

CHALLENGE + CARE = SUCCESS

RIDGELAND

SCHOOL DISTRICT 122



 Ivy League Kids



Early Education Family Handbook

2025-2026






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A Message from our Team

Welcome to Ivy League Kids Early Education. We are delighted to have your child join our community of early learners. This handbook is designed to provide you with important information about our program and policies. Please read it carefully and feel free to reach out to us with any questions or concerns.

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Guiding Young Minds: Statement of Services, Purposes, and Goals

At Ivy League Kids Early Education, we are committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment for children to learn, grow, and thrive. Our goal is to create a place where children feel valued, respected, and encouraged to develop their full potential. We believe that every child is unique and deserves to be treated with care and compassion. Our dedicated team of educators is passionate about early childhood education and is committed to providing a curriculum that is both enriching and developmentally appropriate.

We understand the importance of a strong partnership between parents, caregivers, and educators. We strive to create a supportive and inclusive community where everyone feels welcome and valued.

Our purpose is to provide a safe, nurturing, and educational environment where children can learn, grow, and thrive. We believe that early childhood is a critical time for development, and we are committed to providing high-quality care and education to support each child's unique needs. Our curriculum is inspired by the Montessori philosophy, which emphasizes independence, respect, and hands-on learning. We believe that children learn best through exploration and discovery, and our classrooms are designed to foster creativity, curiosity, and a love of learning. We are dedicated to continuous improvement and are always seeking new ways to enhance the quality of our program. We believe that by providing a nurturing and stimulating environment, we can help children develop the skills and confidence they need to succeed in school and in life.

At Ivy League Kids Early Education, we are more than just a daycare – we are a community of learners, caregivers, and advocates for children. We invite you to join us on this journey of discovery and growth.



Admission, Enrollment, and Billing Policies

Hours of Operation:

Monday through Friday from 7:30AM - 4:00PM.

Ivy League Kids Early Education will follow the current Ridgeland school district calendar with seasonal breaks, days off, teacher institute days, and half day schedules. Our site will be open for teacher institute days and half days for regular hours. Please see the current schedule for the most up to date information.

Enrollment Types Offered:

We offer both full-time and part-time enrollment options to accommodate the varying needs of families. Priority enrollment is granted to students enrolling on a full-time basis.

Tuition & Billing Guidelines:

- Payment is due 1 week prior to attending on Monday. We bill weekly for the week ahead.
- If the card, or checking account on file, comes back declined, then a \$15.00 declined payment fee will be automatically applied to your account.
- A 2-week notice is required when dropping from the program (whether temporarily or permanently). You will be responsible for the tuition through the period without a 2-week notice.
- Written notice for withdrawal can be made by emailing contact@ivyleaguekids.org or you can call our administrative office at 815-464-1265.
- There is no credit for sick days, days absent, or extreme weather days (i.e. emergency school closing).
- The responsible payer must have a valid credit/debit card or checking account on file at all times. If a card or account comes back declined 3 times, a new form of payment is required on the account.
- All unpaid balances will be collected at the end of the school year.

Late Pick Up Policy:

Please be sure to pick up your child by site closing time. There will be a 5-minute grace period for the first occurrence. After the grace period, \$1.00 per minute per child will be charged to your account. Chronic late pick-ups will result in higher late fees and/or termination from our program.

Holiday and Vacation Schedules:

Tuition is based on a regular weekly schedule for all families. Weekly tuition will be required except in the instance of full weeks out of school such as: Winter Break, Spring Break, and preplanned vacations with two-weeks notice provided to our billing department.

Arrival and Departure of Children:

Arrival: Drop off children in their classrooms by entering door 2 on the west side of the building. Parents and guardians are required to physically escort their child into and out of the center.

Clock in/Clock out Keypad: Upon entering or exiting the building, parents/guardians must check-in/out by entering their sign-in code on the classroom tablet.

Hand washing: All students must wash their hands upon entering the classroom.

Saying goodbye: Parents/guardians should say goodbye to their child before leaving.

Departure of Children: Children may only be picked up by those individuals listed on their emergency contacts within the Procure app and Enrollment Agreement Forms. You can update these forms by calling or emailing our business office at 815-464-1265 or contact@ivyleaguekids.org. Photo IDs are required to pick up any child from our program. Children may be picked up early from our program, but this must be communicated to us at the beginning of the day or via message.

Child enrollment documentation requirements

As an additional part of our enrollment process we require each child to have a birth certificate and a current health care examination (physical) on file with up to date immunization records. We ask that all birth certificates and physicals are turned in prior to your child's first day with us!

Birth Certificate:

The Illinois Missing Children Records Act requires childcare facilities to obtain certified copies of birth certificates for enrolling children. Accordingly, please provide us with a certified copy of your child's birth certificate within 7 days of your child's enrollment in our program.

If you are unable to provide proof of your child's identification and age within 7 days, we are required by the Illinois's Missing Children Records Act to immediately notify the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services or local law enforcement. At that time, you will be provided written notification that you have an additional 10 days to comply

Physical Examination:

Initial Documentation: The initial health care examination must be dated less than 6 months prior to the enrollment of the child to our school. Following the initial health care examination, children are required to obtain a new physical from their pediatrician every 2 years.

Immunizations: The medical report shall indicate that the child has received the immunizations required by the Illinois Department of Public Health in its rules (77 Ill. Adm. Code 695, Immunization Code). These include poliomyelitis, measles, rubella, mumps, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, haemophilus influenzae B, hepatitis B, and varicella (chickenpox) or provide proof of immunity according to requirements in 77 Ill. Adm. Code 690.50 of the Department of Public Health rules (<http://www.idph.state.il.us>).

Lead Screening: Our policies require that each student must have either the Childhood Lead Risk Assessment Questionnaire OR screened for lead poisoning. The pediatrician must sign the questionnaire if they do not require their patient to be screened.

The initial examination shall show that children from the ages of one to 6 years have been screened for lead poisoning (for children residing in an area defined as high risk by the Illinois Department of Public Health in its Lead Poisoning Prevention Code (77 Ill. Adm. Code 845)) or that a lead risk assessment has been completed (for children residing in an area defined as low risk by the Illinois Department of Public Health).

Tuberculosis Screening: All children, 12 months and older, are required to have either the Primary Care Childhood Tuberculosis (TB) Risk Assessment Questionnaire completed OR screened for TB by their pediatrician upon enrollment. If the child is in a high-risk group, as determined by the examining physician, a tuberculin skin test by the Mantoux method and the results of that test shall be included in the initial examination for all children who have attained one year of age, or at the age of one year for children who are enrolled before their first birthday.

Thank you for your cooperation in meeting the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

Form:



Physical Exam Form



Emergency Medical Care

All families will read and sign off on the Emergency Medical Care forms in their registration packet. These sign offs indicate that each family gives their permission for Ivy League Kids staff to administer First Aid to your child. First Aid will be administered to minor scrapes and bumps. This includes antiseptic creams and band-aids on scrapes, ice on bumps, and bandages and slings on sprains.

In the event of a medical or dental emergency, you give your permission for ILK to seek emergency medical services for your child when you cannot be immediately reached at the time of the emergency. ILK will do everything possible to contact you during this time. If you cannot be reached, ILK will reach out to all emergency contacts until we have made contact. Families will be responsible for the emergency medical charges incurred.

Child Accidents

Your child's safety and well-being is our top priority. In the event of an accident or incident involving your child while they are in our care, we want to ensure that you are informed and supported as quickly as possible. We will promptly send incident and accident reports to you via the Procare app or a direct phone call.

Administering Prescription Medicine

Prescription medication does not have to be scheduled around daycare! Our team is trained in delivering prescription medication to students with written authorization from families along with the prescription label and instructions from the original packaging. Each prescription medicine will need its own Authorization to Administer Medication form filled out prior to medicine being administered.

Administering Over-The-Counter Medicine

Over-the-counter medications are administered only with the written authorization by a parent or guardian. These medications may only be administered in accordance with manufacturer's instructions when. Each over-the-counter medicine will need its own Authorization to Administer Medication form filled out prior to medicine being administered.

Illness Policy

As part of our commitment to providing a safe and healthy environment for all children in our care, we want to remind you that there are certain communicable diseases for which we may need to exclude children from attending daycare. This measure is in place to prevent the spread of illness and protect the well-being of all children and staff.

If your child exhibits symptoms of a communicable disease, such as a fever, rash, vomiting, or diarrhea, please keep them at home and consult with their healthcare provider. Once your child is no longer contagious and has been cleared to return to daycare, we look forward to welcoming them back.

Ivy League Kids follows all Illinois Department of Public Health & CDC guidelines and policies for exclusions of illness.

Please refer to the items below for clarification based on the DCFS Administrative Code Section 407.310 Health Requirements for Children:

Children shall be screened upon arrival daily for any obvious signs of illness. If symptoms of illness are present, the child care staff shall determine whether they are able to care for the child safely, based on the apparent degree of illness, other children present and facilities available to care for the ill child.

1) Children with diarrhea and those with a rash combined with fever (oral temperature of 101° F or higher or under the arm temperature of 100° F or higher) shall not be admitted to the day care center while those symptoms persist, and shall be removed as soon as possible should these symptoms develop while the child is in care.

2) Children need not be excluded for a minor illness unless any of the following exists, in which case exclusion from the day care center is required:

- A) Illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities;
- B) Illness that calls for greater care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children;
- C) Fever with behavior change or symptoms of illness;
- D) Unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing or other signs of possible severe illness;
- E) Diarrhea;
- F) Vomiting 2 or more times in the previous 24 hours, unless the vomiting is determined to be due to a noncommunicable condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration;
- G) Mouth sores associated with the child's inability to control his or her saliva, until the child's physician or the local health department states that the child is noninfectious;
- H) Rash with fever or behavior change, unless a physician has determined the illness to be noncommunicable;
- I) Purulent conjunctivitis, until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated;
- J) Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated;
- K) Strep throat (streptococcal pharyngitis), until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated and until the child has been without fever for 24 hours;
- L) Scabies, until the morning after the first treatment;
- M) Head lice, until the morning after the first treatment;
- N) Chicken pox (varicella), until at least 6 days after onset of rash;
- O) Whooping cough (pertussis), until 5 days of antibiotic treatment have been completed;
- P) Mumps, until 9 days after onset of parotid gland swelling;
- Q) Measles, until 4 days after disappearance of the rash; or
- R) Symptoms that may be indicative of one of the serious, communicable diseases identified in the Illinois Department of Public Health

Emergency Preparedness

Fire Drills:

Fire drills are performed monthly. Once the alarm sounds, teachers will stop what they are doing, gather the children and lead them to their designated “safe zone” on the far end of the south parking lot, ensuring all children are accounted for. Once the all-clear sign is given, all children and staff will return to their classroom.

Tornado Drills:

Tornado drills are performed annually. During this drill, if anyone is outside, they will be immediately brought indoors. All windows and doors will be securely closed. Children will be taken to their designated shelter-in-place locations, which are marked on the Emergency Preparedness location maps posted in each classroom.

Active Threat/Lockdowns:

Active threat drills are performed annually. During this drill, if anyone is outside, they will be immediately brought indoors. All windows and doors will be securely closed and locked. All shades are closed on windows. Children will remain in their classrooms. No one will be allowed to enter or leave the building until the threat is fully lifted.

Emergency Evacuations:

In an emergency situation where the building is no longer deemed safe for the children and staff, the group as a whole will move to our off-site location: Andrew High School

Emergency Closings:

In an emergency situation that requires immediate closure of our facility, families will be notified via the Procure App, Facebook, and text message/phone calls.

Confidentiality

Release of Personal Information

Confidentiality is of utmost importance at our daycare. We respect and protect the privacy of all children and families in our care. As part of our commitment to professionalism, we will not share any private or personal information about your child and family with anyone except on a need to know basis. If you have concerns or need to share information regarding your child, please speak directly to your Site Director or Director of Early Education. Thank you for helping us maintain a safe and respectful environment for all.

Personal Belongings

We ask that all personal items are labeled with the first and last name of each child and are kept in their assigned cubby/locker when not in use.

We ask that you bring a change of clothes to be left at school.



Guidance and Discipline

Because a key goal of the program is to help children develop positive self-esteem, build trust in the world around them and develop autonomy and pride in their work, a positive guidance approach is used. At Ivy League Kids Early Education Programs, we believe in fostering the development of self-discipline and socialization skills in children through positive guidance and nurturing interactions. Our approach is tailored to meet the unique needs of our students, focusing on building trusting relationships and providing a safe and supportive environment.

Acceptable Child Guidance and Discipline:

- **Meeting Their Needs:** We prioritize meeting the needs of each child and building a trusting relationship with them.
- **Thoughtful Play Space:** Our classroom spaces are carefully prepared to be childproof and safe, encouraging exploration and discovery.
- **Acceptance of Feelings:** We accept and acknowledge children's feelings, providing appropriate outlets for expression.
- **Refocusing Attention:** With young children, we proactively refocus their attention before inappropriate behavior occurs, guiding them towards positive activities.
- **Clear Directions:** Directions are stated clearly and simply, helping children understand expectations.
- **Calm and Consistent:** Teachers maintain a calm and consistent approach, promoting a sense of security and predictability.
- **Transitions:** We allow children time to adjust to transitions, understanding that these can be challenging for young children.

By implementing these strategies, we aim to create a supportive environment that promotes positive behavior and helps children develop important self-regulation and social skills.

Unacceptable Child Guidance and Discipline:

1. Inflicting physical pain (suspected child abuse will be reported to DCFS)
2. Name-calling, shouting, threatening, ridiculing, etc.
3. Depriving a child of any routine care service - food, toileting needs, etc.
4. Isolation
5. Removing a child from the group
6. Imposing cumulative or delayed consequences

Our overall goal is to keep a child successfully in our program. Prior to transitioning a child to other services, our staff will implement all possible classroom strategies to support the child. The Steps to Prevent Suspension and Expulsion document will be used as a guide to identify possible strategies and resources. Then, if we have exhausted all available resources and have come to the decision that keeping the child in the program is not in the best interest of the child or the child's peers, our staff will work with the family to transition the child out of the program. A successful transition is when a child has moved into another program that better fits them and their family's needs.

Water Testing for Lead

Ivy League Kids Early Education conducts water testing for lead in all sites as required by IDPH: All homes and centers constructed on or before January 1, 2000 are required to test all drinking water sources: kitchen and bathroom faucets, water fountains and bubblers, handwashing sinks in infant and toddler rooms for the presence of lead.

Water testing for lead is not required at Columbus Manor. The building was constructed in 2005.

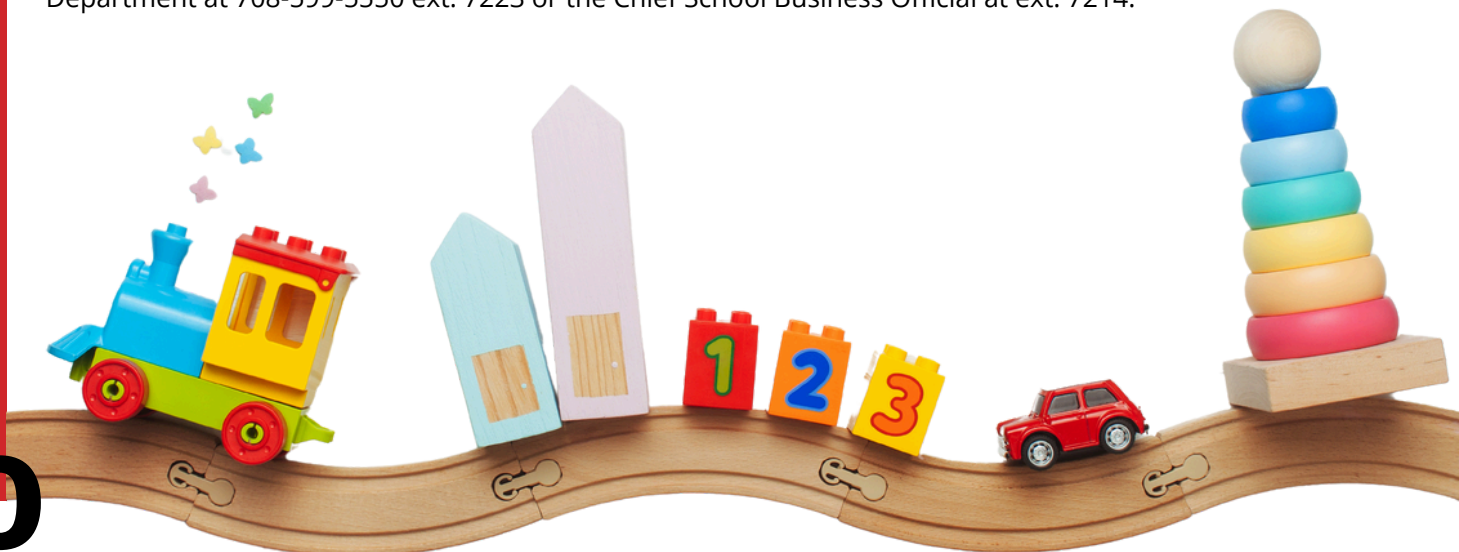
Behavior Support and Program Transition Policies

The overall goal of our program is to keep a child successfully in our program. Prior to transitioning a child to other services, our staff will implement all possible classroom strategies to support the child. Please see our Guidance and Discipline Policy for more details.

Integrated Pest Management Program Notice:

Per D122 Student Handbook:

The Illinois General Assembly has passed a law requiring that public schools implement an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program and notify parents/guardians as well as school employees at least 48 hours prior to any pesticide applications on school property. The term "pesticide" includes insecticides, herbicides, rodenticides, and fungicides. The notification requirement extends to both indoor and outdoor pesticide applications. Excluded from this notification requirement are antimicrobial agents (such as disinfectants, sanitizers or deodorizers), insecticide baits, and rodenticide baits. It should be noted that this school district already had the components of a regular integrated pest management program in place for several years. Signs will be posted at all entry doors the 48 hours preceding the application. The signs will remain posted for 2 days after the application. Please be assured that pesticides will be utilized only when other measures have been ineffective in dealing with a particular situation. Any questions you may have regarding the District's Integrated Pest Management Program may be directed by telephone to the Maintenance Department at 708-599-5550 ext. 7223 or the Chief School Business Official at ext. 7214.



Parent Communication

We strive to maintain open and transparent communication with all families at our daycare. We use a variety of methods to keep you informed about your child's day, including Procare App daily reports, newsletters, emails, and parent-teacher conferences. Our staff are always available to discuss your child's progress, answer any questions you may have, and address any concerns. We value your input and encourage you to communicate with us regularly to ensure the best possible care for your child.

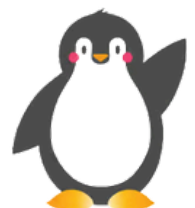
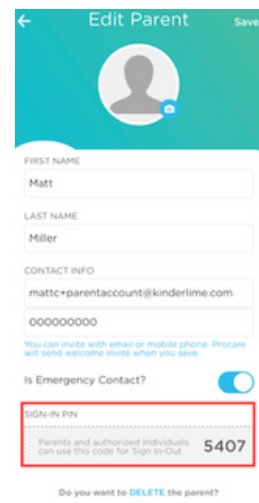
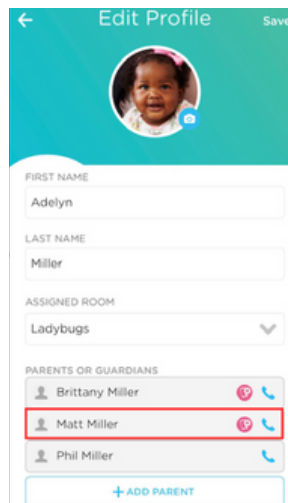
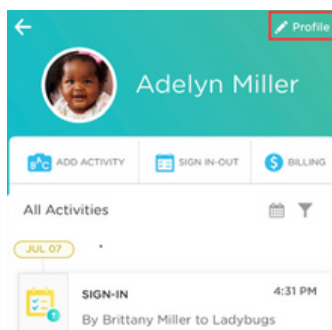
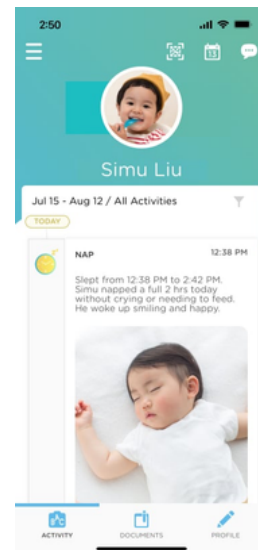
We utilize the ProCare app to enhance the parent experience and keep communication seamless.

With this tool, parents can:

- Receive real-time updates on their child's activities, including meals, naps, and milestones.
- Easily message teachers and staff directly through the app.
- Access photos and videos that highlight their child's day. The ProCare app ensures parents stay connected and informed, making it easier to balance work and family life while fostering a strong partnership between home and school.

Need help finding your 4-digit pin?:

- Log into your Procare App
- On the main screen, click on your child's name.
- Click Profile in the top right corner.
- Find the parent, guardian, or authorized pickup person and click their name.
- Locate the Sign-In PIN field.



Classroom Food Guidelines

Healthy Lunches & Snack Choices

At Ivy League Kids Early Education, we follow Maria Montessori's philosophy of promoting a healthy lifestyle that nurtures both the body and mind. We believe that nutritious food supports children's growth, development, and ability to engage in meaningful learning experiences.

Birthday Celebrations & Special Treats

We love celebrating birthdays and special occasions with our students! Families are welcome to bring store-bought treats to share with the class. To ensure the safety and well-being of all children, we ask that treats come in their original packaging with ingredient labels visible. Please be mindful of allergies and consider healthier alternatives when possible. While sweet treats are allowed for birthdays, we encourage balance and appreciate snacks like fruit trays, yogurt, or whole-grain options. If you plan to bring treats, please notify your child's teacher in advance so we can accommodate any dietary needs.



Our Commitment to You

We are dedicated to providing your child with a nurturing, enriching, and authentic Montessori experience that fosters independence, curiosity, and a lifelong love of learning. We recognize the trust you place in us, and we are committed to:

Providing a Safe & Supportive Environment – Ensuring your child feels valued, respected, and encouraged to grow at their own pace.

Delivering High-Quality Montessori-Inspired Education – Creating a thoughtfully prepared environment that promotes hands-on learning, critical thinking, and self-confidence.

Fostering Open Communication & Partnership – Maintaining a strong, collaborative relationship with families to support each child's individual journey.

Embracing Continuous Growth & Improvement – Always seeking ways to enhance our program to best serve our children, families, and community.

We are honored to be a part of your child's early learning experience and look forward to partnering with you on this journey of discovery and growth. Thank you for choosing Ivy League Kids Early Education!

Meet the Admin Team



Joe Evans
CEO



Christina Knabjian
Managing Director



Jill Vickers
Director of HR



Danielle Fernandez
Director of Early Education



CONTACT US

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