



**MEMBER HANDBOOK
2012**

INTRODUCTION

Welcome Letter

The Administration, Director and Staff of Akitoi Learning Center welcome you, your family and your child to a place of discovery, learning and fun. Akitoi Learning Center is dedicated to providing quality childcare and meeting the needs of your family. Akitoi Learning Center employs staff that are devoted to the education and well being of your child in an environment that is safe, clean and stimulating. Akitoi Learning Center is proud of its reputation and its commitment to quality childcare. To accomplish this, we have a team approach. This means recognizing that everyone's role is vital to the well being of the children and that every person is valuable. Mutual respect and trust among everyone is essential. Our goal is to meet the developmental needs of children and their families in a supportive and pleasant atmosphere of love and respect and set a good example for children. We know that the experiences that you and your child have while at Akitoi Learning Center will be superb! Welcome to the Akitoi Learning Center family...

Sincerely,

Ofelia Aguilar
Director

Akitoi Learning Center's Philosophy

Akitoi Learning Center approaches our work with children in a way that will allow them to reach their full potential for proper growth and development. We provide scheduled learning times, outdoor play, and free play within a consistent routine. Our caregivers cue into your child's individual needs. With Akitoi Learning Center's approach, the teachers help instill values, role-model appropriate behavior, and teach valuable lessons the child needs for a solid foundation in life. It is vital that the children learn about their "Self" since they are naturally developing their self-image, self-control, self-respect and independence. Through guided play and discovery, the child learns not only about himself, but also learns to respect others, and appreciate his environment. Akitoi Learning Center's expansive facilities allow us to provide the highest level of quality care and supervision. A child's environment significantly influences his development and growth. Therefore, Akitoi Learning Center has gone to great lengths to create an environment that is clean, secure and stimulating. Throughout our many Discovery areas, we utilize a hands-on approach to learning. Equipped with age-appropriate activities, our teachers are skilled and prepared to make each discovery and opportunity a learning experience for your child. This discovery process provides the building blocks necessary to promote your child's physical, social, emotional and cognitive development. We have designed our policies to be "parent friendly" so you will not find any hidden costs. We do not require parents to work at the Center or to assist in fundraising events. We believe that your level or method of involvement at Akitoi Learning Center is your choice.

Staff

Akitoi Learning Center's programs meet the State of California staffing ratios in all components to provide the highest level of care and supervision. Our teachers are experienced and trained in childhood development, pediatric first aid, CPR, and have all successfully completed background clearances through the State of California, including Fingerprinting and Criminal and Child Abuse checks through the Department of Justice. Facilities the size of Akitoi Learning Center have many staffing requirements. We are fortunate to have a crew comprised of wonderful teachers, assistants and volunteers with varied strengths, talents, and backgrounds. All are a marvelous asset to our childcare facilities.

Licensing

Akitoi Learning Center is licensed by the State of California, Department of Social Services – Community Care Licensing Division from opening day. Our facility meets or exceeds all of the State Licensing Requirements. We receive unannounced inspections on an annual basis from the Department of Social Services – Community Care Licensing Division, the Local Fire Departments, and the County / City Health Departments. Akitoi Learning Center defines high quality early childhood programs as “one that meets the needs of and promotes physical, social, emotional and cognitive development of children and adults (parents, staff and administrators) who are involved in our programs.” Each day of a child’s life is viewed as leading to the growth and development of a healthy, intelligent, and contributing member of society. High quality is important for both children and families, so that parents can be assured that their children are safe and in good hands. What is good for families is also good for business and communities. In short, high quality early childhood programs benefit us all.

Akitoi Learning Center Child Development Centers are governed by:

Title 22

Department of Social Services

Community Care Licensing Division

Los Angeles Child Care East

1000 Corporate Center Drive, Suite 200-B

Monterey Park, CA 91754

323-981-3350

Section 101200: The Department has inspection authority to enter and inspect a facility without advance notice. The Department has the authority to interview children or staff, and to inspect and audit child or Child Care Center records, without prior consent.

SERVICES OFFERED

Basic Services

Akitoi Learning Center offers 3 age-appropriate programs year-round: Junior Preschool/Daycare (ages 2 - 3), one for Preschool (ages 4 to 5 years), and wrap-around care (all ages).

Classes

Akitoi Learning Center is committed to offering a variety of special classes right here for the convenience of parents and their children. No driving time - no need to pick-up your child just to turn around and drop them off at their ballet or karate class. Gymnastics, Karate, Dance, and Art classes will be offered throughout the month. Please check with the front desk for times and costs of specific classes you are interested in. Classes for adults are also offered from time to time such as First Aid and CPR, and parent education classes.

High Security & Sign In/Out Procedure

At Akitoi Learning Center we take your child's safety and security very seriously. Our facilities are designed to provide a high level of security, while maintaining proper emergency exit capabilities. Our front doors are always manned by our front desk staff who will ask for identification of any person not know to them personally to be an authorized for pick up. Children and parents can only enter or exit through the main reception area, allowing the greatest degree of security possible. All parents must sign their child when bringing their child to Akitoi Learning Center and must sign their child out when picking up their child. The State of California requires a full signature of the person dropping off and the actual time of drop off as well as the full signature of the person picking up and actual time of pick up for each child. No abbreviations of signatures are acceptable. This officially transfers responsibility from parent to Akitoi Learning Center and back to parent. Parents who forget to sign out will be billed until closing.

Playground Parking Lots & "Drive Thru" Policies & Procedures

In our efforts to accommodate our busiest drop off and pick up times, we expect all families to be mindful

of other and of safety guidelines:

Appropriate Behavior

- Do not speed– 5 mph maximum!
- Do not double-park behind other cars!
- Do not use cell phones– be looking for children!
- Be respectful of other parents and the Akitoi Learning Center Staff!
- Drive Thru is a One-Way Loop. If the front “in” gate is closed, do not drive in the “out” gate as it is an exit only.

Gates will be Closed Promptly

- Morning Drive Thru 8:00am– 8:50am
- Afternoon Drive Thru 12:30 – 1:00 p.m.

If your car is left in the Parent Parking Lot / Drive Thru after the gates are closed you will have to wait until someone is available to let you out.

Class Rosters

Many of our parents request names, addresses, and phone numbers of their child's classmates for birthday parties, and just to get in touch with their child's friends. We want to respect your wishes and allow you to NOT have your information given out if you so desire. However, please understand that we only give out your information to other Akitoi Learning Center members that are in the same class as your child. We will NEVER give out your personal information to solicitors, outside companies, or researchers. If you want us to withhold your personal information from the class roster, you must notify us in writing that you want your information withheld, otherwise your signature on the membership contract will constitute your authorization for us to list you in the class roster.

Field Trip Provisions

A variety of field trips will be offered to all members of Akitoi Learning Center. Parents will be notified of each field trip in advance. Parents will be invited and are welcome to join the scheduled field trips. Summer/Winter/Spring program kids will be participating in off-site field trips to various locations. The field trips will depart from Akitoi Learning Center shortly after breakfast, and will return by the 5:30 pm pick-up time.

Food Service

We serve nutritious meals and snacks throughout the day. Breakfast, morning snack and afternoon snack are included in all daytime programs. Your child may bring his/her lunch or participate in the Hot Lunch Program for an additional charge.

Policy on Junk-food

As Akitoi Learning Center provides nutritious food for its members, children should not bring gum, candy or other junk food items to school. For special occasions (i.e. birthdays and holidays) Akitoi Learning Center will allow muffins, cookies, cakes and other treats to be served. Special plates, napkins, and hats make Birthdays for Toddlers a special occasion. Birthday Parties - Your child's birthday may be observed at Akitoi Learning Center. **Please discuss it with your child's teacher first.** Parties can only be held at regularly scheduled snack time to avoid interference with their regular curriculum. In order for us to manage the nutrition of the snacks please eliminate "sugary" foods.

MEMBERSHIP DUES & FEES

Membership Dues

Itemized statements are mailed to each family on the 11th of each month showing all charges for the past month and monthly tuition for the coming month. We work on very slim margins to maintain quality care and keep prices down, this short billing cycle is necessary to pay our teachers and meet our financial obligations. We thank you for your understanding and your help by making your payments on time. At this time we do not accept personal checks or credit cards. We offer the convenience online payments from your checking account so that payment will always be made on time. Your monthly balance is due on the 1st of the month and considered late after the 10th of the month. On the 11th of each month you will incur a \$25 late charge for each child and your child will be suspended from the program until payment is made. If tuition is not paid by the 20th of each month then your child's space will be lost and given to another child from our waitlist. Please refer to our Rate Sheet for detailed rates for each program. Our monthly rates for daytime programs include everything your child will need while at Akitoi Learning Center, with the exception of our optional hot lunch program for which there is an additional charge. Unlike other centers where there are a lot of hidden fees or the parent must provide certain items, such as an earthquake kit, the monthly dues are all-inclusive. For example, preschool dues include the costs for blankets, supplies & materials for art & science projects, hot breakfasts, morning and afternoon snacks and more. The only costs beyond the dues are the one time initiation fee and costs for optional services such as hot lunch, some field trips, and special classes. We have no fundraising commitments, no tuition insurance, no security deposits, no center service commitments, and no annual registration fees. We are committed to providing quality care to your children with an up-front understanding of our rates and services.

Initiation Fee

The initiation fee is a one-time administrative fee that establishes your lifetime membership at Akitoi Learning Center. It helps cover the costs associated with establishing a membership for your child. These fees help cover the costs of processing your child's paper work, establishing earthquake supplies, providing security systems, etc. The Initiation fee is non refundable and non transferable however may be waived if the child is covered by certain subsidy programs.

Late Pick-up fees & Program Hours

Rather than charge a late fee, we do offer an option for early drop off (6:30 a.m.) or late pick-up (6:00 p.m.) which will be billed out at an hourly rate in 15-minute increments. Please consult with the Director if you are interested in this benefit so you will be billed accordingly.

Program Hours

Program	AM Hours	PM Hours	Full Day Program
Jr. Preschool/Daycare	7:30 - 12:30	12:30 - 5:30	7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Wrap-around Care	6:30 - 8:30	12:00 - 6:00 <i>*after kindergarten</i>	2:30 - 6:00 <i>*after school</i>

Notice of Program Changes & Cancellations

No refunds will be given for children leaving Akitoi Learning Center partway through the month. *Thirty days notice is required to change or cancel the program your child is enrolled in.* Giving notice allows the child and staff time to make necessary adjustments for proper care of your child. No refunds are given for sick or vacation days since tuition pays for the space whether your child is here or not.

Changes in Membership Policies and Rates

Akitoi Learning Center's membership policies and rates are subject to change. However, we will provide you with thirty days advance notice of any changes to our membership policies, our rate and fee schedules, or our holiday schedules. Increases in tuition occur each September and generally range from 2 – 5%

Family Discounts

Families with more than one child as a member at Akitoi Learning Center will be given a discount of 10% off the dues for daytime programs for all children enrolled in the daytime programs. The discount applies to all children in the immediate (not extended) family.

Subsidies

Akitoi Learning Center has affiliations with Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP), Mexican American Opportunity Foundation (MAOF) and OPTIONS. One of these programs may provide a subsidy to cover the tuition for some or all of your child's expenses. We will review your enrollment packet and advise if your child may meet the eligibility requirements for one of these subsidies. The benefits of a subsidy cannot be combined and parents are responsible for paying the balance of tuition due, if applicable, according to the payment requirements outlined in this handbook.

ADMISSIONS POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Acceptance Policy

Akitoi Learning Center does not discriminate in any form in the acceptance of children on the basis of sex, race, or religion. However, Akitoi Learning Center is not licensed to work with special needs children. As such, children with special needs must be evaluated by the Director before being admitted to the program. Most special needs children require a one-on-one “shadow” or outside assistant provided by the parents to be admitted. Our license does permit us to accept a limited number of non-ambulatory children. Children will be added to the waiting list in the order in which their completed application along with initiation fee and pre-admission requirements are received. Parents will be contacted in order as space becomes available and will be required to attend an orientation with the Director and the child’s caregiver. All parents and children are required to agree to follow all stated policies and procedures, especially those with regard to health and safety issues. Space for part-time or half-day programs is very limited. Once these spaces are full, children will be admitted only if another child can be matched with them to fill one full-time space. Children entering Akitoi Learning Center will be on a 2-week trial basis to ensure proper adjustment within an already established routine. It is mutually agreed that either Akitoi Learning Center or the parent may terminate the membership at any time.

Pre-Admission Policies

- 1) A child must meet the Akitoi Learning Center Admissions criteria before being accepted for membership.
- 2) An interview will be conducted with the parents to allow for the following requirements to be met:
 - a) Good understanding of the child’s health, physical and emotional development and whether or not his/her needs can be met by the center.
 - b) Parent is provided with information about Akitoi Learning Center to include:
 - 1) Admission Policies
 - 2) Services Akitoi Learning Center has to offer
 - 3) Activities for the children
 - 4) Hours/days of operation
 - 5) Fees
 - 6) Center Rules and Regulations
 - 7) Ill or injured child procedures
- 3) Each parent will be given a complete tour/inspection of the facility.

- 4) Parent must provide Akitoi Learning Center with a complete Medical Assessment form, completed by a physician prior to membership. The assessment must include:
- a) Record of infections and contagious diseases
 - b) TB Test results (Mantoux test / Chest Xray) – after the age of 1 year
 - c) Special problems or needs
 - d) Identification of prescribed medications
 - e) Ambulatory status
 - f) Immunization Records
- 5) Parents must complete all forms in the admissions packet.
- 6) Parents must sign and date that they have received read and agrees to all of the terms for membership within the Pre-Admission, Admissions and Fee Contracts.

TRANSITION POLICY

Transition Schedule

Transition Group	Frequency	Months
Jr. Preschool/Daycare	3 transitions	Sept/Jan/May
Preschool	3 transitions	Sept/Jan/May

Transition Selection & Procedure

Children are selected to transition to the next class on a combination of factors including: Age, Emotional & Social Development, Cognitive Development, and Extenuating Circumstances. Age is obviously a key factor, however, it is not always the overriding determining factor. The child's development in all areas is also very important and can result in children transitioning both before and after their birth date. Major changes in the child's home life such as a recent move, divorce, or traumatic event, or a physical or mental handicap may also be reason to delay a transition for the sake of maintaining stability for the child. Delaying a transition, or "Holding a Child Back" at this stage in their development can be beneficial for their self-esteem without the negative effects of being held back in Elementary School. Here the delay is usually only for a few months while allowing the child the chance to shine as the older child in a class and take on a leadership position. Often this opportunity to be a leader in a class is all it takes to bring a child out of their shell. Then, in a few months, they will transition and join up with their friends in the older class with a greater level of self-confidence and determination. Transition selection is a combined effort at Akitoi Learning Center with input from a child's existing teacher, the component coordinator, the teacher of the class the child will transition to, and the Director. A great deal of thought and consideration is spent in making these selections. In addition to "Who" will transition, we also have to determine "Where" or to which class they will transition. To this end, we look at the child's level of development and personality to match the child to the appropriate teacher. We also look at the number of boys and girls in a class and try to achieve a balance. With the benefit of many years of experience and observation of children transitioning, we have found that most children transition completely and enthusiastically on their first day. Much to the dismay of their old teachers, children are eager to be with the big kids in the new class, and once they move, they rarely look back. We do, however, want to prepare the children for the transition and make them feel comfortable with the move. In the 2 weeks preceding the transition date, each class as a whole will occasionally walk around the center to locate and

briefly visit the classes that their children will be transitioning to. The teachers will talk with their class about the transition process and review the names of the new classes and teachers with their children. This will prepare the children for the transition and make the process smooth and comfortable for them. On the day of transition, the children should go directly to their new class. Their new teacher will be expecting them and will be prepared to welcome them to the group. Most children are so excited about this big day, that they eagerly join their new class. If the child is having difficulty, their new teacher will comfort them and address their uneasiness. In rare cases, it may be best for the child to spend some time with their old class and take the transition more slowly. Usually, however, a slow approach to transitioning confuses the child and makes them unsure of where they belong. Yet, each child is unique and it is our job to do our best to meet the needs of each and every child we care for. Transitioning is always harder on the parents than it is on the child. Please rest assured that we are here for your child, and we will do our best to keep them safe and content.

MEDICAL, SICK & EMERGENCY POLICIES

Akitoi Learning Center Sick Child Policy

We do not have the staff, facilities, or licensing authorization to care for children who are too ill to take part in regular activities. Each child will receive a health check daily. If there is notice of any symptoms of illness such as vomiting or diarrhea, or a temperature of 100.6 degrees or above, the parent will be notified immediately. If your child becomes ill during the day, the parent will be called. Your child will be isolated in the Director's or President's office until you can pick them up (within 1 hour of being called). If the parent cannot be reached, one of the friends or family members listed on the Medical Emergency Authorization form will be contacted.

Akitoi Learning Center Medical Emergency Policy

If a child requires medical treatment, the following protocol will be followed:

For Common Injuries: All staff members of Akitoi Learning Center are certified in child First Aid. The center is equipped with three fully supplied first aid kits. Minor cuts, bruises and scrapes will be treated as they occur following proper first aid procedures and parents will receive "Ouch Reports" detailing the injury.

For More Serious Injuries: All staff are certified in child CPR, should these procedures be needed. All attempts will be made to contact the parents. If the parents are not available, then the persons listed on the Medical Emergency Authorization form will be called.

Emergency Evacuation / Fire / Earthquakes

Akitoi Learning Center has trained its staff to prepare for any type of emergency evacuation, whether it be earthquake, fire or dealing with hazardous materials. Monthly evacuation drills are held to teach the children how to evacuate the building in a safe and orderly manner with their teachers close at hand giving instructions in a calm and organized way. Akitoi Learning Center is equipped with a state-of-the-art fire safety system. Our fire alarm system constantly monitors the facility for both smoke and high levels of heat. If either dangerous situation is detected, the system sounds the fire alarm sirens in all areas of the facility and activates the emergency flashing lights indicating there is trouble. Additionally, the system

automatically dispatches the Fire Department. We are fortunate to have a fire stations and hospitals very close to our facilities. Akitoi Learning Center maintains a substantial stock of emergency supplies and equipment located in storage sheds in our evacuation area away from our buildings. These supplies are rotated on a regular basis and include dry and powdered food products, canned goods, bottled water, blankets, first aid and medical supplies, portable toilets, emergency lighting, tools, and more. In case of a major earthquake or disaster, we have enough supplies on hand to feed the children and staff for a 3-day period.

Akitoi Learning Center Medication Policy

Akitoi Learning Center will not administer medication to your child.

Daily Inspection for Illness

(1) The licensee shall be responsible for ensuring that children with obvious symptoms of illness including, but not limited to, fever or vomiting, are not accepted.

- (A) Have been absent because of illness.
- (B) Have been exposed to a contagious disease.

(2) The licensee shall develop and implement a written inspection procedure that shall include the following:

- (A) No child shall be accepted without contact between center staff and the person bringing the child to the center.
- (B) The licensee shall require that the person bringing the child to the center remain until the child is accepted.

(3) After the child has been determined to be without obvious signs of illness and has been accepted, the center shall require that the person sign the child in.

Isolation For Illness

(1) A center shall be equipped to isolate and care for any child who becomes ill during the day.

- (A) The isolation area shall be located to afford easy supervision of children by center staff.
- (B) The isolation area shall be equipped with a mat, cot, couch or bed for each ill child.
- (C) The isolation area shall not be located in the kitchen area or the general-use toilet area.
- (D) In combination centers, only one isolation area that serves all licensed components is required.

(2) The child's authorized representative shall be notified immediately when the child becomes ill enough to require isolation, and shall be asked to have the child removed from the center as soon as possible.

Observation of Child

(1) The behavior and health of the children shall be continually observed throughout the period of attendance.

(2) Any unusual behavior, any injury or any signs of illness requiring assessment and/or administration of first aid by staff shall be reported to the child's authorized representative and recorded in the child's file.

NOTE: Authority cited: Section 1596.81, Health and Safety Code: Reference: Section 1596.72, 1596.73, 1596.81, 1597.05, Health and Safety Code.

AKITOI LEARNING CENTER'S DISCIPLINE POLICY

Akitoi Learning Center will not allow corporal punishment or humiliating or frightening techniques to be used as a form of discipline. Children will learn from a very early age to consider and respect others and the environment around them. Clear and consistent age appropriate limits will be set, and with these limits, each child will learn what is appropriate and what is inappropriate. Children will be encouraged to solve as many of their own problems as possible. When a caregiver must intervene, age appropriate and constructive methods of discipline will be used, starting with a verbal talking to, redirecting and a time-out if necessary. Physical or emotional danger will be grounds for a caregiver to intervene immediately. The parents will be included in this discipline process so children can see that both parents and teachers reinforce limit setting. Parents are notified with an incident report regarding any disciplinary action taken by the child's caregiver, so you are not only aware, but can follow-up with the child's behavior.

Grounds for Termination

Excessive or repetitious biting, or physical or emotional abuse of another child or teacher will be grounds for termination. Akitoi Learning Center reserves the right to terminate any child's membership if that child is found to be disruptive to our program. However, prior to termination, several steps will be taken to try to eliminate problematic behavior. First, a parent conference will be scheduled to discuss the problems and the means of correcting them. Second, a reasonable amount of time will be given to solve the problem. Additional supervision may be necessary to ensure the safety of the other children during this time. Third, if the problem persists, a specialist may be called in with parental consent to help evaluate and correct the problem, this may result in additional cost to the parent. If the situation cannot be resolved to both the parents' or Akitoi Learning Center's satisfaction, termination may be necessary.

PERSONAL & PARENT'S RIGHTS

Personal Rights

- (a) Child Care Centers. Each child receiving services from a Child Care Center shall have rights which include, but are not limited to, the following:
- (1) To be accorded dignity in his/her personal relationships with staff and other persons.
 - (2) To be accorded safe, healthful and comfortable accommodations, furnishings and equipment to meet his/her needs.
 - (3) To be free from corporal or unusual punishment, infliction of pain, humiliation, intimidation, ridicule, coercion, threat, mental abuse, or other actions of a punitive nature, including but not limited to: interference with daily living functions, including eating, sleeping, or toileting; or withholding of shelter, clothing, medication or aids to physical functioning.
 - (4) To be informed, and to have his/her authorized representative, if any, informed by the licensee of the provisions of law regarding complaints including, but not limited to, the address and telephone number of the complaint receiving unit of the licensing agency and of information regarding confidentiality.
 - (5) To be free to attend religious services or activities of his/her choice and to have visits from the spiritual advisor of his/her choice. Attendance at religious services, either in or outside the facility, shall be on a completely voluntary basis. In Child Care Centers, decisions concerning attendance at religious services or visits from spiritual advisors shall be made by the parent(s), domestic partner(s), or guardian(s) of the child.
 - (6) Not to be locked in any room, building, or facility premises by day or night.
 - (7) Not to be placed in any restraining device, except a supportive restraint approved in advance by the licensing agency.

Parent's Rights

As a Parent/Authorized Representative, you have the right to:

1. Enter and inspect the child care center without advance notice whenever children are in care.
2. File a complaint against the licensee with the licensing office and review the licensee's public

file kept by the licensing office.

3. Review, at the child care center, reports of licensing visits and substantiated complaints against the licensee made during the last three years.
4. Complain to the licensing office and inspect the child care center without discrimination or retaliation against you or your child.
5. Request in writing that a parent not be allowed to visit your child or take your child from the child care center, provided you have shown a certified copy of a court order.
6. Receive from the licensee the name, address and telephone number of the local licensing office.
7. Be informed by the licensee, upon request, of the name and type of association to the child care center for any adult who has been granted a criminal record exemption, and that the name of the person may also be obtained by contacting the local licensing office.
8. Receive, from the licensee, the Caregiver Background Check Process form. **NOTE: CALIFORNIA STATE LAW PROVIDES THAT THE LICENSEE MAY DENY ACCESS TO THE CHILD CARE CENTER TO A PARENT/AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE IF THE BEHAVIOR OF THE PARENT/AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE POSES A RISK TO CHILDREN IN CARE. THE APPROPRIATE LICENSING AGENCY TO CONTACT REGARDING COMPLAINTS IS:**

**Department of Social Services,
Community Care Licensing Division, Los Angeles Child Care East
1000 Corporate Center Drive, Suite 200-B, Monterey Park, CA 91754
323-981-3350**

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

2012 – 2013

Akitoi Learning Center will be closed on the following days:

New Year's Eve and Day

Good Friday

Memorial Day

Independence Day

Labor Day

July 4th

Thanksgiving Eve and Day

Christmas Eve and Day