

# **CAPSTONE QUEST ACADEMY**

## **PARENT HANDBOOK**

### **CHILDHOOD LEARNING PROGRAM PRE-KINDERGARTEN**

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### **AM (BEFORE) AND PM (AFTER) SCHOOL PROGRAM**



**Annual Edition**

**Program participation requires the current payment of fees, participation is voluntary, payment is mandatory!**

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# **CAPSTONE QUEST ACADEMY**

## **HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS**

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# **FORWARD**

**Welcome to another exciting year educating Pre-kindergarten children, ages 3-5, creating a vision for early childhood learnings. As a parent, you are entrusting us with your most valued possession, a loving child.**

**The teacher and each parent is an important contributor to the teaching/learning team for the child's future. Each acts as a trustee, providing a safe environment, securing opportunities that define a lifetime. These mutual responsibilities become significant targets for fulfilling the emerging needs of children and families.**

**The Pre-kindergarten instructional program is conducted 5 days a week, with an A.M. (early arrival) or P.M. (late dismissal) program provided as a fee for service child care activity. This early arrival (7:00-8:00 A.M.) or late dismissal (3:30-6:00 P.M.) program serves the supervisory and safety needs of children and families.**

**The Pre-kindergarten program is a warm, caring and safe environment resulting in a strong foundation for future schooling successes. The young child learns to solve problems in challenging situations. The Pre-kindergarten classroom is an excellent laboratory, helping define and create resources for youthful growth and maturity. The ultimate objective for this program is to foster a life-long love of learning.**

**As a concluding toast to the success of another school year, let us share and experience the beauty of each child.**

**CAPSTONE QUEST ACADEMY**  
**Pre-Kindergarten Early Learners Program**

**SCHOOL OFFICE ADDRESSES**

Phoenix - Camelback (602) 532-0100  
1333 West Camelback Road  
Phoenix, Arizona 85013

Tucson – Country Club (520) 620-1100  
1150 North Country Club Road  
Tucson, Arizona 85716

Yuma – North (928) 919-7203  
1220 South 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Yuma, Arizona 85364

Yuma – South (928) 329-1100  
2098 South 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue  
Yuma, Arizona 85364

# **Capstone Quest Academy**

## **VALUES**

- \*Non-graded**
- \*Personalized Instruction**
- \*Highly Qualified Staff**
- \*Skill Based Instruction**
- \*Integrated Curriculum**
- \*Enrichment**
- \*Community as Laboratory**
- \*High Academic Standards**
- \*Choice**

## **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND CURRICULUM**

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION.** Capstone Quest Academy provides a private school Pre-kindergarten program, serving families and children ages 3 - 5 (those children not eligible for kindergarten). Each learning center sits inside Amerischools Academy Charter School locations.

**DATES/HOURS FOR SERVICE.** The Capstone Quest Pre-K instructional program is conducted 5 days a week. Capstone Quest will be offered during school breaks if participation allows except for the following holidays; New Years Day, Martin Luther King Day, Presidents Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. An A.M. (early arrival) or P.M. (late dismissal) program is provided as a fee for service child care activity if the facility is licensed for it. This early arrival (7:00-8:00 A.M.) or late dismissal (3:30-6:00 P.M.) program serves the supervisory and safety needs of children and families. Refer to the Model Schedule in this Handbook to fully examine the opportunities and instructional provisions for Daily Activities.

**CIRRICULUM.** This Pre-kindergarten program is a warm, caring and safe environment, providing a developmentally appropriate experience, resulting in a strong foundation for future schooling successes. The young child experiences rules for self-control, solving problems in challenging situations whether within the community, school or family. The Pre-kindergarten classroom is an excellent laboratory, a community of young children starting to accept or reasonably reject rules for behavior. This

grand experience provides clearly understood limits for behaving, helping define and create personal resources for growth and maturity.

## **THEMATIC CENTERS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNINGS**

**Daily Care Routines  
Active Play  
Music & Movement  
Block Play  
Dramatic Play**

**Math & Manipulatives  
Science & Nature  
Water & Sand Play  
Creative Experiences  
We, You and Me**

**“Play is our brain’s favorite way of learning”  
Diane Ackerman**

The Pre-K teacher and parent is an important program contributor to the teaching/learning team for the child’s future. Each day lesson plans are posted, following mandated licensing requirements. For these early learning programs, each parent is encouraged to read to their child; recite nursery rhymes; sing children’s songs or play “I Spy” while riding in the car. These mutual opportunities strengthen the bonding of family members. The teaching/learning activities contribute a variety of experiences, positive opportunities to participate and socially interact with others. Specifically, this learning laboratory values play and rest, physical exercise, pre-literacy language exploration as well as developing cognitive and social skills. The ultimate objective for this program is to foster a life-long love of learning.

## PROGRAM ADMISSIONS

**ADMISSIONS CRITERIA.** A limited number of program billets (spaces) are available for program registration of Pre-K children, ages 3 – 5 (not eligible for the kindergarten program). Developmentally, children participating in the program are to demonstrate these abilities: (1) follow simple teacher directions; (2) independently dress, feed and toilet themselves; (3) appropriately interact with others; (4) move from one activity to another without repetitive instructions and (5) orally express themselves in an age-appropriate manner.

**STUDENT REGISTRATION.** All parents must complete registration PRIOR to the child's first day of active participation in the program. This includes: (1) the registration packet; (2) up-to-date (current) student immunization card; (3) up-to-date emergency card; (4) a copy of the child's birth certificate; and (5) proof of residence. To cancel a child's program registration, please notify the registrar two weeks prior to departure. (reference Cancellation Policy below)

**TUITION CONTRACT FOR PROGRAM SUPPORT.** The parent is to sign a tuition contract, requiring weekly payments that are due by the 1<sup>st</sup> day of each week electronically through the Procure online portal. A deposit that is equivalent to one week's tuition is due at the time of registration. This deposit will be credited to the child's first week of attendance. Weekly tuition must be paid to reserve the child's registration in the program even if the child is absent. The program may choose to remain open for a fee depending on participation interest. If not, the holiday non-payment includes Spring Recess, Fall Recess, Winter Recess and the two-week Summer Recess. If the tuition payment is not received by the first day of each week, the child will not be permitted to remain a program participant and attend activities. This billet (space) will be filled immediately by another registrant.

**COLLECTIONS.** Program participation requires the current payment of fees, participation is voluntary, payment is mandatory! There are no privileges for participation in the program without obligations. Unpaid tuition fees are contract obligations that are to be assigned for collection by law.

**REFUND.** No credit or refund is given for absences.

## **PROGRAM PARTICIPATION**

**ARRIVAL.** Parents are responsible for transporting their children to school on a daily basis. Upon arrival, parents are to sign their child in via the Procure app or provided tablet and accompany the child to the classroom or meeting area. Do not leave the child unattended unless a staff member is present to supervise. Leaving a child unattended due to early arrival is unlawful according to statute. Please be considerate and timely in following the arrival protocols and practices. Failure to comply with these imperative policies may result in a complaint being filed with Child Protective Services.

**DISMISSAL.** Parents are responsible to sign-out via the Procure app or provided tablet, pick-up and receive their children at dismissal time. Staff members are to accompany and supervise children to the pick-up/receiving area for release. All children are to be released and received by authorized parents or adults. As a parent receiving a child, please be prompt. Failure to comply with a timely pick-up at release is to result in a \$1.00 per minute (per child) late fee. If an emergency arises, the parent is to call the registrar to inform the child of an anticipated time of arrival.

Authorized adults other than parents are to sign the dismissal form and provide photo identification, authorizing the release of a child into their care. Authorized adults consist only of those on the contact form.

**SCHEDULE PROGRAM OPTIONS.** The Pre-K program schedule provides several options for each family.

- ❖ Program #1 Capstone Pre-K Program (Hours for operation: 8:00 AM – 3:30 PM).
- ❖ Program #2 Capstone Pre-K and Quest 7:00 AM – 6:00 PM programs combined. Monday – Friday, this schedule mirrors the elementary calendar for the AmeriSchools Academy (exception, Pre-K program offers a summer session with a 2 week recess and other breaks).

**ATTENDANCE.** Regular and prompt attendance for class is both appreciated and expected. Licensing requirements dictate attendance records for each child participating in the program. A first-come-first serve waiting list of students provides sufficient registration numbers to support program capacity. Open enrollment is an administrative procedure to fully support tuition contracts that maintain the program.

**IMMUNIZATIONS.** As a condition for registration and participation in the Pre-kindergarten program, *all children must be current* with personal immunization records. *A copy of this record is to be stamped by the physician's office*, including the name of the office or clinic, address and phone number must be provided and recorded on the Emergency Health Card prior to class attendance.

**MEDICATION.** Parents of any child enrolled in the Pre-K program is required to notify the school administration of any medical, physical or disabling condition limiting the child's full participation in the program. This includes allergies conditioned by weather, pollen, food or medicine.

A Medication Consent Form is to be completed by the parent of each child authorizing the administration to provide prescribed medications during the preschool day. The registrar is to securely store and administer medicine as prescribed. All medications are to be in the original container, clearly labeled for each child. Students are not permitted to possess any medication or to self-medicate while attending the program.

**SNACK TIME.** The Pre-K program closely follows and fully supports the food service and nutrition standards incorporated in the licensing for early childhood schooling. The contribution of dietary knowledge is a first step in an extended ladder towards a healthful future for all children who are beginning to make critical choices for a lifetime.

Daily snack time is a PM (afternoon) special learning center to explore the world of food and nutrition. Snack time costs for each child and family is included as part of the program fee schedule. The Food Allergies Form is to be completed by the parent at registration informing the staff of allergic conditions, eliminating these foods from snack selections and choices, and in turn, directly benefiting all children in the program.

**BACKPACKS.** Backpacks have become critical apparel for most students, supporting instructional and recreational activities. Please provide backpacks large enough to hold a folder identifying the child by name. The backpack will transport papers, artwork and special items as a record of achievement and memorabilia. By selecting a special place within the home, the pack is clearly available as the child prepares for school. This

supportive learning technique enhances the opportunity for the child to become responsible for personal possessions. As a responsible parent, please check your child's backpack and folder each day prior to departure or return from school.

**FIRE DRILLS.** Unannounced evacuation/fire drills must be conducted at least every 30 days as required by law. Emergency evacuation plans are posted in each classroom, directing each teacher to follow assigned responsibilities.

**EMERGENCY PROVISIONS.** Emergency first aid is to be given by the classroom teacher. If a student becomes ill, a staff member is to accompany the child to the school office. A parent or responsible adult is to be contacted for students leaving the program during the preschool day. Each student is to remain in the office until transportation is provided for departure. *Each parent is encouraged to cooperate by promptly picking-up the departing child.* The office staff is not authorized to call a parent unless the child requires immediate attention for dismissal due to an un-anticipated illness or emotional distress.

Emergency provisions protecting a child's welfare are dependent upon reliable and current information on the Emergency Health Card. Each card is to record the following emergency information:

- Current home address, telephone number or cell phone number.
- Place of employment, phone numbers for all responsible adults.
- Names of four responsible adults other than the parent.

Children with communicable health conditions ***MUST*** receive homebound care, including overt symptoms of *fever, diarrhea, vomiting or other disabling condition*. If a child is to be homebound for health reasons, the parent is responsible for reporting the absence and health condition to the school administration. (Sorry no deductions are made in fees for tuition children).

**DISCIPLINE.** Play is a powerful teaching activity that captivates children. Teaching discipline through play concentrates on the child experiencing effective behaviors, beginning with the modeling of purposeful acts. Negative behaviors are often equally effective and purposeful, providing less than positive outcomes. To address these conflicting issues, behavioral teaching strategies for the Pre-K program include: (1) the demonstration of appropriate coping skills, (2) the preparation of developmentally appropriate activities that are sequenced according to the maturing needs of the child, (3) scheduling activities in a controlled environment, and (4) providing clear, consistent and fair rules for behavior.

**PARENT CONFERENCES.** Formally scheduled parent conferences are held every six weeks to discuss each child's participation in the program, emphasizing academic and developmental progress. The initial conference is to take place in a mutual setting for direct parent/teacher participation. Other informal conferences for staff members and parents utilize the telephone, fax correspondence and social media. The parent/teacher conference is a critical event addressing the needs of both the student and family. Note: each parent must make independent arrangements for after care supervision for children due to early dismissal schedules.

**PESTICIDE APPLICATION.** Parents, students and staff members are to be informed when pesticides are applied on school property. Such notice must be in a timely manner and conform to state statute, currently forty-eight (48) hours prior to the notice of application. Notification procedures provided during the regular academic calendar include the following: (1) oral notification to pupils and staff members; (2) written notification to parents or guardians; and (3) the posting of signs to identify pesticide application areas. Contracting pest control applicators are to provide detailed information to the principal of the site for the purpose of monitoring the posting of materials, a responsibility of the pest control company. Each site is to maintain written records of pesticide application notifications. Under this policy, the pest control applicator has the duty to complete and post notices required by statute. Pesticides do not include non-restricted use of disinfectants, sanitizers or deodorizers regulated by the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act.

# **SUPENSION AND EXPULSION PREVENTION POLICY**

## **PROGRAM COMMITMENT STATEMENT**

At our program we believe every child deserves to feel safe, supported, and welcomed in their early learning environment. We recognize that young children are developing social, emotional, and behavioral skills and that behavior is a form of communication.

Our program is committed to preventing suspension and expulsion whenever possible through proactive teaching practices, strong relationships with families, and collaboration with community partners. Removal from care is considered only as a last resort after supportive strategies and resources have been fully explored.

This policy aligns with the Arizona Department of Economic Security's Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Policy and supports access to early learning opportunities for all children.

## **PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION PRACTICES**

Our program implements developmentally appropriate and relationship-based practices designed to support children's success in care.

Prevention strategies include:

- Maintaining predictable daily routines and nurturing classroom environments
- Teaching social-emotional skills through modeling and guided practice
- Using positive behavior guidance and redirection strategies
- Adjusting classroom environments or expectations to meet individual needs
- Supporting staff through coaching, reflective supervision, and professional development

Program leadership regularly observes classrooms and partners with teaching staff to identify strengths and areas where additional support may benefit children or educators.

## **FAMILY PARTNERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION**

Families are valued partners in supporting children's development. Open and respectful communication occurs early when concerns arise.

When behavioral or developmental concerns are identified, our program will:

- Share observations with families in a strengths-based manner
- Invite families to participate in problem solving discussions
- Collaboratively develop support strategies or individualized plans
- Consider cultural, linguistic, and family perspectives when planning supports

Families are encouraged to share information about their child's experiences, routines, and strengths to help guide supportive approaches.

## **INCLUSION AND SUPPORT FOR ALL CHILDREN**

Our program is committed to inclusive practices and does not deny enrollment or remove children due to developmental delays, disabilities, behavioral challenges, or suspected special needs without first implementing supportive interventions.

Supports may include:

- Individualized behavior or support plans
- Environmental or schedule modifications
- Additional classroom support
- Developmental screenings with family consent
- Collaboration with early intervention or special education services

Our program makes reasonable efforts to ensure all children can safely participate in learning activities alongside their peers.

## **USE OF CONSULTATION AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

Before suspension or expulsion is considered, our program will seek additional support resources when available.

These supports may include:

- Referral to AZ STEPS (Arizona Statewide Training and Technical Assistance for Expulsion Prevention)
- Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation
- Inclusion specialists or behavior consultants
- Community based developmental or family support services

Staff and families are informed when referrals are made and are included throughout the support process.

## **DOCUMENTATION AND ONGOING REVIEW**

The program documents:

- Observed concerns
- Strategies implemented
- Family communication
- Supports requested or received
- Progress over time

Support strategies are reviewed regularly and adjusted as needed to promote successful participation in care.

## **SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION AS A LAST RESORT**

Suspension or expulsion will only be considered when:

1. A serious and ongoing safety risk exists, and
2. Reasonable accommodation and interventions have been attempted, and
3. Consultations or external supports have been requested when available.

If a child must transition from the program, we will:

- Notify parent in writing, at least five business days prior to the child's

#### **disenrollment**

- **Work collaboratively with families to identify alternative care or services**
- **Provide referrals to community resources**
- **Support a respectful and planned transition to minimize disruption for children and families.**

#### **POLICY COMMUNICATION AND REVIEW**

**This policy is:**

- **Shared with families upon enrollment**
- **Included in the family handbook**
- **Reviewed annually with staff**
- **Updated as guidance or best practices evolve**

## MODEL SCHEDULE OF DAILY ACTIVITIES

|                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7:00 – 8:00 AM   | Gates open for AM (before) Pre-K Program (Breakfast with Free Center Time)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 8:00 – 8:25 AM   | Gates open for full day Pre-K Program (Free Center Time Organized for Exploration and Readiness activities) greeting, morning centers and attendance.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 8:30 – 9:00 AM   | Circle time, read out loud and dance.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 9:00 – 9:30 AM   | Recess Outdoors (weather permitting/inclement heat respected)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 9:30 – 10:30 AM  | Art, centers and special projects.<br>Dynamic activities for social interaction and self-other recognition includes music and movement, singing, finger play, counting friends and articles. Singing as a repetitive exercise, encourages children to learn through the recognition of common memory activities. Circle time explorations build upon repetitive activities, including counting, an awareness of others as cohort classmates. This encourages the learning of individual classmate names, sharing/cooperation, friendships and positive social responses to others. |
| 10:30 – 10:45 AM | Clean, bathroom, wash hands.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 10:45 – 11:15 AM | <b><u>Lunch</u></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 11:15 – 11:30 AM | Buddy reading                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 11:30 – 11:45 AM | Bathroom and wash hands.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 11:45 – 2:00 PM  | Nap Time<br>The Pre-K program provides each student with essential mats for Nap Time.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 2:00 – 2:20 PM   | Wake up and clean up.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 2:20 – 2:30 PM   | Snack Time                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 2:30 – 2:40 PM   | Dance and exercise.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 2:40 – 3:15 PM   | Outside playtime and dismissal.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

## Job Description

Job Title: Teacher/Director Designee  
Reports To: Director  
FLSA Status: Non-exempt  
Shift: Ten/Twelve months, as assigned by the Chief Executive Officer

This position is directly responsible to the Director of the Early Learning Program: (1) implementing a program based on the highest of child development standards, (2) positively interacting with children and parents, acting as an adult role model as defined by specified regulations, enforcing and applying all laws and rules and regulations relating to standards and official legal documents, (3) communicating in English and commonly spoken language of the child's home, to fully explain a child development integrated curriculum, (4) maintaining accurate records and (5) maintaining and supporting positive working relationships. Some specific responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

1. Assisting the Director of the Early Learning Program in planning and scheduling age appropriate learning activities, stimulating the cognitive skills and development of each child.
2. Providing continuous supervision of each child enrolled in the Early Learning Program, ensuring the health and safety of each participant.
3. Assisting to maintain the physical facilities housing the program to provide a clean, orderly and safe environment for various activities, including food service, napping sites and play areas.
4. Recording daily observations of each child's behavior while participating in activities, monitoring and recording behaviors resulting in appropriate child assessments and profiles.
5. Scheduling parent conferences to facilitate communicating the development of each child, devising learning and developmental strategies.
6. Maintaining accurate attendance and enrollment records, utilizing confidential standards to secure the privacy of family information.
7. Actively monitoring any sign of child abuse, reporting such incidents to appropriate authorities.
8. Maintaining and securing supplies that directly affect the health and welfare of children, including materials for early learning activities, napping and play exercises.
9. Satisfactorily completing an appropriate background check and a validated education work history appropriate for this position, including certificates in CPR, First Aid and selected core courses and 18 GE units, as enumerated rules of the Department of Health Services rules.
10. Performing such other duties and responsibilities as assigned, providing the instructional leadership and entrepreneurial skills required by this position.

This position is directly responsible to and evaluated by the Chief Executive Officer in the performance of these duties, with the clear understanding that job related stress is a norm for this position, and that this situation will be encountered on a daily basis to properly perform these functions. The payment of wages is dependent on the timely and continuous registration of students and the receipt of funds.

### Job Description

Job Title: Teacher Aide  
Reports to: Director  
FLSA Status: Non-Exempt  
Shift: As assigned

This position is directly responsible to the Director of the Early Learning Program, with responsibility for: (1) providing the general supervision of children in the Pre-K program including either before (AM) or after (PM) services, (2) providing and participating in recreational and educational activities for children, and (3) assisting to maintain a clean, safe healthful learning environment. Some specific activities shall include, but are not limited to:

1. Assisting in the supervision of students for various indoor and outdoor activities, establishing a safe and positive learning environment.
2. Receiving and releasing children at arrival and dismissal times directly to parents or authorized individuals, ensuring the safety of program participants.
3. Assisting the Director or teacher in providing age appropriate activities, working with individual or small groups of children for the purpose of teaching and learning.
4. Distributing instructional or play materials necessary for child assisted learning.
5. Maintaining program equipment and teaching/learning work areas, including kitchen tools, appliances, etc., ensuring the availability of items for continued instruction.
6. Monitoring children in all activities including testing periods, snack time or indoor/outdoor play.
7. Promoting positive behaviors and habits that contribute in the quality of student development, acting as a positive role model.
8. Actively monitoring any sign of child abuse, reporting such incidents to appropriate authorities.
9. Satisfactorily completing an appropriate background check and a validated education work history appropriate for this position, including certificates in CPR, First Aid and selected core courses and 18 GE units, as stated in the rules of the Department of Health Services.
10. Performing such other duties and responsibilities as assigned, providing the instructional leadership and entrepreneurial skills required by this position.

This position is directly responsible to and evaluated by the Chief Executive Officer in the performance of these duties, with the clear understanding that job related stress is a norm for this

position, and that this situation will be encountered on a daily basis to properly perform these functions. The payment of wages is dependent on the timely and continuous registration of students and the receipt of funds.