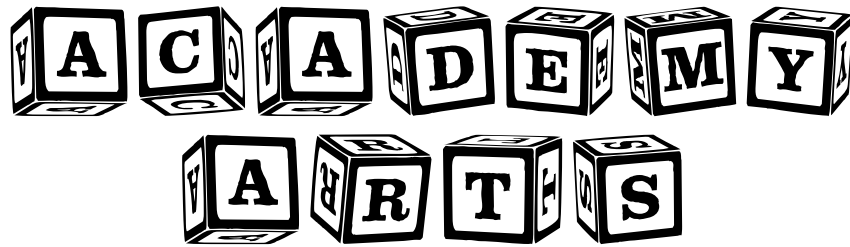


AR**T**S
RE**A**D**I**N**E**S**S**
TR**A**I**N**I**N**G
SC**H**O**O**L



Parent Handbook
2017-2018

Academy of Movement & Music
605 Lake Street • Oak Park, Illinois 60302 • 708•848•2329 • fax 708•848•2391
www.academyofmovementandmusic.com
academyofmovementandmusic@gmail.com

General Traffic Regulations

See page 6 & 7 for Traffic Regulations specific to Preschool A.R.T.S.

The Academy is located in a densely packed residential neighborhood. The high school playing fields are nearby and they, along with the Academy, generate a great deal of traffic. The following rules were put in place to help the Academy stay on good terms with our neighbors and to enable our clients to drop off and pick up their students safely.

Please comply with these traffic regulations!

1. Academy traffic **must travel ONE WAY** on Bishop Quarter Lane – entering on the east side of the U shaped drive by turning RIGHT as you drive west. Please **do not turn left from North Blvd** as you travel east. **For the safety of all, traffic should never move on the drive at more than 5 miles per hour.**
2. If you are **picking up** your student, you may join the carpool lane on the east side of our drive - this lane is intended to be slow moving at all times. Please **DO NOT COME EARLY** and just sit in the driveway and **NEVER** leave your car unattended in that lane. Most students need a few minutes to get their belongings or change clothes after class; if you come early, you will not get your student earlier. You must stay in the east lane of the Bishop Quarter Lane until you see your student on the Academy steps. Please be aware that if a group of students exits the building at the same time, chances are the student of the person in front of you in line is also out and they will be moving forward to collect their student, so there will be no need for you to pull out of the east lane. If, however, the car in front of you does not move with the other cars, **when there is room to go around the curve and pull up to the pole**, you may move out of the east lane and go forward to get your student. **You must not stop in front of the neighbors' drives while in the west lane.** Please yield right of way to any neighbor attempting to pull in or out of his/her drive.
3. If you are **dropping off** your student, coming 10 – 15 minutes before class starts to allow time for the student to change clothes is a good plan. You may travel in the west lane of the drive, but you must be very careful to pull up all the way to the pole and your student should be quickly ready to exit the car. This is not a good time for discussions. When our traffic piles up, blocking the whole driveway, our neighbors become very upset with the congested drive, especially if they need access to their driveways.
4. When walking your child to and from the Academy, **please use the sidewalk!** Do not walk in the middle of the driveway and **never walk across the neighbors' driveways or through their private courtyard.**
5. **PLEASE DROP OFF OLDER DANCERS OUT ON LAKE STREET TO WALK INTO THE ACADEMY.**
6. **Never enter into or park in the U-shaped drive to the north of our building off of Lake Street. This is private property, and although the neighbors are gracious about having our students walk from Lake Street, they have a very active towing service for non-resident cars. You will be towed!**
7. **PARKING** next to the Academy building or in front of the Academy garages is reserved for **STAFF ONLY**. Please do not park even for “just a minute” – **park only on Lake Street, East Avenue or in the METERED slots on North Blvd. Please do not pull into the townhome driveways at any time.**
8. **To accommodate our Preschool A.R.T.S. parents**, we have Academy staff available to greet and dismiss children whose parents choose to use our carpool system during preschool hours. *See page 6 & 7*
9. **Failure to comply with these regulations may result in your student's dismissal from the Academy. The rules apply to everyone, and keeping a good relationship with our neighbors is important to the Academy!**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

A.R.T.S. Important School Dates Calendar 2017-2018

August	23	Parent Orientation 7:30 PM
	24	A.R.T.S. Open House: Downstairs 9:30-12:30/Upstairs 10:00-11:30
	28, 29	Classes Begin
	30	A.R.T.S. Door Greeting Begins
September	24	Fall Get-together 4:00-5:30 PM
October	2, 3	ASQ Questionnaires Sent Home
	24, 25	Picture Days (Class Pictures)
	30	Fall Masquerade
	31	Fall Masquerade
November	1	Open Observations Begin
	1, 2	ASQ Questionnaires Due
	9	Upstairs A.R.T.S. Performance 9:45 AM
	17, 20, 21	A.R.T.S. Conferences 8:00-3:30 PM ~ No A.R.T.S. Classes
	22-24	Thanksgiving Recess
December	25	Winter Recess Begins
January	8	Classes Resume
	16	2018-2019 Registration Begins for Current A.R.T.S. Families
	30	2018-2019 Registration Opens to All Academy Families
February	4	2018-2019 Open Registration Begins
	6	Summer A.R.T.S. Pre-Registration ~ Current A.R.T.S. Families
	8	Upstairs A.R.T.S. Performance 9:45 AM
	10	Sock Hop ~ 5:30-7:00 PM
	13, 14	Valentine Exchange
March	5	No A.R.T.S. Classes/Teachers Institute Day
	26	Spring Break Begins
April	2	Classes Resume
	12	Upstairs A.R.T.S. Performance 9:45 AM
May	9, 10	Recognition Days 9:30 AM ~ Last Days of School for AM's
	10	Recognition Day 1:15 PM ~ Last Day of School for PM's
June	11	Summer Session Begins ~ 7 Weeks

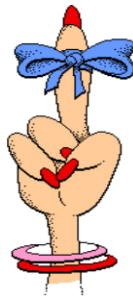
ABSENCES/ILLNESSES

DO call the office -

- if your child will be absent or on vacation
- to report a contagious illness ~ we send home “health notices” to alert parents of any infectious or contagious disease that they may have been exposed to
- if you are going to be early or late picking up your child
- if you have problems or questions



REMINDERS

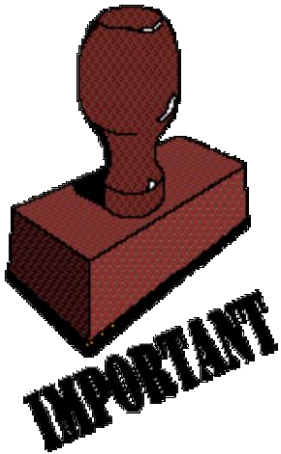


1. **DO have your child wash his/her hands after eating and before coming to school – especially if the food has contained any nuts/peanuts or nut/peanut oils.** Some of the games we play in class include holding hands. Even skin contact can trigger anaphylactic shock.
2. **DO check your email** for A.R.T.S. correspondence regularly.
3. **DO label everything!** Remember to do so at each change of seasons and/or as your child grows.
4. **DO NOT** bring any snacks containing any peanuts/nuts or peanut/nut products into the school. Please see page 1 for details.
5. **DO NOT allow** your child to bring toys, blankets, pacifiers, jewelry, money, gum, candy or other snacks into the Academy. Assure your child that these treasures will be waiting at home or in the car after school.
6. **DO NOT** use your child’s backpack to transport any medication from home to your child’s after school day care destination. If necessary, we will be happy to keep such items in the office for you.
7. **DO NOT** send children to school until they’ve been fever-free for 24 hours or have been on a full course of prescribed antibiotic for 24-hours.

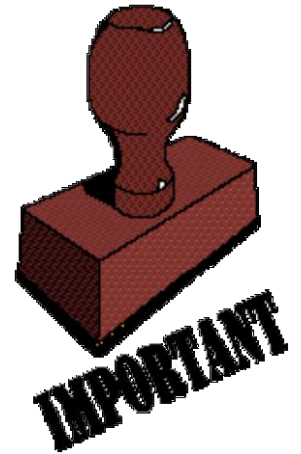
PEANUT/NUT POLICY

THE ACADEMY IS A PEANUT/NUT -FREE ZONE PLEASE READ AND OBSERVE CAREFULLY

This may seem like an unusual first page to our A.R.T.S. Parent Handbook, but because we feel this is such an important issue we have chosen to begin our Handbook by addressing it. We have students at the Academy with life-threatening allergies to **PEANUTS, NUTS, and all PEANUT/NUT PRODUCTS.** These students must avoid these foods and foods containing these substances. Please do not bring in any treats on any occasion that contain any of the following ingredients:



PEANUT OIL
GROUND NUTS
MIXED NUTS
NUTS
NU-NUTS FLAVORED NUTS
PEANUTS
PEANUT BUTTER
PEANUT FLOUR
M & Ms (PLAIN OR PEANUT)
CHOCOLATE CANDIES AND CANDY BARS
HYDROLYZED PLANT PROTEIN
HYDROLYZED VEGETABLE PROTEIN
MARZIPAN
NOUGAT
AFRICAN, CHINESE AND THAI DISHES
EGG ROLLS



Please be sure to read labels!

We will not use products that have the label “May contain traces of tree nuts or peanuts.”

We appreciate your attention to this important matter. With your help all the children can enjoy a healthy school year. If you have any questions, please call Stephanie at the Academy at 708-848-2329.

YOUR CHILD'S DAY

DOWNSTAIRS A.R.T.S.

Children in the Downstairs A.R.T.S program are divided by age into four different groups -- red, blue, green and yellow, with the yellows the youngest. Generally, the age range within a group is no more than six months.

There are three classrooms downstairs. Studio I is used for Creative Movement. The Yellow group begins in this room every day. Studio II is the Physical Fitness room. The Green group starts here each day. Studio III is the Art, Music, Montessori classroom. This is where both the Blue and the Red groups begin their day.

Creative Movement and Physical Fitness are each half hour classes; the children spend a full hour in the Art, Music, Montessori classroom.

Creative Movement classes work on basic motor and dance skills, as well as on problem solving using movement in space through time. Props can include rhythm instruments, puppets, scarves and beanbags.

The Physical Fitness class also works on basic motor skills with more emphasis on upper body work. One or two days a week may have a special activity using ropes, balls or a parachute. The other days usually have a circuit of activities.

The Art, Music, Montessori classroom offers a variety of different activities. There is a book corner, shelf work, imaginative play area, pre-writing table, game table and green circle with a variety of building materials to share. Children generally participate in art projects on Monday and Tuesday. Wednesday and Thursday generally incorporate special projects and practical life exercises. The hour of activities concludes with music on the green circle.

During the course of the year we work on thematic units that usually last about three weeks. Items in our green circle, imaginative play area, books, puzzles, some shelf work, art and music vary with each theme.

Snack, usually consisting of graham crackers or pretzels and water, is served halfway through the morning/afternoon. Before snack the children wash their hands then change classes.

The teacher/child ratio varies from room to room. There is one teacher and an aide in Creative Movement and one teacher and an aide in the Physical Fitness class. Three teachers are always present in the Art, Music, Montessori classroom. There are also one or two "floating aides" who assist children with hand washing and bathroom needs. These aides also assist in the classrooms as needed and are actively involved in the greeting and dismissal procedures.

Children 3 1/2 (by September 1) and older are eligible to participate in our Friday Science/Montessori program that is held in our large open classroom upstairs.

UPSTAIRS A.R.T.S.

Children in Upstairs A.R.T.S. begin their day by climbing the long flight of stairs upstairs to the big classrooms. They remove their shoes and, depending on their color group, they place them on the purple or orange lines on the landing. They are greeted and directed to a special area where their school shoes are waiting for them on the line. They remove their coats and put on their school shoes. Then the children do a daily calendar activity after which they are free to choose work from the activity cabinet or read books in the reading area. To end this free time, a teacher rings a bell signaling the children to put their work away. The Orange Group (younger children) will then go to the West gym as the Purple group begins their day in the East gym.

Each day Upstairs has different activities, with each class lasting about 45 minutes. Depending on the activity and the day, the teacher/student ratio varies Upstairs, but is usually about 1:6. Snack, usually consisting of graham crackers or pretzels and water, is served halfway through the morning. Before snack, the children wash their hands. After snack, the children have free project time until the groups change classes.

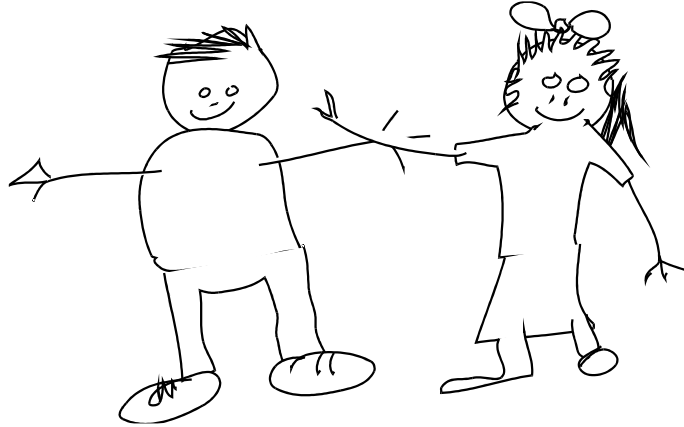
Mondays and Wednesdays are experience oriented. Mondays consist of literature and a physical fitness class. Wednesdays are for art and creative movement. Literature allows the children to informally act out some favorite stories.

Tuesdays and Thursdays are performance oriented. During the school year, four “units” or “themes” are presented. All classes explore activities and ideas built around these themes with a performance that ends each unit. On Tuesdays, the children have Music and Production Shop -- an art class that creates sets, props and sometimes costumes for each performance. Thursday’s children work in Dance and Cultural Awareness. Here they will learn songs, dances and customs from around the world.

Friday is a special day Upstairs at the Academy. Some older children (3 1/2 and up) from Downstairs A.R.T.S. join Upstairs students to work in the large open space. The space is set up with special activity areas that include: Montessori practical life, sensorial work, snack preparation and flower arranging; Science, language and math; Puzzle solving and construction materials.

At the end of each day, the children change shoes, put on outerwear and are led down the back stairs to the main hallway where they are dismissed.

CLOTHING FOR SCHOOL



• CASUAL, LOOSE-FITTING CLOTHING •

- Simple shorts, leggings, or sweat pants with a T-shirt or sweatshirt work best. Dresses get in the way during our more active classes. If dresses are a must for your preschooler, they need to be worn over leggings, bike shorts, or tights. No jewelry please as this also gets in the way. Our art experiences are frequently messy, so please dress your child in something washable.

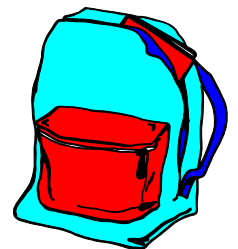
- **Upstairs A.R.T.S.** – dresses **may not** be worn on **Monday**, which is Physical Fitness Day.

• SHOES •

- Children are **required** to have **leather ballet slippers**. It is dangerous for children to run and dance in gym shoes or bare feet. Heavy shoes can hurt other children; bare feet are cold, and socks are slippery on the floors. Upstairs children will leave their ballet slippers at school. If your child is taking a separate ballet class during the week we will see that their ballet slippers are waiting for them at their class.

• SCHOOL BAGS •

- **Downstairs A.R.T.S.:** It is strongly recommended that each child bring a small backpack in which to carry ballet slippers, (optional: change of clothing), art work, and correspondence to and from school. ***Please do not send toys, food, or meds in your child's backpack.*** Please label it with your child's name.



- **Upstairs A.R.T.S.:** Backpacks are not needed.

• HAIR •

• Girls' long hair needs to be tied up so that it's not in the way while they do physical fitness class. Please also be mindful of bows, headbands and barrettes that easily come out. They can be distracting to your child and easily get lost.

• CHANGE OF CLOTHES •

• Occasionally accidents happen at school and clothing becomes wet or soiled. The Academy has several sets of T-shirts, sweatshirts, sweat pants, leggings, underwear and socks. The aides will change your child's clothing and send home the soiled clothing in a plastic bag. Just wash and return the Academy clothes the next time your child comes to school. If your child is very uncomfortable wearing unfamiliar clothing, keep an alternative set of clothes in your child's backpack.

• LABEL EVERYTHING! •

• Ballet slippers must have name and telephone number written on the inside of the shoes so we can contact you if they're lost. Children need to have their shoes, boots, outer garments and backpacks labeled as well. Many children have similar boots, sweaters and jackets. As the seasons change and children grow, please remember to label all new clothing.

• PERFORMANCE CLOTHING •

• Those children enrolled in the performance component (Tuesdays and Thursdays) of the Upstairs A.R.T.S. are **required to have** the following uniform clothing for our seasonal shows:

• girls - white long sleeved scoop neck leotard, light pink tights, black sweat pants and pink leather ballet slippers.

• boys - long sleeved white turtleneck shirt or mock turtleneck, black sweat pants and black leather ballet slippers.



DROP OFF/PICK UP PROCEDURES

Safety Restraints

We are required to follow Illinois law regarding car seats and safety restraints. Greeters cannot put a child in a car lacking these mandatory safety devices. Please walk in to get your child until you have safety restraints appropriate for your child's age and weight.

Drop off and Pick up procedures begin the 1st Wednesday of regular classes. Prior to that, please allow time to park on the street and walk into the building.

Please do not drop children off more than 10 minutes before classes begin. AM begins at 8:45. PM begins at 12:30.

• DROP OFF PROCEDURE •

- There is a greeter to escort children into the building from 10 minutes before the start of class to 10 minutes after.
- Drive up to the utility pole far enough so that two cars can let off children at the same time.
- Stay in your car and let the greeter get the children out of your car.
- **Please have your children on the passenger side of the car.**

• DISMISSAL PROCEDURE •

You may pick up your child by parking on East Ave., Lake Street or the metered slots on North Blvd. and walking into the building or by using our pick up service.

If you are coming into the building to pick up your child:

- **Downstairs A.R.T.S. parents** should line up to the right of the double doors and around the desk area.
- **Upstairs A.R.T.S. parents** should line up to the left of the double doors (along the wall by the office).
- **Please leave a center pathway clear for the children to get through.**
- All the children will be seated in the hall behind the closed double doors. A staff member will ask you your child's name and we will walk your child to you.
- Please clear the entryway as soon as possible after greeting your child to make room for others. The crowding and the noise in this small area can be difficult for some children, as well as the staff trying to call the children.

- We realize that the children are very excited to see you and you are equally excited to hear about their day, but we ask your patience. This procedure allows us to dismiss the children efficiently while keeping everyone safe.

If you choose to use the pick-up service:

- We have an established Pick Up routine, which you can elect to use. Each child will receive a Pick Up Number assigned by the office. The Pick Up service helps avoid the congestion involved in having sixty parents trying to find separate parking spaces and coming into the building to pick up children.

- ***Please do not arrive 20 minutes early and just sit in line.*** Our neighbors complain and call the police. 5 minutes is maximum.

- A greeter watches at the outer door for the Pick Up Numbers, and then escorts the children to the car.

- **Show your number** when you pull into the Academy Drive by holding up your number **outside** the car window.

- **When your child is brought outside you may then pull up to the utility pole.** If you are first in line do not assume that your child will be the first to be brought out. If the last person's child comes out first, that person may drive around the other cars to get their child.

- **Wait in your car.** Do not get out of your car to get your child because this will delay the line.

- **Having your child's car seat on the passenger side of the car is safest and best.**

You can help us insure a safe and effective dismissal in these ways:

- If you need to pick up your child early, call the office to make arrangements.
- Do not park in employee spaces around the building or Bishop Quarter Lane at any time or for any reason.

- Please be sure to **walk on the sidewalk along the fence**, not on Bishop Quarter Lane or on the condo driveways.

The Academy can release children only to authorized persons – a child's parent(s) or legal guardian. Only the child's parent(s) or legal guardian can authorize another person to pick up a child, including siblings 11 years and older. Authorizations should be in writing and must be signed by the parent(s) or legal guardian. The Academy has long-term and short-term forms available in the office. The Academy will accept a signed note or letter from a parent or guardian instead of one of the Academy forms. Phoned authorizations will be accepted at the discretion of the Academy office.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

You're welcome to celebrate your child's birthday at school. You might even want to consider celebrating a six month birthday if your child has a summer birthday. Some families choose to give a book or small gift to the classroom for all the children to enjoy. Wish lists are available in the office or you can ask the directors for ideas of items the teachers can use.



• DOWNSTAIRS A.R.T.S. •

You are invited to bring a treat to share. During the greeting routine, the birthday child is given a special sticker to wear for the day. At snack time the children sing "Happy Birthday" and enjoy your special treat. Birthday napkins are a big hit, but no cups please. They are too big for many children to hold. Please keep the snack simple - no gooey frostings. Pretzels, goldfish crackers, fruit, simple sugar cookies, or mini muffins are always enjoyed.* The Yellow and Green groups have snack together. The Red and Blue groups eat separately. Please call ahead to let us know what date you will be providing snack. We can then let you know if there are any conflicts as well as information about class size and possible allergies. Snacks are served at 9:50 AM or 1:35 PM. You are welcome to join us.

Downstairs A.R.T.S. children who attend Friday, Montessori Day have a few options for celebrating their birthday:

- 1) You can celebrate their birthday by bringing a special treat to share on the day that they attend Downstairs A.R.T.S. that is closest to their birthday;
- 2) You can celebrate their birthday on the Friday closest to their birthday with the Friday Upstairs class children (see procedure below);

OR

- 3) You can choose to celebrate both times.

• UPSTAIRS A.R.T.S. •

Children who attend Upstairs A.R.T.S. but do not come on Friday, celebrate their birthdays on the school day closest to their birthday. You are invited to bring a treat to share. Snacks are served Monday through Thursday at 9:45 AM. You are welcome to join us.



Upstairs A.R.T.S. students who do attend on **Fridays** are asked to celebrate their birthday on the Friday closest to their birthday. Please advise the teacher in advance that your child will be celebrating his/her birthday. Your child is asked to bring photos marking each year of his/her life. Write the child's age on the back of each picture so we can make a time line. We discuss the changes that your child has experienced as he/she has grown. Snack times on Friday are 10:30 AM and 2:15 PM. You are encouraged to join us to help us tell your child's life story.

Children prefer simple snacks; treats with frosting are too messy. Children enjoy having special napkins. They generally like to have seconds and even third helpings of birthday treats. Rice cereal treats, butter cookies, goldfish crackers, fruit and popcorn are always enjoyed.* The children all snack together. Check with the director or the office to find out how much to bring.

***Please consult Handbook page 1 for important information concerning food allergies and prohibited snacks.**

SEASONAL CELEBRATIONS

• FALL MASQUERADE •

At the end of October, the A.R.T.S. students celebrate with a class time masquerade. Children are welcome to wear costumes although young children often do not want to. If your child wants to wear a costume, please follow these guidelines:



- **Do not send your child to school in a mask or heavy face paint.** Some of their classmates find masks or heavy face paint very frightening.

- **Do not send your child to school with any weapons.** Toy guns, swords, etc. are best left at home as we strongly discourage this sort of play in our classrooms.

- **Be careful that costumes do not hamper movement,** as children will be participating in movement classes. Sweat suits with a few simple accessories, i.e. removable ears, tails, etc. are good choices. *Label costume pieces.*

It's fine if your child decides not to wear a costume. We will have some things here for children to put on. Costumes need not be elaborate - a silly hat or a funny shirt can be delightful. Our focus is on children having a good time. The children will enjoy a special holiday snack provided by the PTO.



• VALENTINE'S DAY EXCHANGE •



We celebrate Valentine's Day in our classrooms. The children bring valentines for each of their classmates. Please help your child sign each valentine, but DO NOT ADDRESS IT. The children will enjoy a special holiday snack provided by the PTO.

• RECOGNITION DAY/"GRADUATION DAY"! •



At the end of May children share music and stories with family and friends and receive certificates recognizing their participation in the A.R.T.S. Program.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

What is the Academy's discipline policy? This is a question many new parents ask us when they are considering the Academy for their child. Our goal, as educators, is to provide our students with a safe environment where they can, with our guidance, learn self-discipline and self-control. It is our task to present them with choices and actions appropriate for the situations they encounter in our classrooms. When a child chooses an inappropriate behavior – such as interrupting another child's work with educational materials, or trying to sit on another child's mat – a teacher will approach the child and, one-on-one, explain why this choice is inappropriate. With children who are becoming more verbal, teachers help children to use words to express their feelings and guide them through conflict resolutions.

Sharing common materials (toys), respecting another's personal space and learning to wait for a turn are all a part of the preschool classroom experience. We help children learn problem-solving skills and to develop "scripts" to deal with classroom social interactions and activities. Occasionally it is necessary to ask a child to sit to the side and to observe and to see for him/herself what the other children are doing; this is a part of the learning process. The teacher may also point out to the observing child what it is that the other children are doing that is appropriate or by praising the behavior of another child the teacher can motivate others to choose a similar behavior.

As much as possible, we try to help the child with positive directions. In those cases where a child demonstrates dangerous/harmful behavior (i.e. biting or hitting), it is necessary to remove him/her from the situation to another area of the room or out in the hall. This "Time Out" provides the child an opportunity to calm down, regain control, as well as providing the teacher an opportunity to talk with the child. Usually talking about the reasons why the child is feeling so upset and identifying and acknowledging the child's feelings is enough to calm him/her enough to return to the classroom. Rather than view our discipline policy as a negative punishment, we see our task as educators as one where we use constructive interruptions to refocus, redirect and educate.

What is the Academy's Biting Policy? To ensure that every child is safe while in the Academy's care, we work to provide an environment that encourages and promotes cooperative interaction, respect for others, and non-aggressive problem solving between the children. Biting is a normal stage of development for young children who are teething and are still developing their language skills. It is usually a temporary condition that is most common between 18 and 24 months of age.

For safety and health concerns, we take biting seriously. When it happens, it is very scary, frustrating, and stressful for children, parents, and teachers. It is also not something to blame on children, parents, or teachers and there are no quick and easy solutions to it. Children bite for a variety of reasons ranging from lack of verbal skills to teething. Knowing that the effect of their biting will hurt another person is not yet part of the mindset of children this age who have not yet internalized cause-effect relationship.

The policy for handling a biting incident is the following:

We tell the biter immediately to “Stop – biting hurts.” We console the bitten child and wash the bitten area with soap and water. If necessary, we apply ice to reduce any swelling or bruising. We remove the biter from the situation for an appropriate amount of time and then suggest alternative solutions to biting.

We will give written report to the parents of all children involved when they are picked up that day. We will not release the name of the biting child because it serves no useful purpose and can make an already difficult situation more difficult.

In an effort to prevent further biting, an intensive review of the context of each biting incident is conducted to look for any patterns.

Staff will work with each biting child on resolving conflict or frustration in an appropriate manner.

If there are repeated incidents of biting, we will discuss the situation with the parents and make a determination as to whether our environment is the appropriate place for the child.

EARLY INTERVENTION

Each child grows in a unique way and has special talents and abilities. At times, there are areas of development where some children need extra support. Frequently, the preschool years are a time when challenges in a particular area of development are first identified.

The Faculty at the Academy of Movement and Music are invested in providing a stimulating environment that enhances the child’s development. We have been participating with the Collaboration for Early Childhood in the community, and we are strong supporters of the village wide effort to provide Early Intervention Services. Please contact the Family Support Coordinator or ask in the office for a list of service providers in the area. Studies have shown that Early Intervention is very effective at assisting children in maximizing their development. If a child is experiencing ongoing challenges with an activity, skill, or transition, the teacher will discuss this with the parent.

This year the Academy will continue to use the Ages and Stages (ASQ) Screening Tool. This effort is funded by the PTO. We will send home a packet with your child during the first few weeks of the fall term, and ask you to complete the Ages and Stages Questionnaire. If you have already completed an ASQ through your pediatrician’s office in the last six months, or your child is already receiving services, or your child is already enrolled in Kindergarten, you do not need to complete a new ASQ. Our goal is to be sure that every child is screened each year, but it does not need to be done through the Academy. The questionnaire will ask about some things your child does or does not yet do and is in addition to the Academy’s Developmental History Form. The Ages and Stages Questionnaire is a standardized screening tool recommended by national early childhood organizations and will be evaluated by the Family Support Coordinator. All information about your child and family will be kept confidential.

COMMUNICATIONS

• COMMUNICATIONS •

For both Downstairs and Upstairs A.R.T.S., your first line of communication is to call the office; office staff will then contact the appropriate staff member.

• DEANS •

In **Downstairs A.R.T.S.** your child's dean is the teacher of your child's first class. Each of the color groups, yellow, green, blue and red has a dean. Usually your dean will be the teacher to contact you if your child is having any challenges at school.

• OBSERVATIONS •

You may observe in the classroom at any time after November 1st. We will make every effort to accommodate your schedule, but ask that you please make an appointment through the office at least 24 hours in advance. We need to limit the number of parents in any given classroom for the least amount of disruption. You are welcome to bring your infant of six months or younger when you come for observations. Please make child care arrangements for older siblings. It is difficult to get a good idea of your child's classroom behavior if you have to supervise other children.

• CONFERENCES •

Conferences are scheduled during the month of November. Conferences give you an opportunity to get to know your child's teachers, to ask questions and to get an overview of your child's participation in class. These are team conferences that include some of the teachers who work with your child. Childcare is provided for the November daytime conferences. You may also request a phone conference in the Spring after you receive your written evaluations.

Conference time is limited, so we ask you to make a separate appointment if you have serious concerns about your child or the school.

A.R.T.S. PTO

Upon enrolling your child in the A.R.T.S. program, you automatically become a member of the Academy A.R.T.S. PTO. This group is led by a board of officers and room parents who help to facilitate many events throughout the year. PTO events and activities are designed to build community among A.R.T.S. families and raise funds to support teachers as well as help to preserve and update our historic building.

There is a list of jobs for which the PTO always needs volunteers. We encourage you to become involved in the organization and to sign up for at least one activity. There are a variety of opportunities, designed to accommodate a variety of schedules and talents. Don't have much time? Pick a local establishment and organize a "mom/dad/parents' night out". Know your way around clip art? You can help with marketing event. Helping out is a good way to meet other families and to feel a part of your child's preschool experience. It also helps us keep tuition costs down while providing an exciting and enriching environment for your child.

Your energy adds to the overall success of the program and to your child's experience. Fill out the volunteer form (the PTO will email to A.R.T.S. families) or talk to any PTO officer about what you can do to help out. We look forward to reconnecting with returning families and welcoming new friends! Our first meeting will be Thursday, September 14, at 7:30 PM at the Academy. Please join us!



A.R.T.S. PTO Events Calendar 2017-2018

August 1, 8, 15, 22	PTO Playdates ~ 10: 00 AM, Rehm Park
26	Fall Welcome Picnic ~ 11:00 AM, Field Park Patio, 935 Woodbine, Oak Park
September 13, 14	PTO Spirit Days ~ Wear your A.R.T.S. T-shirt!
14	PTO Kick-off Meeting, 7:30 PM, Academy of Movement & Music
24	Fall Get-Together ~ 4:00-5:30 PM
October 12	Parents' Night Out Mixer
November 15, 16	PTO Spirit Days ~ Wear your A.R.T.S. T-shirt!
16	Mom's Night Out
19	Holiday Used Toy Sale at the Academy
30	Dad's Night Out
December 1-14	Holiday Charity Drive
January 19	PTO Soiree & Silent Auction, Pleasant Home
February 10	Sock Hop at the Academy ~ 5:30-7:00 PM
21, 22	PTO Spirit Days ~ Wear your A.R.T.S. T-shirt!
March 15	Mom's Night Out
22	Dad's Night Out
April 2-12	Annual PTO Board Elections
12	PTO Spring Meeting – Election Results Announced
18, 19	PTO Spirit Days ~ Wear your A.R.T.S. T-shirt!
26	Parents' Night Out
May 12	End of Year Picnic 11:00 AM, Taylor Park

EMERGENCY CLOSING PROCEDURES

The Academy has only closed a few times in thirty years due to bad weather. If we can't get snow-plowed, we can't open. Should this or any other emergency occur (i.e., loss of power), you will receive an email to advise you of the closing, unless you have indicated that you prefer to be telephoned. **Do not assume** that if Oak Park Public Schools are closed that the Academy will be closed. We are registered for school closings due to inclement weather at www.emergencyclosings.com. Enter "Academy of Movement and Music" to check our status.

UPSTAIRS A.R.T.S. PERFORMANCES

Upstairs A.R.T.S. children who attend on Tuesday and Thursday over the course of a year will investigate and study four topics in depth. These are explored through a child's perspective with art, dance, literature, music and cultural awareness. Each unit closes with a performance. After the program we celebrate with a special snack. At some point during the year each family is asked to bring something to share. You will be contacted when it is your turn to provide treats.

The children work hard and look forward to presenting their show to an appreciative audience made up of family, friends and the Downstairs children. Please try to make sure at least one adult in your family is at each performance during the year. It means a great deal to the children.

The specific details regarding each of these events will be sent home in a timely fashion during the school year.



A.R.T.S. Faculty

Academy Administration

Stephanie Clemens, Director

Kari Farkvam, Administrative Assistant

Rachel Gorgol, Business Manager

A.R.T.S. Administration

Maureen Fahey, Director, Downstairs A.R.T.S. Program

Donna Pries, Director, Upstairs A.R.T.S. Program

Downstairs Faculty

Judy Bianchi, Physical Fitness

Maureen Fahey, Music, Story Explorers

Kaitlin Mullen, Practical Life, Montessori

Melissa Taub, Creative Movement

Ruth Tazelaar, Art

Caroline TeDesco, Physical Fitness, Creative Movement, Story Explorers

Upstairs Faculty

Jennifer Enriquez, Construction, Aide, Little Peacemakers

Linda Preston, Montessori, Making Friends with Numbers

Donna Pries, Cultural Awareness, Literature, Production Shop, and Science

Rebecca Pries, Dance, Friday Dean/Staff Coordinator, PTO Coordinator

Melissa Taub, Creative Movement, Physical Fitness, Little Peacemakers

Rebecca McLane, Music

Anja Riis Wachter, Art, Aide, Building Words with Friends

Classroom Aides

Corey Blackwell

Lucy Hunter Bry

Mindy Dillon

Molly Nelson

Julie Seiler

Niki Tazelaar

Nathalie Yanguas

Stoja Zajlic

ACADEMY A.R.T.S. STAFF BIOS

Stephanie Clemens, Director of the Academy of Movement & Music, “founded” the Academy in 1971 in her Oak Park living room when she rolled up the rug and began giving dance lessons to neighborhood children. Since that time the Academy has grown into a real village Institution, home to approximately 900 students: 150 families in the A.R.T.S. preschool program, the rest in dance and music classes. Stephanie studied dance at Juilliard and took a B.A. in Physical Anthropology at U.C.L.A. where she did research on the evolution of the human locomotor system. Stephanie spends her time at the Academy teaching in the dance division and has developed the Introduction to Ballet program for preschool age children. She is the Artistic Director of **MOMENTA**, the Academy’s resident performing company. She has three grown sons, Jason and Justin Prost and JP Tenuta, all of whom grew up in Academy classes ~ and three granddaughters and a grandson – all of whom have been students at the Academy. Her son, JP, teaches ballet at the Academy and performs with **MOMENTA**.

Maureen Fahey, Downstairs A.R.T.S Director, joined the Academy family in 2004 when her two sons began attending preschool. In 2009 when her daughter started preschool she became the Practical Life teacher in the Art/Music/Montessori room. She enjoyed learning more about the Montessori method and introducing the children to new ideas each week at the practical life table. Maureen loves the unique preschool experience that the Academy offers families in the community. She studied Family and Consumer Science at Eastern Illinois University and worked in management and consumer relations after college. In her free time Maureen enjoys reading, yoga and spending time with her family especially outside in nature! Maureen lives in Oak Park with her her husband and three kids and is excited to begin her 2nd year as Downstairs A.R.T.S Director.

Donna Pries, Upstairs A.R.T.S. Director (Cultural Awareness, Production Art, Literature), received a B.A. from North Central College in Elementary Education and Religion. Upon graduation, she spent the summer as a playground director in Santa Cruz, New Mexico, then taught 4th grade for 5 years in Naperville. She took oil painting and pottery classes. When Donna quit teaching to raise her children, Adam (44) and Rebecca (42), she made stoneware plaques and mirrors to sell at art fairs. The Pries family came to the Academy when they lived in Cicero. Adam and Rebecca were taking ballet, but Donna wanted a school where other boys were also taking ballet. Rebecca teaches ballet, preschool Spanish and in Upstairs A.R.T.S. at the Academy and has worked in the office. Adam and Rebecca were both involved with **MOMENTA**. Adam was a professional ballet dancer for six years and now teaches High School Art in Tinley Park. Donna also took dance classes - ballet, tap and jazz - here at the Academy. She is also the Backstage Children’s Coordinator for the June Ballet Recital at the Academy. Donna helped develop the A..R.T.S. program since its beginning. As well as teaching at The Academy, Donna is a director of a Sacred Dance Troupe. In 1996, Donna was nominated for the Kohl-McCormick fellowship for Early Education and in 1998 and 2013 she received the Orrin Kayan Memorial Excellence in Teaching Award. Donna has attended seminars on both the Montessori and Reggio Emilia methods of early childhood education. Donna now lives in Naperville and is the proud grandma of Adams’ son Anderson and daughters Fiona and Felicity, and Rebecca’s twin son Nicolas and daughter Natalia. Rebecca’s twins have attended the A.R.T.S. program for 4 years and will be in 1st grade at Longfellow this fall.

Judy Bianchi, Physical Fitness and Montessori (Downstairs), has been on staff at the Academy since 1999. She began as an aide for the Physical Fitness class and has emerged through the Academy programs. She has taught Physical Fitness, Downstairs Montessori and Upstairs Friday Montessori. She has also experienced the Creative Movement class. Judy is married and has three daughters. Her daughter Talia was a dancer at the Academy and Judy is now taking dance classes and yoga at the Academy as well. As a student Judy was a gymnast. She competed in many competitions and has performed many routines. Floor Exercise was her specialty. Judy has also learned the art of Rhythmic Gymnastics. Judy has taught

teens Floor Exercise at summer camps at Maine East H.S. in Park Ridge. She also has volunteered at Whittier Elementary School as a classroom aide helping children better develop their reading skills and comprehension skills. Judy truly enjoys working with young children and is very happy and gratified to have the opportunity to work in all of the creative programs at the Academy. Judy now is a grandma of four and her grandson and granddaughter attend the Academy A.R.T.S. program.

Corey Blackwell, Upstairs Aide, is a native of Massachusetts and a graduate of Southern New Hampshire University. Prior to moving to Chicago in 2007, Corey worked in sales and founded Therapy Beauty Bar, a luxury beauty boutique located in Providence, R.I., in 2004. She is married and has two children. Her daughter Easton is a recent graduate of the Academy. This will be Corey's second year working at the Academy.

Mindy Dillon, Downstairs Aide, has an MA and BA in English from University of Notre Dame. Mindy and her husband live in Oak Park and have four children. Her daughters, Rory and Samantha, attend dance classes at the Academy. Mindy has worked in the elementary schools in Berwyn, Forest Park, and Cicero. This is Mindy's third year as an aide in the A.R.T.S. program.

Jennifer Enriquez, Upstairs Aide, Georgetown University (Washington, DC), George Mason University School of Law (Arlington, Virginia). Jen's two children, Luke and Helena, both attended the A.R.T.S. program from the age of 20 months through kindergarten. She is passionate about teaching children skills and giving them tools for finding peace in themselves and bringing peace and kindness to their world. Jen is also director of children's formation at St. Christopher's Episcopal Church in Oak Park, and maintains a small solo law practice from her home. Jen and her family live in La Grange with their two dachshunds, Willow and Felicia.

Lucy Hunter Bry, Downstairs Aide, grew up dancing and demonstrating at the Academy. She has choreographed for theater companies in the Oak Park area. Lucy volunteers at Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago and is attending Concordia University as a Pre-Art Therapy major. This is her seventh year working as an aide in the Downstairs Arts.

Rebecca McLane taught at Pilgrim Community Nursery School from 1990 to 2015 and has been the music teacher for Upstairs A.R.T.S. since 2015. She earned a BFA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago and an MEd in Child Development from Erikson Institute in Chicago. She has also trained in the Musikgarten and Orff music education approaches. She sings with Heritage Chorale, plays with the Oak Park Recorder Society and was a founding member of Recorder Disorder. Rebecca has lived in Oak Park with her husband Paul Jacobson since 1982. Paul taught music at Lincoln Elementary School in Oak Park and their son Evan is currently the music teacher at Hatch Elementary School. Their daughter Anna teaches Exceptional Wiggle Worms for children with special needs at The Old Town School of Folk Music.

Kaitlin Mullen, Downstairs Aide, is back for her fifth consecutive year after a few years' hiatus. Kaitlin worked in the A.R.T.S. program for 3 years previously and is an Academy dance alumn. She is married now and the mother of Grace who is an A.R.T.S. alumn and attends ballet class at the Academy.

Molly Nelson, Downstairs Aide, a Fourth Generation OPRFHS graduate who received her Associates Degree from Triton College, studied Early Childhood Education at Concordia University, and received her Bachelor's degree from Eastern Illinois University. Molly worked as an Aide at Concordia University's early childhood education center for one year. Molly also worked at Midtown Athletic Club as a childcare attendant for three years. This is Molly's third year and she is happy and excited to be working at the Academy.

Linda Preston, Montessori Directress (Upstairs), directed the Montessori environment in the Kinder A.R.T.S. program (predecessor to Upstairs A.R.T.S.) and taught in the Art/Music/ Montessori classroom in the A.R.T.S. program for 8 years, from the mid-80's to the early 90's. Linda's son Elisha (37) spent a

year in the Kinder A.R.T.S. program and now attends the “Everybody Can Dance” program on Sundays. He thinks of the Academy as home. Linda obtained a Bachelor’s Degree in Sociology and Education from Beloit College in 1967 and a second Bachelor’s in Judaic Studies in 1978. In 1985 she completed her Montessori training and received a Montessori Pre-Primary Certificate. After teaching at the Academy, Linda worked at the University of Illinois Circle Campus teaching adults with developmental disabilities. Linda received a Master of Arts from DePaul University in 2002. After receiving her Master of Arts degree, Linda taught, for a number of years, adults with developmental disabilities and led workshops for parents and staff. In addition to her duties in the Montessori section of Upstairs A.R.T.S., Linda works many hours advocating for her son, and also many hours making phone calls for the continuance of national healthcare coverage.

Rebecca Pries, Upstairs A.R.T.S. Dance, has a B.A. in Latin American Studies from Washington University and a M.S. in Early Childhood Education from the Erikson Institute. Rebecca began attending ballet classes at the Academy when she was five years old. She continued to study ballet through college, but chose a professional career working with children. After graduating from Wash U, she lived and worked in Chile, where she met her husband. Upon returning to the United States, she worked as Director of the School Age Program at Casa Central in Chicago for five years. After completing her M.S. with Type 04 teaching certificate from the Erikson Institute, Rebecca taught in the Chicago Public Schools’ bilingual Head Start program. Rebecca has taught ballet at the Academy since 1999. This will be her eighth year in the A.R.T.S. program working with her mother, Donna Pries. Her children, Nicolas and Natalia, will start 1st grade this year.

Julie Seiler, Downstairs Aide, has a B.S. in Communications from Loyola University. Her son, Richard, is an A.R.T.S. alumnus. Julie is excited to be returning for her ninth year at the Academy.

Melissa Taub, Creative Movement (Upstairs/Downstairs) and Physical Fitness (Upstairs), graduated from Columbia College with a B.A. in film/video and travel certificate from C.O.D. This is Melissa’s 9th year at the Academy. She started out as a floating aide in the Downstairs program, as well as a reading volunteer while her children attended the Academy. She began working in the Upstairs program first as an Arts aide and as an aide in physical fitness and became an aide in the Downstairs physical fitness room in 2012. Melissa took over teaching Upstairs Creative Movement and Physical fitness when Larry Ippel retired, this will be her 4th year. Melissa has been in the Upstairs Friday snack area for the past 9 years. This is Melissa’s 3rd year teaching Creative Movement in the Downstairs program. Melissa has taken the “Brain Dance” theory workshop and has been incorporating it into her classes, as well as taking dance lessons through the Academy. This is the second year that she will be co-teaching “Little Peacemakers” with Jen Enriquez. Melissa is also a classroom volunteer at Julian and a Reading Buddy at Longfellow School. Her two children, Jane and Max, are A.R.T.S. alumni.

Niki Tazelaar, Downstairs Aide, has a B.S. with a concentration in Graphic Design and Painting from Bradley University and a B.A. from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. After graduating from Bradley University Niki worked in graphic design and fine art reproduction, and taught mural painting class to high school students for 2 years. She studied landscape painting in Italy while working on her B.A. at S.A.I.C. After graduation from S.A.I.C. Niki worked in graphic design for seven years. After marrying Ruth Tazelaar’s son and having three boys, she worked from home designing invitations and painting portraits. This is Niki’s seventh year working at the Academy.

Ruth Tazelaar, Art (Downstairs), has been married for forty three years and is the mother of four children and grandmother of sixteen. When she became a mother, she chose to remain at home. Before coming to the Academy, for the last 36 years, she has helped raise many children as a home day care giver. She has also taught at Church schools, taught a dance class, cooking classes and has had a catering business. Through her life experiences and learning, Ruth feels she can teach much to the children at the Academy. She has been at the Academy for twenty three years, beginning as an aide and moving to the Creative

Movement Room in Downstairs A.R.T.S. before becoming the art teacher. Ruth attended Triton College and Trinity Christian College.

Caroline TeDesco, Physical Fitness and Creative Movement (Downstairs), began her dance training at the Academy when she was 4 years old. She joined the Academy's resident dance company **MOMENTA** at age 10 and accompanied them on their first tour of Austria through Tanszomer in 2003. Caroline continued her dance training through the Milwaukee Ballet School, Ruth Page Dance Center, Lou Conte Dance Studio, River North Chicago and then on to Point Park University's Conservatory of Performing Arts. Caroline began teaching dance and working as a teacher's aide in the Academy's A.R.T.S. program in the summer of 2005 and became a full time faculty member at the Academy in 2007. In the dance program Caroline has taught ballet, jazz and tap dance and is co-director of the junior ballet recital. In 2010 she was honored to receive the Orrin Kayan Award for excellence in teaching. In the A.R.T.S. program Caroline has worked as a hallway aide, Upstairs aide and teacher (Dance), Downstairs aide in the Creative Movement and Physical Fitness classes and has been teaching Physical Fitness in the afternoons since 2011. Caroline is excited to be teaching both Physical Fitness and Creative Movement this year! In addition to her experience at the Academy, Caroline has taught at the Dance Center of LaGrange and in Hatch Elementary School's after school program.

Anja Riis Wachter, Upstairs Aide and Art Teacher, is originally from Denmark. Anja studied construction and design before earning an MA in English Literature and Language, with a minor in History, from the University of Århus, Denmark. Prior to moving to Chicago in 2003, she was an editor with an educational publishing company, a career she continued in Chicago while simultaneously operating her own design and dressmaking business. Anja's experience with design and tailoring has given her an ease with arts and crafting projects, while her academic and editorial backgrounds provide well-rounded knowledge of world cultures, traditions, and narratives. Anja lives in Oak Park with her husband and two daughters. She tries to stay active with running, yoga, and taekwondo and when she has the time, she enjoys sewing stuffed toys, hair accessories, and costumes for kids. Anja will be teaching Art on Wednesdays and the add-on class 'Building Words with Friends' on Mondays, which is something she looks very much forward to. She will also function as an aide throughout the rest of the week and is excited to meet the new Upstairs class.

Nathalie Yanguas, Upstairs Aide, has an MA in Egyptology from the University of Geneva, Switzerland. Before moving to the US in 2015, Nathalie taught French for 11 years, working with adults and teenagers, in particular immigrants and refugees. She lives in River forest with her husband and daughter Rose, who is a graduate of the Academy.

Stoja Zjalic, Upstairs Aid, holds an MA in International Relations/Political Science, University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada and the Law Degree from University of Banja Luka, Bosnia-Herzegovina. Stoja and her family relocated to Chicago from Windsor, Ontario, Canada in November, 2008, where two of her three children were born. Stoja's three children, Elena, Nina and Roman are Academy alumni. Stoja's girls are also past participants in ballet classes offered at the Academy. The years of volunteering at the Academy led to Stoja's professional "gig" as the upstairs teaching aid in 2015. In the eyes of Stoja's children, this gig was "the coolest job ever" for it allows Elena, Nina and Roman to maintain a close contact with their beloved Academy teachers and volunteer at the Academy when they are off school. Since 2011, Stoja has been actively involved with Pro-Bono Network (PBN), an Oak-Park based nonprofit recently named by the Forbes magazine "the Uber of legal Aid", managing PBN's award winning Jail Clinic Project, offering legal protection to minor children of incarcerated mothers, since its inception. Through PBN Stoja also works on protection of victims of domestic violence. Stoja, her husband and the kids are the only family left on this Earth to two rescued guinea pigs – Moe and Goofy.