

HOPKINS HOUSE

A Learning Center for Children, Youth, and Families
Celebrating 76 Years

Helen Day Preschool Academy

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Dear Parents and Family Members,

Allow me to express my sincerest thank you for completing the 2016 Preschool Satisfaction survey this past January. From our parent responses on the annual survey, we gain much insight about our strengths and areas in which we might need to improve. The purpose of this letter is to share how we intend to use your feedback to improve the Helen Day Preschool Academy.

We were excited and pleased to learn that the overwhelming majority of parents expressed satisfaction with the care and learning opportunities provided at the Helen Day Preschool Academy, as well as satisfaction with the performance of our highly-qualified staff.

Please allow me to touch upon some of the areas the survey identified as areas we could improve upon and what strategies we will implement going forward.

Notification of Staff Development Days/Academy Closures or Delays

The administration at Helen Day makes every attempt to notify families about closures in a timely manner. The Assistant Principal generally sends out a notification two weeks in advance of any scheduled holiday/staff development day. Hopkins House also publishes a Master Calendar, which is sent via email, at the beginning of each school year. The Master Calendar is also on display in the lobby, on the Hopkins House website and can be found on the organization's Facebook page. Parents can also request a copy of the calendar at the front desk.

We do recognize that these methods of communication are not seen or heard by all. To help provide increased notification of academy closures and delays, both Helen Day Parent Council and Administration will be including closures in their monthly newsletters. The administration will also provide reminders of closures by posting a sign on the main door and via email at least 4 weeks out from the academy closure.

Please know that when the decision is made to delay or close the academy, it is done with taking our families and staff's safety into great consideration. Decisions are made with the consensus of the Principal, Parent Council President, and Academy Business Officer and are relayed by 11pm the night before, if possible. Weather delays and any other unexpected closures are broadcasted via email and text messaging. Please make sure you are all signed up to receive text alerts by signing up through our website. Parents can also utilize our Weather Advisory Hotline by calling **571-480-4097**.

Discipline Policy

It is our goal first and foremost to provide high-quality care and early education for our students. Our goal is to ensure that each child is able to receive the best care and education that we can offer. At times, we are faced with young scholars that may need additional assistance with their behavioral, social and/or emotional skills. In section 15 of the Hopkins House Family Handbook, the discipline policy outlines what steps or measures will be taken in addressing children who might cause injury to another child or themselves, exhibit inappropriate behavior, or use

obscenities. The management at Helen Day partners with parents, educators and sometimes outside services to determine what the best strategies are to help address these behaviors. On March 2nd, we hosted a general Parent Council Meeting where Ms. Lisa Ton, Preschool Prevention Team for Alexandria City, spoke about some of the services and resources she offers to staff and students of Hopkins House. We were excited to see such a great turnout and to provide the opportunity for parents to ask questions to Ms. Ton!

At present, management at all the academies is currently reviewing the discipline policy at Hopkins House. It is our hope that this will help our families better understand what steps are taken to address children with excessive behavioral concerns. It is always our intention to maintain a safe and secure environment for all of our young scholars. Our goal first is to ensure the safety and education of all children in our care, as well as identify the necessary resources to better serve children with behavioral needs.

Staff Turnover and Retention

The concern about staff turnover and retention at any preschool is a valid concern, and the need for continuity of care for the children at Helen Day Preschool Academy is our number one priority. The administration at Helen Day has a very strong commitment to hiring educators that see child care as a profession and want to make it a career. Each candidate that is interested in working at Helen Day goes through an extensive interview process to ensure that the candidate is a proper fit for employment at Helen Day.

To maintain morale and retain the educators at Helen Day Preschool Academy, we regularly check in with staff on a professional and personal level to see how they are doing. Both the Principal and Assistant Principal have "open door policies," in which an educator can approach us at any time to discuss anything of concern or question. As an agency, Hopkins House provides a myriad of systems to gauge staff morale, such as, quarterly staff meetings, Open Mic, and periodic staff surveys. The information gathered from these systems helps to provide feedback on what we can improve and how we can be more responsive to our educators' needs.

Teacher Communication with Parents

The survey results indicated that the usefulness of the Weekly Activity reports can be improved with more detail. We will work together with classroom educators to design a daily/weekly report that allow parents to see a snapshot of their child's day, but also learn how it is framed within our curriculum. Hopkins House has a play-based curriculum, in which children's interests and curiosities are fostered by the activities our educators implement via the weekly lesson plans and environment planning forms.

It was brought to our attention, via the survey, that some parents felt the communication from management to teachers was lacking, especially when we reorganized the Infant 1 and Infant 2 classrooms on January 4th of this year. Please understand that administration communicates in a variety of ways with our educators which includes, but are not limited to emails, memos and letters, text messages and face-to-face conversations. When the decision was made to reorganize the classrooms, management informed all educators via face to face conversations at the beginning of December and via email, on December 17th, 2015, along with details of the reorganization and when it would occur. All educators or classroom education teams are included on emails that affect the center such as: Introduction of New Staff, Illness Advisory Notices and academy closures. We do our best to anticipate and inform all staff of issues/concerns surrounding academy business.

We are very grateful that you have chosen the Helen Day Preschool Academy for your child's education and care. The Preschool Parent Satisfaction Survey is one of the ways of getting your feedback and addressing your concerns in a timely fashion. We appreciate every opportunity provided to be a partner in your child's education.

Kind Regards,



Dawn Erasquin, M.Ed.
Principal