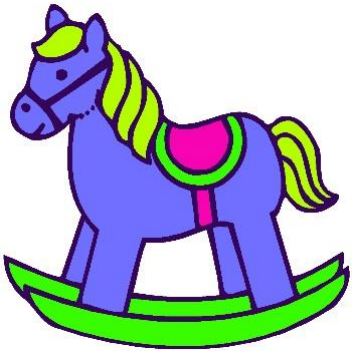

Rocking Horse Academy WELCOMES you to PONIES

WELCOME TO THE PONY ROOM! The teachers in the Pony classroom look forward to having your child in our class. We pledge to do our best to have fun while creating a safe, supportive, nurturing, and exciting learning environment.

The Pony room is where we begin to teach with a more structured approach. We introduce circle time, begin teaching the children to walk through the hallways in an orderly manner, and learn to focus on the teacher for longer periods of time. We also teach the basics, like colors, shapes, numbers, the alphabet, and reinforce concepts of sharing and using our manners. We practice language skills in English, Spanish, and American Sign Language. Finally, we introduce our oldest Ponies to the idea of using the potty along with our diaper changes.

As a class we learn through hands-on activities and group play. Our curriculum includes sensory play, art exploration, fine motor activities, circle time, center time, tabletop activities, story time, music, dance, and physical education in our gym, atrium, and toddler playground. A complete Pony Schedule is attached to this packet and a copy is always posted inside the class and on the Parent Board in the hallway.

COMMUNICATION:

ponies@rockinghorseacademy.com

Communication between parents and your child's teacher is vital. As a team of teachers, we try very hard to communicate with each other about what might occur before or after our shift. The more you tell us about your child's personality and how you manage behavior and discipline, the better we can partner with you.

When you drop off your child each day, you will sign in by writing down the time on the attendance roster on the clipboard located on the counter. When you pick up your child, please sign out with your initials and time as well.

COMMUNICATION PLATFORM

As technology advances, so does the software available for Childcare Centers to communicate with parents. Rocking Horse Academy subscribes to Tadpoles. We use tablets in our classrooms to help us stay in touch with our families. It is essential that every parent has an email address in order to receive notices and information from our teachers. Tadpoles also has a convenient APP for your mobile phone devices. On the following page is a list of features offered on Tadpoles.

FAMILIES	TEACHERS
• Receive photos videos, notes by email • Download or share photos and videos of your children • Receive emergency alerts by text message • View your children's portfolio using our mobile application • Mark your child out sick or on vacation using our mobile application	• Share photos, videos, notes to families throughout the day • Record meals, activities, naps, and more to daily reports • Post lesson plans up to 4 weeks in advance • Take attendance • Record classroom visitations • Mark children sick or on vacation • View medical and birthday reminders • View child allergy and emergency information • View guardian and medical information

The Tadpole system is our way of ensuring safety and providing communication for all of our staff and families. Families may also send a note to the teacher letting us know anything that might help us to understand your child better or be more observant about. If your child is cutting a tooth or didn't sleep well last night might give us insight to your child's moods or behaviors that day.

If you would like to call us for any reason, the best time is from 12:30-2:30 pm while the children are napping. Our telephone number is 512.405.3700 ext. 111 or contact the front desk and ask to be transferred to the Pony room.

CLASSROOM SUPPLIES

Please be sure to have the following items available for your child:

- A water bottle- all parts labeled with your child's name.
- Crib sized sheet and blanket (pillow or stuffed toy optional).
- Two sets of weather appropriate extra clothing, including underwear, shirt, socks, and shorts/pants.
- Diapers or pull-ups, wipes, and diaper cream. If you prefer to use pull-ups, they must have Velcro on the sides.
- Optional: Family photos for our bulletin boards.

PLEASE LABEL EVERYTHING YOU SEND TO SCHOOL WITH CHILD'S FIRST NAME AND LAST INITIAL.

CLASS RULES

- **We are a NUT FREE room.** Please do **not** bring peanut butter or other food items that contain any type of nut to class.
- Please bring a water bottle every morning and be sure to take it home daily to wash and replenish with water of your choice. You may want to freeze a small amount of water the night

before so that the water is cool during the day.

- **PLEASE LABEL EVERYTHING YOU BRING TO CLASS! Label ALL items with child's first name and last initial.**
- Be sure to let us know about any medications your Pony is taking and sign those in at the front desk.
- Be sure to provide and replenish extra clothing, underwear, and socks. Please check your child's cubby each season to make sure the clothing is weather appropriate and still fits your child properly. **Label everything with your child's name!**
- We are a pacifier free classroom. Please make sure that your child's pacifier has been put away prior to entering the room.
- Linens (sheets, blankets, pillow) should be brought in at the start of each week and taken home at the end of each week to be washed.
- Apply sunscreen in the morning before arrival. If you provide us with your sunscreen and a signed permission slip, we will apply sunscreen in the afternoon prior to going outside. We require lotion sunscreen; sprays are not permitted.
  REMINDER OF RHA RULES:
  - Drop off must be no later than 10:00 am unless you have a doctor's note.
  - No food allowed from home after 7:15 am. Food will be removed by 7:30 am.
  - Closed-toed shoes are required to reduce chances of falling or injury.
  - No toys from home please.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Physical activities are very important at this stage of your toddler's development. In the early mornings on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursdays, we practice large motor skills in the Rocking Horse Gym. We dance, run, introduce relays and races, experiment with hula hoops, etc. We also play in two different outdoor areas during our day- the Atrium and the Toddler Playground. Both offer age-appropriate climbing opportunities, as well as riding and push toys.

These activities lead us out of the classroom and give us the opportunity to teach your Pony how to walk in the hallways in an orderly manner. We use a Hold-a-Ring Walking Rope and usually will be marching to a lively beat! As an added bonus, the Walking Rope has different shapes and colors as the "rings", so we have an additional teaching opportunity as we pick our shape, color, and count our friends as we leave the classroom.

CUBBIES

Your child will have two cubby areas in the Pony room. The *Clothes Cubby*, located next to the hallway window, is where your child's extra clothing, jackets, and other personal items are kept. The *Diaper Cubby,* located next to our diaper changing table, is where your child's diapers, creams, sunscreen, and wipes are kept. We keep the extra supply of your child's diapers and wipes in the cabinets in the changing table.

FOOD POLICY

You may bring breakfast for your child if dropping off prior to 7:15 am. We remove all food from the tables at 7:30 am. No outside food is allowed after that time.

Please find a copy of the lunch/snack menu in the lobby. We also have one posted in the Pony room and on the Parent Board in the hallway. We serve morning snack at 9:00 a.m., lunch begins at 11:00 a.m., and our afternoon snack is served shortly after nap at approximately 2:45 p.m. You have the option of bringing a lunch from home or purchasing a lunch from our kitchen. We do not have a refrigerator in our room, so if your child's lunch includes perishable items, please include a reliable ice pack in your child's lunch box. We do have a microwave available to heat food if necessary.

At this age, we still serve whole milk to the children. If your child has special dietary needs, please let us know. You will need to supply us with any alternative foods or milk (milk will be kept in a refrigerator located in the RHA kitchen).

If your child has a dietary restriction or food allergy, you must provide written verification from a physician or a registered or licensed dietician. RHA will not provide nutrition for dietary restrictions or allergies, instead, you will need to provide alternate nutritious food options for snacks and lunch daily. We will post a sign in our classroom noting your child's food allergy/dietary restriction and include a picture of your child.

We are a NUT FREE room. Please do not bring peanut butter or other food items that contain any type of nut to class.

BEVERAGE POLICY

Please bring a **full** water bottle every morning and be sure to take it home daily to wash and replenish with water of your choice. You may want to freeze a small amount of water the night before so that the water is cool during the day.

If your child runs low on water during the day, we will replenish their cup/bottle with tap water. If you prefer us to refill with bottled water, please feel free to bring in a 16oz bottle labeled with your child's name.

Please note that RHA provides whole milk to the children during snacks and lunch. As per TxDFPS Minimum Standards, water is served throughout the day as well as during all mealtimes. It is RHA's policy to not serve juice or any beverage (other than water) that is brought from home. If you include juice in your child's lunchbox, we will return the beverage at the end of the day. If your child brings juice or milk in their water bottle, we will refill it with water

NAP

We nap between 11:45 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. During this time, we lower the lights and play soft music. Some children need patting, and we do our best to comfort all who require that extra help to sleep. Children this age sleep on cots provided by RHA. Parents are asked to provide a crib-sized sheet and blanket for naptime. You may also bring a pillow.

Please bring fresh linens every Monday and take them home on Fridays to be washed. If your child attends class part time on Tuesday and Thursday, please remember to take your child's linens home on Thursday. Rocking Horse Academy does not have extra sheets to provide our classrooms when linens are forgotten.

ILLNESS POLICY

The Pony's teachers will refer to the Rocking Horse Academy policies and procedures with regards to illness, up to and including sending children home. There are some times when we will give parents a courtesy call just to pass on observations or developing symptoms, so please be sure we have your most current contact information. As working parents, we understand that this may help you make arrangements to pick up if it becomes necessary later in the day.

A sick child requires one-on-one attention, and we will do what we can to keep that child comfortable until someone can come pick him/her up. The Rocking Horse Parent Handbook is much more detailed and if you have any additional questions, feel free to call.

BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE METHODS

Children behave best when they are actively involved in fun projects. They are less likely to misbehave when they are busy. Children also behave better when they follow a routine or schedule. We make every attempt to follow the same schedule every day so that our Ponies understand the rules and what to expect throughout the day. We also encourage the children to communicate their feelings using words and not with aggression. "Soft touches only", "Be Nice", "Where do your hands go?" and "Use your words" (No, Help, Stop, Please, Mine, Thank You, Excuse Me, etc.) are key phrases that we use often in class.

If your Pony does misbehave, we always use redirection as a first step. If attempting to redirect your child fails to solve the problem, we then use time alone for an appropriate amount of time based upon your child's age (one minute for each year, for example, if your child is one year of age, we will place your child in time out for no more than one minute). We always get down to the child's level and talk with the child about the behavior and remind the child of the correct behavior when ending the time out session.

At this age level, the children are just starting to use words and cannot always communicate what they want or do not want. As a result, when another child gets too close (crowds them) or attempts to take something away, a child may bite because he/she is frustrated and are unable to effectively

communicate with the other child using words. While all children at this age are capable of biting, some bite more often than others and some never bite at all. As preschool teachers, we watch each child to the best of our ability and always try to stop a bite before it happens. We work with each of the children, especially our known biters, to teach them that they should "use their words" in place of biting. We teach this through role play (using dolls to show that biting hurts and that words like "No" and "Stop" work much better) and discussing how much biting hurts others. We also play games in class and on the playground so that children begin to understand the meaning of "Stop".

Overall good behavior is always rewarded with praise and activities that the children enjoy.

Please feel free to talk with any of the Pony room teachers and let us know if you have any questions or concerns. We look forward to working with you and your child.

TODDLER BENCHMARKS

Benchmarks are goals that we work toward in our classroom. Our lesson plans and every day interactions are interwoven with these benchmarks to aid in the development of your child. These benchmarks are not set in stone and are only used to help guide us in our curriculum. Please remember that every child develops in a different way. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us or the administration.

Social Interactions

- Children enjoy playing alone or side by side another child.
- Children become frustrated when learning new skills they haven't mastered.
- Children will have mood swings and tantrums lasting one (1) minute to thirty (30) minutes long.
- Children do not understand their actions hurt others (biting, hitting, pulling hair, etc.).
- Children show concern and form friendships with other students.

Language & Pre-Writing

- Children understand more than they can verbalize.
- Children can follow simple directions.
- Children may bite out of frustration, personal space, or lack of verbal skills.
- Teachers encourage children to use their words.
- Children love finger plays, repetition, rhyming, songs, and flash cards.
- Children enjoy scribbling, finger painting, shaving cream, and playdough.

Math/Manipulative

- Children will begin to learn counting.
- Children will identify basic shapes and colors.
- Children will learn to stack multiple objects.
- Children will learn to match like objects and manipulate puzzles.
- Children will learn the difference between big/small and fast/slow, etc.

Science/Sensory

- Children will explore using different senses.
- Children will be able to identify parts of their body.
- Children will learn cause and effect (turning lights on/off, banging a toy drum makes noises, etc.).
- Children can sort objects into groups.
- Children enjoy playing with sand, water, shaving cream, playdough.

Physical

- Children will become more proficient at throwing, catching, kicking balls.
- Children love to climb.
- Children can jump up and down, walk on their tip-toes.
- Children enjoy running in large groups.
- Children attempt to carry larger items.

Life Skills/Social Studies

- Children assist with dressing and undressing.
- Children can brush their own teeth and wash their hands with supervision.
- Children will help with simple clean-up tasks.
- Children learn classroom routines.
- Children learn their manners, such as Please, Thank you, May I, Yes sir, and Yes ma'am.