 

**African Cultural Enrichment (ACE) Academy**

**Park Montgomery**

**Parent Handbook**

**2015-2016**

**Project Director: Kathy Stroup [Phone: 301-610-0147 x 216 Email:** **kathy.stroup@collaborationcouncil.org**

**Essex House Site Coordinator: Betelehem Abebe Phone: 240-273-6491 Email: Betelhem.abebe@airfound.org**

**Program Goals:**

The ACE Academy is a culture-rich reading and creative arts after school program for 1st through 5th grade students located at two housing communities in Montgomery County. Sixty-five ACE Academy participants will discover new ways of connecting with their former and adopted cultures through a variety of learning experiences including participation in classes in West African drumming and dance, basket weaving, sculpture, and traditional African tales. They will also receive homework help and extra academic support in reading.

**Goal:**

By 2018, 80% of all ACE Academy participants meet or exceed end of year Instructional Reading Level benchmark, 75% of ACE 3rd, 4th & 5th graders will increase or maintain their social and emotional competency and 70% of ACE parents will increase their self-efficacy to support their child’s academic success.

**2016 Objectives:**

* By 2016, 60% of ACE Academy participating students will meet or exceed end of year Instructional Reading Level benchmarks as reported on Montgomery County Public Schools report card.
* By 2016, 50% of ACE Academy 3rd, 4th & 5th graders will increase or maintain their social and emotional competency as measure by their change in skill level on the Tauk Foundation Social and Emotional Assessment Tools (TSEL).
* By 2016, 90% of ACE Academy parents will increase their self-efficacy to support their child’s academic success as measured by change on the Parent Self-Efficacy subscale on a post survey.

**Program Schedules:**

ACE Academy will take place every ***Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday*** from ***4:00 pm to*** ***6:30 pm*** each day that school is in session from ***Monday, December 14, 2015 until Thursday, June 16, 2016.* Students are expected to arrive at the Community Room immediately after school in order to have time for snack and homework completion.**

The following time periods are set aside for these activities:

***30 minutes for snack and homework help***

***1 hour for cultural enrichment activities***

***1 hour for reading literacy***

Special events for program participants and their families are scheduled throughout the year. We will send information home with your child before each special event. If a field trip is scheduled away from Essex House, we will send home a parent permission slip for you to sign and return to us.

It is very important that you send a note to the Site Coordinator where your child attends ACE Academy if someone not listed on the registration form is picking up your child. If there is a special reason you need to pick up your child earlier than 6:30 p.m., you will need to call the Site Coordinator to let him or her know when you will pick up your child.

If you have any questions about program activities or your child’s schedule, please feel free to contact the Site Coordinator by phone or e-mail.

**Inclement Weather Policy**

Please sign up for Alert Montgomery to hear information about weather-related school closings and early dismissals. Visit Alert Montgomery**:** <https://member.everbridge.net/index/1332612387832009#/login> for more information.

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|  **Situation** |  **ACE Academy** |
| No School | No program |
| School opening delay | Program remains in session |
| Early Dismissal | No program |
| Regular school day with cancellation of all afterschool activities | No program  |

**Illness Policy**

If an ACE Academy participant becomes ill, a parent or authorized person will be called to pick up the child. It is very important to keep the site coordinator informed of any changes in emergency contact information.

**Absence Policy**

Your child is allowed 3 days of unexcused absences. After 3 days your child may be subject to being terminated from the program. It is very important that you call the site coordinator if your child is absent.

**Late Policy**

It is important that you pick your child up on time. ACE Academy staff are scheduled to leave the site at 6:30. If an emergency arises and you are unable to pick up your child, please arrange with one of your approved pick up contacts to do so. It is very important that you pick up your child at 6:30 pm because all staff are scheduled to leave at that time. Any late pick-ups will result in a $25.00 fee.

**Behavior Policy**

The ACE Academy Team has high expectations for your child during after school hours. We look forward to working in partnership with families to assist students in behaving safely and appropriately.

ACE Academy will use the ***PEACE*** Standards for behavior during the operation of the program:

***P***eople will be treated with respect, consideration and cooperation.

***E***veryone will use appropriate language and voice level.

***A***ll of us will take care of property and materials.

**C**hildren and adults will move safely in and around the building.

***E***ach of us will follow directions.

A meeting with the child and the Site Coordinator will occur if serious behavior issues occur during the program. If behavior problems continue after trying to work with the student, parents/legal guardians will be required to attend a conference with the ACE Academy site coordinator and the student. If a child is unwilling to follow the ***PEACE*** standards for behavior after this conference, the student may be removed from the program.

**Parent Involvement**

 At certain time during the school year we will be having events that the parents will be invited to. At a few of these events we will be highlighting what your child has learned – such as dancing, playing the ukulele, or artwork. These are events are very important to your child and we expect you will do your best to attend these events.

 **We are looking for adult volunteers to assist with activities at ACE Academy. If you are interested, please contact the site coordinator.**

**Important Reminder**

Students are prohibited (not allowed under any circumstances) to bring any object(s) to the program that could be used as a weapon or could cause harm to themselves or others. This includes objects that look like weapons. Possession of firearms, explosive devices, or objects that can be used as weapons are strictly prohibited and will result in removal from the ACE Academy program.

**Emergency Procedures**

 In case the building is evacuated, such as in the case of a fire alarm going off, all students will be escorted out of the back door to the street. Please do not go to the community center to get your child. You will find us on the sidewalk in front of the building.

 In the event there is an emergency and we are told to “shelter in place” which means to stay where we are and to keep the children safe. In order to keep your child safe, which is a priority, we will be locking the doors, turning out the lights, staying as far away from windows as possible and staying with your child until the emergency is over. Once the emergency is over you may come to the community center to see your child. **We will not unlock the doors to anyone until we are told by the police or other authority that it is safe.**

*ACE Academy is a 21st Century Community Learning Center Project funded by the Maryland State Department of Education Program. Partners include: The Montgomery County Collaboration Council, Carpe Diem Arts, African Immigrant and Refugee Foundation, and Westin Educational Consulting. The Collaboration Council does not discriminate in its any of its programs, activities, and/or operations on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status.*

   