary staffing changes. Parents also can help Odyssey's staff by providing the director with as much notice as possible of any significant changes in your child's attendance (*e.g.*, when an unusually early morning meeting will create the need to bring your child earlier than usual).

Odyssey enrolls a sufficient number of children in each classroom to maintain the following ratios on a customary basis throughout its learning blocks. Nap times are exceptions to the following ratios, as the state requires less staff coverage when

the children are sleeping, except in classrooms where the average age is less than twenty (20) months, in which case the ratios must be satisfied throughout the day.

GROUP	LEARNING BLOCK RATIOS
Infants through 12 months	4:1
Younger Toddlers through 20 months	4:1 – 6:1
Advanced Toddlers through 36 months	6:1 – 8:1
Pre-School through 36 months	8:1
Pre-School above 36 months	10:1-11:1

As many parents who have been enrolled at Odyssey for some time know, we usually surpass these ratios during the stated learning block hours, and even usually during the early morning and late afternoon times.

C. TRANSITIONS

Although Odyssey retains the right to the final decision, administrators will strive to communicate with parents regarding the appropriate classroom for their child. Parents may not unilaterally decide if and/or when to transition their child from one classroom to another.

In evaluating the proper time to transition a child from their present classroom to the next classroom, the following criteria, among many others, will be used by the director:

1. Available Space: When there is a space available in the next class, so that after the transition both affected classes will remain within their ratios, a transition will be considered.
2. Appropriate Grouping: When the child to be transitioned into the next classroom is demonstrating developmental growth similar to that of children in the next classroom (and greater than other children in their current classroom), a transition will be considered.
3. Child's Age: Although age modeling among children is extremely valuable developmentally, a child's age rarely will be the sole factor in determining when to transition a child into the next classroom. The fact that a younger child has been transitioned into the next classroom never will be a factor in transitioning a child into an older classroom.
4. Parent Opinion: When the parent believes that their child is ready to be transitioned into the next classroom, based upon the other criteria listed herein, a transition will be considered.
5. Friendships: Sometimes a transition can be eased by making it with friends. If possible, and if the transition is appropriate for both children, and there is space available for both children, friendships may be an appropriate factor in determining whether to make a transition.

V. PARENT COMMUNICATION WITH THE TEACHERS

A. CLASSROOM VISITATION

Due to Odyssey's open door policy, parents are encouraged to visit and observe their child's classroom. Parents do not need to make arrangements with the classroom teacher prior to a classroom visitation.

While Odyssey does promote an open door policy allowing its parents to visit without notice, the parents should be aware of the activities in the classroom and should not interfere with the teacher in their direction of those activities. No parent should disrupt the provision of care to all other children by unduly distracting the teacher during classroom activities.

B. TEACHER / PARENT RELATIONS

One of the most valuable assets to parents with children at Odyssey is the open door policy that allows parents to visit their child's classroom. Open communications between teachers and parents helps the classroom run smoothly, keeps parents in touch with classroom activities and helps keep the teachers informed about issues that are important to the parents.

Odyssey's teachers are instructed to greet the parents and children upon their entrance into the classroom and upon their departure at the end of the day. Teachers also are instructed to provide parents with a brief description of some of the activities during the day. When parents and teachers discuss the classroom environment in a positive manner, the parents are more comfortable in their relationship with Odyssey and with the care provided to their child by the teacher.

The open door policy, however, does not leave any room for confrontation in the classroom. If a parent has a problem with a particular situation at Odyssey, whether it is related to Odyssey's program or to a staff member in particular, the only appropriate venue for discussing such concerns is a conference with the director and the teacher outside the classroom.

C. CHILD PROGRESS REPORTS

The Daily Report and the semi-annual Developmental Profile are the two child progress reports that will be provided to parents on a regular basis.

For infants, a report will be provided daily of all elements of infant care, including feedings, diaper changes, administration of medicine, food consumption and activities in which each child has participated during the day.

Children will receive a Daily Report providing information about each of the following categories:

1. Infants

Diapers: All diapers will be checked at least every two hours and the report will indicate whether the diaper was dry, or was wet with urine or a bowel movement.

Naps: The start and finish time of all naps taken during the day.

Feedings: The time of each feeding and the amounts of liquids and solids consumed.

Medications: The time and dosage of any medication administered during the day.

Daily Activities: A report of activities to which the child was exposed during the morning and afternoon time blocks.

Teacher Comments: Parents will be informed of any special events that occurred during the day.

2. Toddlers

Potty Notes: Diapers and pull-ups will be checked every two hours.

Naps: The beginning and ending time of the child's nap will be indicated. Self-initiated naps also will be reported.

Feeding: Will indicate whether the child ate the food items on the daily menu.

Medications: The time and dosage of any medication administered during the day.

Daily Activities: Will report activities to which the child was exposed during the morning and afternoon time blocks.

Teacher Comments: Teachers also will inform parents about special events that occurred during the day.

D. ODYSSEY'S FRIDAY NOTES

Odyssey's Friday Notes is published each Friday to keep parents informed about upcoming events and other items of interest, including suggestions for how parents can continue the child's studies while away from Odyssey.

This weekly newsletter also will be the main way by which major announcements, such as changes in tuition rates or days of closure, will be made.

E. PARENT CONFERENCES

Odyssey schedules two regular conferences each year during which the teacher will meet with the child's parents to go over the Developmental Profile and any other issues that the parent and teacher may wish to discuss. The director may sit in on these conferences as well. In addition to regularly scheduled parent-teacher conferences, parents are encouraged to request a conference with the director and/or teacher at any time they want to discuss items of satisfaction or concern.

Parents should come to these conferences with any suggestions and/or comments about how they feel Odyssey is satisfying the needs of their child. Regular feedback at the conferences and at other times will ensure that Odyssey continues to provide high-quality service.

F. CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR

1. Biting and/or other Aggressive Behavior

Occasional biting is a normal behavioral occurrence among many infants and younger toddlers. Biting by older children, however, is an unacceptable behavior that must be worked through by Odyssey and the parents in a cooperative manner to end it as quickly as possible. Most often, biting is associated with teething, but it also can be a product of learned behavior. For the first months of a child's life, just about everything they do involves something being put into their mouth, from eating to playing with toys by chewing on them. So, it should come as no surprise that as children begin the process of learning about possession and begin interacting with new friends, that they occasionally turn to what's natural and try to put the source of their frustration into their mouth. This is an unfortunate, but understood, event. We will try to do everything possible to curb and prevent such instances, but they cannot be prevented 100% of the time.

Odyssey's staff will communicate with both the biter's and the bitee's parents whenever a bite occurs. There will be a report for both parents to sign. Under no circumstances will the biter's identity be disclosed or confirmed. However, should a situation evolve where a single child is proving to be a chronic biter, making regular, recurring bites upon other children in his presence, then that biter may be dismissed from Odyssey should reasonable efforts to prevent such acts be unsuccessful.

When it becomes apparent that a particular child is making a regular practice out of biting, a parent / teacher / director conference will be held during which possible solutions will be discussed. In most cases, unless the problem is so severe that continued attendance will work irreparable detriment to other children or staff members in the classroom, or to the learning environment in the classroom, Odyssey will try to give parents a week's notice prior to withdrawal, so that other childcare arrangements may be made.

2. Uncontrollable Behavior

If we knew how to bottle the energy in young children and control it with an on/off switch, we would have retired by now. Frequent displays of high energy levels is a normal behavioral characteristic among children; their energy levels and the accompanying inquisitiveness makes them fun to be around. Children will be children!

There is a difference, however, between having lots of energy and having uncontrollable fits. Whenever a child screams, cries or otherwise acts to the detriment of an organized classroom environment, the other children benefit less from Odyssey's outstanding teachers.

Upon a first and second session of such disruptive behavior, the child will be isolated from the group for an appropriate length of time depending on the child's age at which point the teacher will sit down and discuss the behavior with the child and then re-introduce them back into the classroom group. If the child has a third occurrence during the day, the parent will be called to come pick the child up for the day.

When it becomes apparent that a particular child is making a regular practice out of disrupting the classroom, a parent / teacher / director conference will be held during which the issue and possible solutions will be discussed. In most cases, unless the

problem is so severe that continued attendance will work irreparable detriment to other children or staff members in the classroom, Odyssey will try to give parents a week's notice prior to withdrawal, so that other child care arrangements may be made.

G. DISCIPLINE

As a company consisting of child care professionals, Odyssey is committed to providing an inviting, spontaneous and challenging learning environment that enhances each child's innate desire to learn. That commitment and a basic respect for children is reflected in our discipline policies and procedures, which are intended to help children learn self-discipline as they build self-esteem. It is our belief that discipline encompasses all those actions taken by teachers to enhance the probability that children will develop effective behaviors that are self-fulfilling, productive and socially acceptable. The following guidelines have been developed to enable us to create a consistent and caring environment that teaches children to behave in responsible ways, to make good decisions and to feel good about themselves.

At Odyssey, teachers will:

- set realistic expectations for young children's behavior – children will be children!;
- create an environment that enhances the probability that children will behave in appropriate ways;
- focus on positive communication techniques to gain children's cooperation;
- turn destructive situations into constructive ones by giving children alternatives that they must choose among and live up to;
- use natural and logical consequences to motivate and empower children to make responsible decisions about their behavior;
- teach children to use problem-solving skills and strategies to resolve conflicts.

In the rare case where a child is disruptive beyond the control of the teacher, the director will be notified and a parent conference will be scheduled. Continued repetition of discipline problems may result in the recommendation that the child be withdrawn from the school. Unless the problem is so severe that continued attendance will work irreparable detriment to other children in the classroom, the parents will be given a minimum notice of one week prior to withdrawal, so that other arrangements may be made.

H. "POSITIVE" COMMUNICATIONS

Odyssey instructs its staff to engage only in "positive" communications with its parents. Despite being provided numerous examples in very clear terms, and despite having this element of our operation emphasized at just about every single monthly staff meeting and in occasional memos, a teacher will sometimes interpret "positive" as meaning that they are only allowed to tell our parents about the *good* things that their child did during the day. NOTHING could be further from the truth.

Every child will occasionally have an "off" day – a day during which they didn't quite follow directions or interact with their friends and/or teachers in some inappropriate manner. They're children – they'll do that from time to time. On those days, Odyssey trains its staff to not greet the parent with anything bordering on "I'm glad you're here" or "we've had a bad day" or "he's been bad today." Instead, we ask that our staff tell you about the negative event and then really emphasize what they, the adult, did to redirect the child and to prevent the negative activity from happening again, thereby ensuring that the child had a good rest of the day.

A parent who experiences the following sequence of events has a greater confidence in their child's teacher (and Odyssey!) when they hear the following:

"Mrs. Smith, Johnny had a tough time listening to us this morning when we were trying to get the children ready to go outside. He ran around the room and refused to listen to us and the class lost some of its playtime. So, when we got outside, I sat down with him and talked about how his actions prevented he and his friends from getting all of their playtime and I held him out for a few minutes when the others were playing. He responded well. The rest of the day went well and he did a great job during share time."

That is a very POSITIVE communication that involves negative occurrences during the day. The parent, however, now knows that their child wasn't perfect throughout the day and cannot say that the teacher has never communicated with them about such actions at school. Most importantly, that teacher has scored incalculable points with Mrs. Smith in terms of the

confidence that Mrs. Smith now has in Johnny's teacher. If the teacher had greeted Mrs. Smith with "boy, am I glad you're here because we've had a bad day," Mrs. Smith would know with certainty that her child's teacher was not effective today and would probably question that teacher's ability to lead her child's classroom.

Please do not hesitate to let our Director know whenever you receive anything less than this standard of communication from our staff. They have been trained regarding positive, effective communications, and it is one of Odyssey's strongest points of emphasis.

I. REPORTING LESS THAN STELLAR PERFORMANCE TO THE DIRECTOR

Odyssey's goal is perfection. Every day, in every thing we do. However, our staff is human, and just about every day we make little mistakes. If a parent ever sees or hears anything at or about Odyssey, then that parent should approach their Director and inform them of that fact. After being in this industry for years, we know that parents are sometimes more likely to go to the neighborhood birthday party and share their concerns with their friends, circulating the issue, despite that that act does nothing to resolve the problem.

We have been told by parents that they fear that if they criticize a staff member that the Director will go and tell the staff member that that family complained about them. Nothing could be further from how we train Odyssey's administrators to deal with parent concerns.

Provided that circumstances allow, the administration is trained to go to one or more rooms and indicate that they have received some feedback concerning the issue at hand. The Director instructs all staff in the room as to the proper way to handle the issue and then makes a report of the instruction. The teachers have now received positive, proactive guidance and know the manner in which they are expected to perform. Under this system, the problem has been fixed. Under the birthday party method, the problem is allowed to fester and grow to the real detriment of the parent-teacher-Odyssey relationship. PLEASE let us know when we're not living up to you're standards. The only way for us to fix it is to know about it. Odyssey's administrators are good problem solvers; they are terrible mind-readers.

VI. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Odyssey is committed to maintaining a healthy and safe environment for all of its children. A child may not be brought to, or remain at, the school with any sign of illness unless diagnosed as non-contagious by a physician.

A. HEALTH & RESOURCE ROOM

Each Odyssey school contains a designated Health & Resource Room. That area is separate from the regular classrooms and is designed to provide a warm and caring environment for children who develop a mildly-elevated temperature during the day, or who need basic medical attention for a skinned knee, earache, upset stomach, etc. Parents will be contacted whenever a child is referred to that room.

To protect the health of a sick child, other children and Odyssey staff, whenever a child exhibits any one of the following more serious health problems, the child will be isolated in the Health & Resource Room. The parent will be notified and will be required to pick up their child from the school within one hour. The list of health problems that will require the child to be picked up includes:

- Fever. A child with a known fever must not be brought to school. For a child younger than one year, a fever is over 100 degrees axillary (under arm) or 101 degrees taken by ear using rectal equivalent. For a child over one year, a fever is over 99.4 degrees axillary (under arm) or 100.4 degrees taken by ear using rectal equivalent.
- Diarrhea. A child with known diarrhea must not be brought to school. If the child develops diarrhea with other signs of illness (fever, rash, crankiness, etc.), the parent or guardian will be contacted after the third loose, watery stool.
- Vomiting. A child who has been vomiting that day must not be brought to the School. If the child vomits one time while at school, the parent or guardian will be contacted and asked to take the child home.
- Pink eye (conjunctivitis) with white or yellow discharge.
- Any skin rash, lesion or wound with bleeding or oozing of clear fluid or pus. A child will not be accepted with such a rash

unless (1) the child has had Rubella and Rubeola vaccines or (2) a note or phone call from a physician has been received at school stating that the rash is non-infectious or that it is an allergic reaction to food or drugs.

- Any rash suspicious of contagious childhood disease.
- Mouth sores with drooling.
- Scabies, head lice or other infestations.
- Constant, uncontrolled nasal discharge or productive cough (raising phlegm).
- Difficult or rapid breathing.
- Yellowish skin or eyes.
- Any illness or condition requiring one-on-one care consistently during the day.

After a child has been excluded from Odyssey for any of the above reasons, the child may return to the School only upon the following conditions: (1) the child must have been symptom free for a full 24 hours (please note that this is not the same thing as having been away from school for 24 hours); (2) any child who has been prescribed an antibiotic for a current infection must take the medication for a full 24-hour rotation before returning to school (*e.g.*, if prescribed four times daily, the medication must have been taken four times before returning to school); (3) the child must be free from open and oozing skin conditions unless the affected area is bandaged with no seepage and a physician provides a note stating that the condition is not contagious; (4) a child excluded because of scabies, head lice or other infestations may return to Odyssey 24 hours after treatment is begun, provided the parent or guardian supplies a note from a physician stating that the child is larva- and nit-free; and, (5) if the child was excluded because of a contagious illness, a physician's note is required stating that the child is no longer contagious.

This policy is not designed to inconvenience the parents; it is designed to make Odyssey a safe and healthy place for all children.

B. MEDICATIONS

Odyssey distributes medications only once each day, between 11:00 AM and 12:00 PM. Odyssey has consulted with several physicians and has determined that the overwhelming majority of common medications, both prescription and over-the-counter, are packaged in 6-, 12- or 24-hour doses; all of those schedules can be made consistent with an Odyssey distribution time of 11:00 AM to 12 PM. Parents are asked to time their child's medications so that distributions during the day may occur at that time. Parents should make a concerted effort to ask their physician to establish a dosage schedule that allows the medication to be given within Odyssey's distribution period.

For children with unusual or extraordinary medication needs, the parent may discuss their concerns with the Director, and an appropriate schedule may be established, if necessary.

Medication will be distributed to children by Odyssey personnel only under the following conditions: (1) all medication must be provided by the parent or guardian in the original container; (2) the original container must clearly indicate the name of the physician, the name of the medication, the child's name, the duration of the prescription, the frequency of the prescription and clear instructions as to dosage; and (3) a medication authorization form must be completed by the parent or guardian before any medication will be dispensed on Odyssey property.

All medications in compliance with the above guidelines will be stored in the Health & Resource Room and, if necessary, in the refrigerator.

Children with a history of severe allergies or anaphylaxis (bee stings) may have medication kept at school for emergencies upon written instruction by the child's pediatrician.

Parents must notify Odyssey, in writing, whenever their child has received further immunizations, so that Odyssey can maintain their immunization records. Also, parents must notify Odyssey, in writing, of any additional health-related problems that their child may possess, including, but not limited to, allergies, sunburn sensitivities, seizures, head lice or exposure to contagious disease.

No "blanket" medication authorizations are accepted for Tylenol or other over-the-counter and/or temperature-controlling medications except with the parent's or guardian's express prior approval to help during teething or after immunizations. In no event will any over-the-counter medication be distributed to a child for more than three consecutive days without a physician's note. For purposes of this requirement, different medications designed to combat similar issues (*e.g.*, Tylenol vs. Motrin, etc.) will be considered the same medication and cannot be interchanged in an effort to prolong the three-day limitation.

An Authorization for Medication form must be completed by the parent or guardian before any medication will be administered by the staff. A separate form must be completed for each type of medication to be administered. If the medication is to be administered for several days, the parent or guardian must authorize each day's dosage. If the medication is to be administered for several days, the Administrative Director should check the Authorization for Medication form when the parent leaves the medicine to make sure that the day's dosage has been authorized by the parent or guardian. If authorization has not been given, the parent or guardian must either return to the school to sign the form or fax written authorization to the school before any medication will be administered.

Any special utensil used for administering the medicine (syringe, etc.) will be provided by the parent or guardian.

Prescription medications will only be administered for the time period prescribed. If re-prescribed, written authorization from the physician indicating the continued duration for the medication is required.

The final decision on whether to exclude a child from the school due to health-related issues is made by Odyssey; not by the parent or the physician.

C. NUTRITION

1. General Information

During the registration process, a parent whose child requires a special diet will need to inform the director of dietary limitations.

Breakfast is served daily, between 8:30 and 8:45 AM, depending on classroom. If your child will arrive at the school later than the time during which their class normally eats, please call ahead and we will hold a breakfast for your child. However, families arriving after 8:45 should be aware that the morning learning block and/or other scheduled events generally start immediately after breakfast and that food cannot be held after 8:45.

Parents are welcome to have lunch with their child's class. Please give us as much notice as possible, at least by 9:00 AM of the day that you will be joining us for lunch.

Menus for Odyssey breakfasts, snacks and lunch will be displayed in the front office each week.

Children with allergies to certain foods and/or religious exceptions must notify Odyssey's Director of such issues and must complete Odyssey's Allergy / Religious Exception Menu Form.

2. Infants

Infant formula and baby food is not supplied by Odyssey. Each infant room has facilities for warming and/or cooling infant foods; microwaves will not be used for any warming purposes.

3. Toddlers

The toddler classes provide a transition period in which finger foods will be introduced from our kitchen as the children become ready.

4. Preschool

Meal time is an integral part of the Odyssey Program. All lunches and snacks (other than infants) will be served family style. Careful attention will be given to proper nutrition. For those children in age-appropriate groups, tasks such as setting the table and cleaning up after the meal will be the responsibility of Helpers. All children will have the opportunity to serve as a Lunch or Snack Helper on a regular basis.

All pre-school meals served at Odyssey are planned and prepared by Odyssey food service personnel and meet the requirements of a nutritionally well-balanced meal. Children will be encouraged at least to "try" each item served at a given meal. Children, however, will not be forced to eat any particular food.

While Odyssey will do everything within reason to accommodate the medical, religious and/or other special dietary requirements, Odyssey cannot be responsible for children who simply do not want to eat some foods in general.

VII. CLOSING

We thank you for placing your trust in Odyssey. It is a tremendous responsibility to take care of children; one that we take very seriously. We believe that we have selected the most energetic, highly trained and capable staff possible. They are at Odyssey because they love children, and because they believe that Odyssey provides the best environment for children. Our staff also understands that my goal is to be the very best employer (although demanding) that they will ever have – I want them to have great work conditions so that they will be able to be 100% focused on nurturing and teaching your children.

We always will try to not only meet each parent's high expectations, but also to surpass them. Every decision by Odyssey is made after careful consideration of each individual child's best interest.

If you ever have any questions about your child's experiences at Odyssey, please let us know immediately. We plan to be the best childcare company in the country; our goal is to be better on our worst day, than any of our competitors on their best day!

If you ever have any questions or comments about how well Odyssey is meeting its goals, please contact me at any of the corporate "locations" provided above.

Thank you,

Bob Mitchell

G. Robert ("Bob") Mitchell
Owner
Odyssey Early Schools