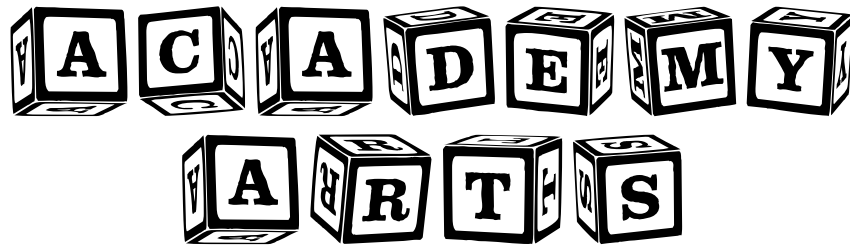


AR**T**S
RE**A**D**I**N**E**S**S**
TR**A**I**N**I**N**G
SC**H**O**O**L



Parent Handbook
2019-2020

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.

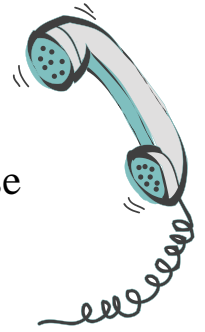
A.R.T.S. Important School Dates Calendar 2019-2020

August	21	Parent Orientation 7:30 PM
	22	A.R.T.S. Open House: Downstairs 9:30-11:30/Upstairs 10:30-11:30
	26, 27	Classes Begin
	28	A.R.T.S. Door Greeting Begins
September	29	Fall Get-together 4:00-5:30 PM
October	22, 23	Picture Days (Class Pictures)
	30	Fall Masquerade
	31	Fall Masquerade
November	1	Open Observations Begin
	22, 25, 26	A.R.T.S. Conferences 8:00-3:30 PM ~ No A.R.T.S. Classes
	27-29	Thanksgiving Recess
December	23	Winter Recess Begins
January	6	Classes Resume
	14	2020-2021 Registration Begins for Current A.R.T.S. Families
	28	2020-2021 Registration Opens to All Academy Families
February	2	2020-2021 Open Registration Begins
	4	Summer A.R.T.S. Pre-Registration ~ Current A.R.T.S. Families
	9	Sock Hop ~ 4:30-6:00 PM
	12, 13	Valentine Exchange
	17	No A.R.T.S. Classes/Teachers Institute Day
March	23	Spring Break Begins
	30	Classes Resume
April	27, 28, 29, 30	Last Days for Add-on Classes
May	6, 7	Recognition Days 9:30 AM ~ Last Days of School
June	8	Summer Session Begins ~ 7 Weeks

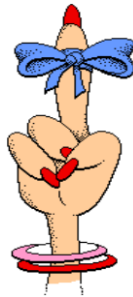
ABSENCES/ILLNESSES

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

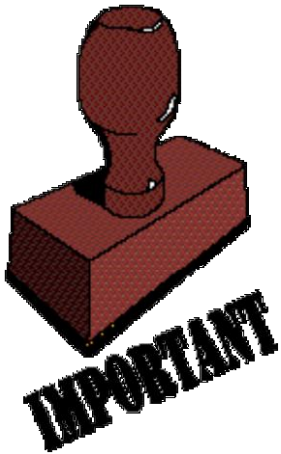


1. **DO have your child wash his/her hands after eating and before coming to school – especially if the food has contained any nuts/peanuts or nut/peanut oils.** Some of the games we play in class include holding hands. Even skin contact can trigger anaphylactic shock.
2. **DO check your email** for 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.

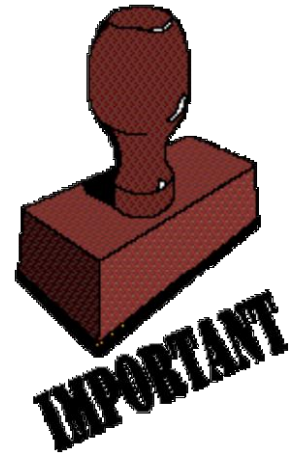
PEANUT/NUT POLICY

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!

You may use www.snacksafely.com to check.

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.

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 the Upstairs A.R.T.S. begin their day by climbing the stairs upstairs to the big classrooms. They remove their shoes on the landing and carry them to the coat hook with their name, where they place them on the space on the floor and put on their ballet slippers. They hang their coats on the hook and place their bag, if they brought one, by their shoes. Then the children do a daily calendar activity after which they are free to choose work from the activity cabinet, read books in the reading area, or join the running circle on days when that is an option. The ringing of the bell signals that this free time is over, and it is time to stop and listen, and to put away projects before going to class. The Orange Group (younger children) will then line up and go to the West gym as the Purple Group (older children) take their places in the East gym.

Each day Upstairs has different activities, with each class lasting about 45 minutes. The teacher/student ratio varies depending on activity, but is usually 1:7. A snack, usually consisting of graham crackers and pretzels with water, is served halfway through the morning. Before snack, the children wash their hands, and after snack, they have free project time until the groups change classes.

All classes are taught under a seasonal and an interconnecting geographic theme. Exhibitions and small performances throughout the year will showcase the children's work.

Mondays and Wednesdays are experience oriented, consisting of Art and Creative Movement, and Music and Physical Fitness. Art introduces the children to basic art concepts along with different periods and movements in art history. The children learn to work with many different materials and techniques. Creative Movement encourages the children to explore through dance, imagination, rhythm, and play, while Physical Fitness has focus on building core strength, stamina, and coordination. In Literature we will read old and new stories, picture books and even some without pictures. We will learn to sequence the stories as we informally act them out and illustrate a brief summary.

Tuesdays and Thursdays are performance oriented classes. On Tuesdays the children have Music and Creative Arts. In Music class the children work with basic concepts of singing, pitch, and rhythm as well as early hand signals and instrument handling. In Creative Arts, they will explore various craft projects which will tie in with the overall theme of upcoming exhibitions and performances. Thursday's children take Dance in which they learn different dance traditions from around the world, different ways of moving to music and interpreting feelings; and Literature and Culture, which introduces the children to stories and traditions from around the world, with an emphasis on what we have in common with people from other backgrounds.

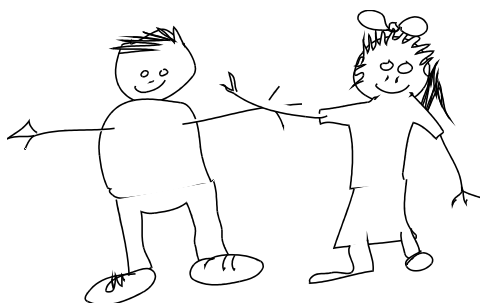
For both Monday/Wednesday and Tuesday/Thursday classes, grown-ups will be invited in throughout the year to get a taste of what we have been working on. These days will include short performances and exhibitions of the children's work. The Tuesday and Thursday classes will culminate in a big performance in spring, which will showcase all that they have learned during the year.

Once the school year is up and running, the Upstairs children will have monthly Movement and Sharing Days, on which the regular classes will be replaced with a full day of active and mindful movement - sometimes outdoor activities - and a show-and-tell session during which the children are invited to share something from home.

Friday is a special day Upstairs. Some older children (3 1/2 and up) from Downstairs A.R.T.S. can join Upstairs students in the large open space. The space is set up with special activity areas that include Montessori practical life, sensorial work, snack preparation, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics), free play, and music.

At the end of each day, the children change back into their street shoes, put on outerwear, and are led down the back stairs to the main hallway from 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. A water bottle should be brought each day.

• 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, water bottles 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.



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.

• 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. 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. 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. 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 email you a link 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 Tuesday, September 17, at 8:00 PM – Location TBD. Please join us!



A.R.T.S. PTO Events Calendar 2019-2020

August	7, 14, 21	PTO Playdates ~ 9:00 AM, Rehm Park, 900 Gunderson Ave., Oak Park
	24	Fall Welcome Picnic ~ 11:00 AM, Field Park, 935 Woodbine, Oak Park
September	4, 5	PTO Spirit Days ~ Wear Academy T-Shirt
	17	PTO Kick-off Meeting ~ 8:00 PM, Location TBD
	29	Fall Get-Together ~ 4:00-5:30 PM
October	2, 3	PTO Spirit Days ~ Wear Academy T-Shirt
	17	Parents' Night Out Mixer
November	6, 7	PTO Spirit Days ~ Wear Academy T-Shirt
December	4, 5	PTO Spirit Days ~ Wear Academy T-Shirt
January	8, 9	PTO Spirit Days ~ Wear Academy T-Shirt
	24	PTO Soiree & Silent Auction ~ Pleasant Home
February	5, 6	PTO Spirit Days ~ Wear Academy T-Shirt
	9	Sock Hop Family Dance ~ 4:30-6:00 PM
March	4, 5	PTO Spirit Days ~ Wear Academy T-Shirt
April	1, 2	PTO Spirit Days ~ Wear Academy T-Shirt
	1-10	Annual PTO Board Elections
	14	PTO Spring Meeting ~ Election Results Announced, Location
	23	Volunteer Appreciation Night

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

Over the course of the year, Upstairs A.R.T.S. will investigate and study the four seasons and the seven continents. These are explored through a child's perspective with art, dance, literature, music, and cultural awareness. Throughout the year, we will invite family and friends to come see our work in the form of exhibitions and sample performances. We ask that parents help us celebrate these days with a special snack, which will be coordinated through the PTO using SignUp Genius.

The children work hard and look forward to presenting their work to their family and friends. Please try to make sure that at least one adult in your family is able to attend these days of exhibition and performance. 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, Administrator

Rachel Gorgol, Business Manager

A.R.T.S. Administration

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

Anja Riis Wachter, Director, Upstairs A.R.T.S. Program

Downstairs Faculty

Mark Anderson, Creative Movement

Melissa Garba Baker, Practical Life, Montessori

Judy Bianchi, Physical Fitness

Corey Blackwell, Montessori

Maureen Fahey, Music, Practical Life, Montessori, Story Explorers

Melissa Taub, Creative Movement

Ruth Tazelaar, Art

Caroline TeDesco, Creative Movement, Story Explorers

Upstairs Faculty

Mark Anderson, Music

Merril Doty, Dance

Jennifer Enriquez, Construction, Little Peacemakers

Melissa Taub, Creative Movement, Physical Fitness, Science, Little Peacemakers,
Making Friends with Numbers, PTO Coordinator

Rebecca McLane, Music

Anja Riis Wachter, Art, Building Words with Friends, Creative Art, Literature
World Cultures

Nathalie Yanguas, French, Aide

Classroom Aides

Corey Blackwell

Audrey Deziel

Lucy Hunter Bry

Val Kalita

Elle Morton

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 800 students: 100 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 Founder 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 husband and three kids and is excited to begin her 4th year as Downstairs A.R.T.S Director.

Anja Riis Wachter, Upstairs A.R.T.S. Director, is excited to welcome the new class of 2019-20! 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 lives in Oak Park with her husband, two daughters, and very large dog. In her spare time, she tries to squeeze in some running and yoga, she is on the board of directors of Pro Musica Youth Chorus, she volunteers with her daughters’ schools and after school activities, and she enjoys creating design and sewing projects. Anja started at the Academy as an aide, then Art Teacher, and is thrilled to continue as Director of Upstairs A.R.T.S.

Melissa Garba Baker, Practical Life and Montessori (Downstairs), is excited to join the Academy A.R.T.S. staff this year. Her son, Simon, is a Downstairs student and loves it! Originally from Ohio, she lived in New York City for over 8 years where she earned an MS in Nutrition from Hunter College-CUNY. While in New York, she worked for the Food Bank for NYC, where she developed nutrition curriculum for Pre-K through 2nd grade students, trained public school teachers how to implement the curriculum, and traveled to schools in the city’s five boroughs to evaluate the program. She also worked at the Children’s Museum of Manhattan (CMOM) to develop and implement community programming and workshops for their Eat, Sleep, Play exhibit. Prior to her career change to nutrition and public health, she worked in public and nonprofit management. She was the Recruitment Manager for the New York Regional Office of Peace Corps, where she oversaw the recruitment and selection of volunteers to serve overseas. She was also a Peace Corps Volunteer in Ukraine from 2001 to 2003, which was truly the best job she’s ever had. She taught English to 1st through 10th grade students, developed afterschool enrichment programs for students, and facilitated teacher-training workshops. Melissa also has a BA in Sociology & Spanish from John Carroll University and an MPA in International Nonprofit Management & policy from New York

University. She is a Registered Dietitian. In her free time she loves traveling with her family - Nick, Simon and their dog, Clementine. She also enjoys cooking, photography, and sewing.

Judy Bianchi, Physical Fitness (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 granddaughter attends the Academy A.R.T.S. program, her grandson is an Academy alumna.

Corey Blackwell, Montessori (Downstairs), 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 fourth year working at the Academy.

Audrey Deziel, Downstairs Aide, has a BS in Child and Family Studies from Ohio University. Audrey first came to the Academy to watch her sisters Caroline and Teresa perform. She soon followed their footsteps to dance at the Academy. During her years dancing at the Academy Audrey was a class demonstrator and performed with *MOMENTA*. She started working in the Upstairs A.R.T.S. program during her summers home from college. During these summers she also worked in Downstairs A.R.T.S. as the Physical Fitness aide. Once Audrey graduated college she served as a Downstairs hallway aide for a year. She then became the Creative Movement aide and this coming year will be the aide for Physical Fitness as well. Audrey is also a Youth Development Specialist with Hephzibah Children's Association.

Jennifer Enriquez, Upstairs Construction and Peacemakers Add-on Class, 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, both spent two years in the upstairs program. Jen is passionate about teaching children skills and giving them tools for finding peace in themselves and bringing peace and kindness to their world, and runs Peace Camp for kids in the summer. Jen is also Director of Children and Youth 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, Felicia and Roxie.

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 ninth year working as an aide in the Downstairs Arts.

Val Kalita, Upstairs Aide, has a BA in Finance from the University of Notre Dame. Val grew up in River Forest, her husband Tim grew up in Oak Park. They made the decision to raise their three kids in Oak Park, two of whom are graduates of the Academy. William, her youngest, is excited to join Val in the Upstairs program. Val is extremely excited to be a part of such a wonderful program!

Rebecca McLane, Upstairs Music, 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.

Elle Morton, Upstairs Aide, is originally from Philadelphia and has degrees from Washington University in St. Louis (BA in Drama) and George Washington University (MA in Speech-Language Pathology). She has maintained the ASHA CCC-SLP since 2009 and previously worked in the Virginia public schools. Elle has been active on the A.R.T.S. PTO for 6 years and is the PTO President this year. She lives in Oak Park with her husband Josh, 3 kids, and kitty Eloise. Julian is in Upstairs A.R.T.S. and ballet, and Penny & Olive are A.R.T.S. alumnae (Olive still dances). This is Elle's second year working in the A.R.T.S. program.

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 11th year at the Academy. She was working in Advertising until her children were born. This led to a change in careers when her children, Jane and Maxwell attended the Academy. While her children attended the Academy, Melissa was a reading volunteer Downstairs and a parent volunteer Upstairs. This led to becoming a floating aide in the Downstairs program and moving to the Upstairs program the following year. Upstairs she was an art aide and a physical fitness aide. This is Melissa's 6th year teaching Creative Movement and Physical Fitness Upstairs. She took over teaching Creative Movement and Physical fitness Upstairs, when Larry Ippel retired. Melissa has been working in the Upstairs Friday program for 11 years. She was in the snack area for 9 years and last year Melissa taught Science on Fridays. This school year Melissa will move over to the Montessori/Practical Life area which she will take over from Linda Preston, who retired last year. This is Melissa's 5th year teaching Creative Movement in the Downstairs program. She first was an aide in the Downstairs Physical Fitness room starting in 2012 and moved over to Creative Movement. Melissa has been incorporating the "Brain Dance" theory into her classes and has taken it's workshop. She has taken dance lessons through the Academy and Intuit. Melissa has been co-teaching "Little Peacemakers," with Jen Enriquez for the last 2 years. She is also the Math Add-on teacher and aiding the Words and French Add-on classes. She has been a Reading Buddy at Longfellow School for 10 years and is currently attending Triton College for an Early Childhood Education degree. In the Spring of 2019, Melissa attended a paraprofessional training at Seton Montessori, as well as taking continuing workshops through the Early Childhood Collaboration, which included a 7 month training on, "Equity in the Early Childhood Classroom."

Ruth Tazelaar, Art (Downstairs), was 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 37 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 four 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, Creative Movement and Story Explorers (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. 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.

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 primarily with adults and teenagers, in particular immigrants and refugees. Last year she started teaching French in the A.R.T.S. program and is excited to continue this year. Nathalie lives in River forest with her husband and daughter Rose, who is an Academy alumna.