

## ***“Joining hands with parents in nurturing the spiritual growth and development of their child.”***

### **Dear Family,**

Thank you for entrusting Lighthouse Learning Center to care for your child. We realize that choosing a quality child care program is an important decision for your family. We consider caring for your child a great privilege and responsibility; therefore, we want to assure you that your child will be cared for in a safe and nurturing environment of learning that will enable him or her to grow spiritually and developmentally.

We marvel at the miracle of a child's development and how his personality unfolds day by day. We believe each child is unique in his own way. Some lead, while others follow. Some require lots of direction, while others do not. No matter what race, ethnicity, gender, or economic status, all children deserve to be cherished and challenged by teachers who will love, teach, encourage and help them reach their God-given potential.

Because you are an essential part of our program, we seek to form a lasting partnership with you that will foster the learning and healthy development of your child. We welcome you in the center at any time to join your child for lunch, to observe your child in the classroom setting or to speak with the staff. Our aim is to make our center an active networking community that builds a partnership of support with the family.

Transitioning to a new center creates an adjustment period for the child and the family. The adjustment period will vary depending on the age of the child and prior experiences in a classroom setting. Our staff is well-experienced to work with you to make the transition as easy as possible. To ease the transition process, we suggest that you:



- Visit the center with the child prior to his start date to introduce him to the new setting.
- Ease him into the new setting by increasing the amount of time he spends the first week in care.
- Bring a photograph of your family for the child to look at during the day.
- Say goodbye to him before you leave. Let him know he is in a safe place and that you will be back.

As our partnership forms, please feel free to let us know how we can better serve you and your family. New ideas and suggestions are always welcomed. We value establishing and maintaining open and ongoing communication with our families. We thank you for entrusting us to care for your child. When you entrust us, we are challenged to provide a program of the highest quality; a program that is designed to supplement the qualities of a good and loving home where caring adults cherish children to reach their fullest potential of learning.

Respectfully,

Mary A. Sariago, M. Ed.

Director

Lighthouse Learning Center

[Nurturing the Spirit](#), [Educating the Mind](#), [Transforming our World](#)

# Lighthouse Learning Center Handbook

## Table of Contents:

<b>1</b>	<b>Family Involvement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Family Expectations and Responsibilities</li><li>Family-Teacher Connection</li><li>Primary Caregiving</li><li>Daily Communications</li><li>Developmental Journey</li><li>Conflict Resolution</li><li>Referral Program</li></ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>Program Standards</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Transitions</li><li>Center Operational Guidelines</li><li>Program Quality Standards</li><li>Staff Qualifications</li><li>Staff and Ratios</li><li>Positive Guidance</li><li>Handling of Confidential Information - Aggressive Behavior Incidents</li></ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>Health and Safety</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Medical Records</li><li>Child Illness</li><li>Infection Control</li><li>Allergy Prevention</li><li>Flu Prevention</li><li>Blood-borne Pathogens/Blood Spills</li><li>Hepatitis A Screening</li><li>Food and Nutrition</li><li>Child Injuries</li><li>Injury Prevention</li><li>Biting</li><li>Emergency Preparedness</li><li>Child Abuse and Neglect</li></ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>Procedures</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Registration Procedure</li><li>Enrollment Procedure</li><li>Program Placement</li><li>Child Records</li><li>Arrival/Departure</li><li>Basic Care Requirements</li><li>Birthdays</li><li>Classroom</li><li>Daily Routines</li><li>Diapering</li><li>Toilet Learning</li><li>Food and Mealtime Preparation</li><li>Teaching Environment</li><li>Tuition/Fees</li></ul>
<b>5</b>	<b>Policies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Absence</li><li>Authorized and Unauthorized Release</li><li>Babysitting</li><li>Care of Toys/Classroom</li><li>Center Safety</li><li>Child Custody</li><li>Child Exclusion</li><li>Confidentiality</li><li>Drop Off/Pickup</li><li>Late Pickup Fee</li><li>Medication</li><li>Medication</li><li>Non-Discrimination</li><li>Pets/Animals</li><li>Photographs</li><li>Profanity</li><li>Privacy Invasion</li><li>Process of Dis-enrolling</li><li>Process of Suspending a Child</li><li>Refusal to Release a Child</li><li>Summer Drop Outs</li><li>Transportation</li><li>Water Related Activities</li><li>Weapons</li><li>Weather</li></ul>

Note: Use of the term “parent” throughout this handbook refers also to the child’s legal guardian.

# 1

## Family Involvement

The Center partners with families to form a caring and learning community that interacts and grows together. We believe the key to family involvement is actively working to support family life and giving families a variety of ways to be involved in our program without making them feel obligated.

### Family Expectations and Responsibilities

Texas laws regulate specifically outlined criteria for both children and staff. This information is open for inspection by authorized representatives from the State at any time. To meet these regulations we require the following for each enrolled child:

- Up-to-date immunization records according to the schedule set forth by the American Academy of Pediatrics
- A health appraisal upon entry into the program
- Current contact numbers to allow staff to reach the child’s parents at all times
- Prompt response to any message from the center
- Updates to the child’s information as changes occur
- Completion of any other specified forms within the specified time frame
- Adherence to basic policies and procedures
- Signatures to document the child’s daily in/out times
- Notification by phone if the child will not be attending school
- Notification if someone other than those on the contact list will be picking up the child
- Notification if the child has become ill with a contagious illness

### Family-Teacher Connection

A family-teacher connection encourages children to develop a positive attitude toward themselves and others, and a lifelong love of learning. Connecting parents builds a stronger program and is a key to their child’s success. Research indicates that when a parent is involved in the education of his child, it strengthens his child’s academic success. The center also benefits with improved teacher morale, more support from families, higher standards of achievement, and better reputations in the community. Program involvement may include a variety of duties such as assisting on a field trip, providing a snack, being a special visitor, having lunch with your child, or attending a parent seminar.

#### Ways parents can be involved:

- The center has an “open door” policy that welcomes and encourages parents to call or to drop in at any time. Staff may limit the amount of time spent in a class if deemed necessary. Parents remaining for a lengthy period of time will be required to sign the visitor log.
- Parents are invited to actively participate in calendared events such as: multi-cultural celebrations, grandparent events, class parties, parenting events and special programs provided by the children.
- Formal and informal communication takes place through morning and afternoon greetings, assessments and documentation of the child’s learning, daily sheets, parent conferences, weekly newsletters, and classroom bulletin boards.
- Parents are welcome to join their child for lunch at any time.
- Parents are encouraged to share a talent, a special activity, a cultural tradition or a project with their child’s class or during Chapel time.
- Parents may celebrate their child’s birthday at the center. See guidelines listed under procedures.
- Parents or individuals that desire to volunteer on a regular basis are required to complete a volunteer application, pass a background screening, be physically able to care for children and

- have a high level of respect for the program. Volunteers must comply with minimum standards that apply to employees and are never to be left alone with a child.
- Parents are encouraged to attend parent/teacher conferences twice a year to assess the progress and needs of their child.
  - The most important way parents can be involved in their child's success is to keep us informed of any changes that may relate to the child such as: health issues, family status, address change, phone number changes, emergency contact persons and phone numbers and current immunization records.

## Primary Caregiving

Classroom teachers assume the responsibility for each child and for communicating with parents. A relationship is established between teacher and parent to focus on the child's needs and development. At the same time, social and emotional growth along with education becomes a team effort.

## Daily Communications

Open and honest communication initiates a strong home and center connection. This includes a continual exchange of information between the center, center staff, and the parent.

**Daily Greeting:** Children and parents are greeted upon arrival and departure.

**Daily Sign-in-out form:** Parents are required to sign the child in and out daily.

**Daily Sheets:** An awareness of the child's daily needs and experiences is important to us. A critical communication link between the center and home is supported through staggered scheduling of staff. Written daily sheets provide information regarding the times the child slept, times and amount of food consumed, times of diaper changes, child's general mood, and brief summary of activities, and supplies that may be needed.

**Daily Information:** General information regarding the day's activities is posted on the parent board in the classroom in the form of a lesson plan for the week.

**Cubbies/Mailboxes:** Important information from the center is left in the child's folder in the backpack at the end of each day.

**Communication with Parents:** A weekly newsletter is distributed to keep parents informed of learning themes, special dates, and topics of interest. Bulletin boards, classroom parent boards, periodic flyers, in-house memos and emails are used to communicate and create awareness of upcoming events, closings, and special activities.

**Regulated Parent Notifications:** Parents are notified when any of the following situations arise:

- Illness/injury of a child
- Policy revisions
- All Center closings
- Activities including field trips or water play
- Animals in the center
- Vision and hearing screenings
- Evacuation of premises

**General Surveys:** Parents are encouraged to give feedback about our program through daily conversation and general surveys provided.

## Developmental Journey

Teachers begin documenting a portfolio of the child's developmental journey at the initial enrollment. This effort continues through communication, observations, documenting learning experiences, and assessing the child's development. The portfolio consists of a collection of information and works of art that point out the child's experience and accomplishments and an assessment tool designed to form a developmental profile. All children are assessed according to age and stage development twice a year. Parent

conferences are scheduled to identify any questions or concerns that the parent or teacher may have, track the child's developmental progress in all learning areas, and share a variety of activity suggestions to support a continuation of the child's development and learning process.

## **Conflict Resolution**

There are unavoidable conditions or conflicts in everyday life that are potentially undesirable. It is critical that before conflict arise; an atmosphere exists that promotes mutual respect, tolerance and clear, honest communication. The emotional health of the center is not revealed by the absence of conflict, but its effective resolution. Our aim is to respond to all family grievances within a reasonable time frame and to resolve them as soon as possible.

The aim of the center is to satisfy our families with quality programming. If a specific concern arises, parents are asked to meet with the teacher to resolve the issue. If the situation that caused the concern continues, the parent may request a meeting with the director and teacher. The center and parent share common ground – the child and the Lord Jesus Christ; therefore the prevailing philosophy is that all issues can be resolved in a manner that will benefit the child and bring glory to God.

## **Referral Program**

Our families are always our best voices. We are grateful when a family who is satisfied with his child's experience at the center tells another family about our program. To reward families for their thoughtfulness, we have developed an Each One Reach One Referral Program that offers their family unlimited tuition credits. When an enrolled family refers a new family to the center and the new child has been enrolled full-time for one semester, the referring family receives a tuition credit of \$200 for the learning center and one month's tuition for KidZone.NET. The new family will receive that same tuition credit.

# 2

## Program Standards

Lighthouse Learning Center believes in a standard of excellence in an early education program. The center complies with regulations and reviews set forth by the State Licensing Department and a National Accreditation Association. To become accredited, a program must undergo a thorough process of self-study involving children, families, and staff. A variety of criteria related to providing a developmentally appropriate program must be met. These criteria include having a qualified and trained staff, good staff-child ratios and group sizes, an all-inclusive curriculum, and meeting strict health and safety standards.

### Transitions

Transitions work better when we know what to expect. By planning transitions, we can help children adjust to new settings and approach new experiences in a positive way.

**From Home to Center:** The first transition experience of adapting from home to a center environment can be a difficult period of adjustment for the child and family. Everyone is adapting to new routines and new people. During this transition, we encourage parents to talk with the child's teachers about what method of communication works best for everyone. It is important to mention any adjustment problems you may foresee. It is recommended that parents gradually increase the number of hours the child remains at the center for the first week to help them adjust to a new situation. Parents will receive a daily sheet to inform them of the child's interaction and any needs they may have. Parents may call the center throughout this period to inquire about their child.

**To a New Classroom:** As children grow and develop, they need new challenges and social interactions with other children in their peer group. Social and emotional interaction is important. Children are transitioned to a new classroom annually along with the Life School Mountain Creek school calendar. This transition is based upon age, developmental readiness, regulations set forth by state licensing, and space availability. During this transition period, current and future teachers will be working together to give special attention to the child and family. Please note that these transitions are only done at times when the class complies with teacher/child ratios. Generally speaking, children adapt to the initial change within the first two weeks.

**Moving a Child to another Classroom:** Attachment is formed early in a child's life. To strengthen a young child's emotions, it is important to help them say good-bye to the people and places to which they have become attached. Failing to allow time for these emotions does not allow time to process feelings. Angry outbursts, sudden tantrums and crying are often the result of children who have been stressed by a sudden move. When we take time for slower transitions, we give children the message that the people and places they have known have been important in their lives. These become part of the child's identities. Slower transitions help a child build cherished memories.

### Center Operational Guidelines

**Days and Hours of Operation:** The center is open Monday through Friday, 6:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

**Tours:** Parents may drop in unannounced to seek information regarding the center. The best times to tour the facility are between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.

**Closings:** Center closings are often the result of a natural disaster, power outages, or inclement weather. Parents are encouraged to listen to local television/radio stations for early dismissal plans and closings for area schools when severe weather conditions exist. Teachers will notify their parents via the Class Dojo app. The office will communicate via the Remind app. If Life School Mountain Creek is closed, the center is closed. If Life School Mountain Creek starts late, the center will open one hour earlier than the Life School Mountain Creek start time. If Life School Mountain Creek closes early, the center will

close one hour after the school closing. These guidelines will apply to most inclement weather situations. When weather conditions become hazardous to the staff and the well-being of the children and families involved, the center may over-ride the decision made by Life School Mountain Creek. Early notification will be communicated to parents.

**Holidays:** The center is closed when Life School is closed. On some of those days, however, holiday care is provided for an additional charge. Parents will need to reserve a spot for their child.

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Spring Break – Holiday Care is available by reservation. There is an additional charge for this care.
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Week – Holiday Care is available by reservation on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. There is an additional charge for this care.
- Thanksgiving (Thursday and Friday)
- Christmas Break– Holiday Care is available by reservation. There is an additional charge for this care.
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

**Parking:** To alleviate problems with parking in the mornings and afternoons, we request that parents park in a parking space beside the large playground or on the west side of the church. We ask that you not park in any labeled/reserved parking spaces or in the breezeway. Please adhere to traffic signs, speed limits and other procedures designed to keep our families safe while at our center. Children are not to be left unattended in a car while it is running as this poses a serious health and safety risk.

Our traffic flow is one-way (north) when entering from the east side of the property and one-way (south) when exiting on the west side of the property.

## **Program Quality Standards**

Our experiences, background, and training offer a unique vision of what it means to be a professional in the child-care setting. Our employees meet a high standard of requirements by obtaining annual training that prepares them to be specialized, qualified, certified, and skilled as teachers and caregivers of young children. They embrace professionalism and hold a responsibility to ethical behaviors.

**Purpose:** Lighthouse Learning Center is a ministry of Gospel Lighthouse Church. The program gives support to the family by providing quality care, biblical and academic education; and social/emotional growth opportunities to each child enrolled.

**Program Philosophy:** Because a child develops mentally, physically, spiritually, socially and emotionally; age-appropriate learning experiences allow the child to progress at his own pace while experiencing success through hands-on-learning activities.

**Non-Discrimination:** The center maintains a working and learning environment that respects all individuals. Applications for enrollment are accepted without regard to the child's race, color, national origin, sex, religion, marital status, age, disability or citizenship or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state and local laws

**Accreditation:** Lighthouse Learning Center maintains a standard of excellence in early childhood education and is accredited with the Association of Early Learning Leaders. An annual review or validation visit is required to maintain an accredited status.

**Annual Inspections:** Lighthouse Learning Center complies with the regulations set forth by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and is licensed to provide for 119 children between the

ages of two and five years in addition to twelve years for our before-and-afterschool program and summer day camp. The center is inspected annually by a licensing representative, the Dallas Fire Department and Dallas County Health Department. In addition, an inspection of the gas lines is required every other year. This information is posted on the parent bulletin board in the main hallway for parent review.

**Licensing Information and Contact:** The contact number for the center Licensing Representative and the Licensing Department is posted on the bulletin board in the main hallway for review. Parents may view Licensing Standards through the website for Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

## Staff Qualifications

**Education:** All employees must have one of the following qualifications:

- Has a Child Development Associate Credential
- Has a high school diploma or GED

**Background/Fingerprint Screening:** Criminal background screening and fingerprint-based criminal history checks are required for all new employees. Criminal background checks are repeated every two years on all employees. Failure of personnel to meet these requirements will result in termination.

**Employee Training:** First-time employees are required to complete an orientation process. All employees are mandated to complete a required number of annual training hours set by the Licensing Department.

**CPR/First Aid:** All staff is required to obtain training in pediatric CPR and first aid. All CPR training and re-certification adheres to the guidelines for CPR. The center complies with State regulations requiring one caregiver per class to have current training in CPR and first aid. First-aid kits are placed throughout the center for quick use. These kits are accessible in each classroom, indoor/outdoor play areas, inside evacuation bags and during all field trips. Additional first aid supplies regulated by licensing standards for emergency purposes are also kept in the clinic in the center.

**Tuberculosis Screening:** Tuberculosis screening is no longer a mandatory requirement for all personnel working in a child-care facility.

## Staff and Ratios

Full-time staff consists of a director, assistant director, supervising lead teachers, teacher assistants, and part-time afternoon assisting teachers. The center is a licensed facility and is in full compliance with staff regulations and certification requirements. The child/teacher ratio is the maximum number of children one teacher can be responsible for. The number of children is never to exceed regulations regarding the room capacity. This information is covered during staff orientation and planned training events.

## Positive Guidance

A child learns by exploring, experimenting and testing the limits of his environment and experiencing the consequences of his behavior. This is how he begins to understand how the world works, his own limits and appropriate assertiveness and that he is accepted for who he is. Discipline is individualized and consistent for each child, appropriate to his level of understanding and directed toward teaching acceptable behavior and self-control without losing self-esteem. Positive reinforcements include encouraging positive behavior, establishing clear behavior expectations, redirection, and using brief supervised separation from the group. The center complies with Licensing and Accreditation Standards regarding guidance and discipline policies and procedures. A copy of this policy is provided in the enrollment packet.

**The following methods of discipline are prohibited:**

- Corporal punishment, including spanking
- Shaking, jerking, squeezing, or physically indicating disapproval
- Shaming, humiliation or verbal abuse
- Labeling (i.e., implying a child is “bad” rather than the behavior is the problem)
- Using bribes, false threats, or false choices

- Withholding food or unrelated activities such as special events as punishment
- Retaliating or doing to the child what he or she did to someone else
- Punishment for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet

**The center's approach includes:**

- Expectations are based on the appropriate developmental stage of the child.
- The surrounding environment encourages positive behavior.
- Appropriate behavior is modeled by class teachers.
- The child is enabled and guided to turn destructive situations into constructive ones.
- Behaviors that strengthen cooperation, helping, negotiating and problem solving are fostered.
- Opportunities to shape a child's feelings of self-worth are nurtured.
- Guidance is given to help a child make responsible decisions about his behavior.

## **Handling Confidential Information - Aggressive Behavior Incidents**

Exploring and experimenting are the beginning ways that young children interact in a social setting. It is not unusual for an incident of aggressive behavior to occur. In the early stages of development, children communicate with their behavior because of their lack of language skills. This is their way of expressing and asserting themselves. Hitting, biting, and taking things from others are common. We understand the developmental perspective regarding these behaviors and are committed to helping young children learn more constructive ways to interact with their peers. When incidences occur of this nature, we inform parents of the situation. The report includes details of the incident, time and place, ratios of the class, and steps taken to comfort the hurt child. Plans are put into place to prevent a reoccurrence

The identity of the child involved with the aggressive behavior is not disclosed. This policy is consistent with standards of excellence in early childhood education organizations. Therefore, we promote respect by ensuring that each child's record is kept confidential. This means that we will not reveal the identity of a child who has been engaged in aggressive behavior against another child. Such knowledge of the aggressive child's identity may only stigmatize the child. It only adds to the stress of the child's family who already finds itself in a difficult situation.

If at any time a child's behavior places the well-being of others at a risk of injury, we will act decisively to resolve the situation with closer supervision, redirection to more appropriate activities, removal from stressful situations, firm and consistent limits, and alternative ways for expression of feelings. Only when we have exhausted all of our resources, may we conclude that it is in the best interest of the program to take alternative measures of removing the child from the center.

# Health and Safety Practices

Lighthouse Learning Center practices stringent health and safety practices. Staff members go through a thorough screening process, undergo certification of CPR and First Aid, and receive training for infection control including blood-borne pathogens. Staff members complete routine health and safety checklists and practice fire and emergency drills on a regular basis. Emergency preparedness plans are put into place should the center be required to evacuate or leave the premises. The center provides a security keypad system and secured access entry. Parents are asked not to allow

A list of emergency preparedness plans and procedures will be addressed in the “Policies” and “Procedures” section of the handbook.

## Medical Records

To comply with state licensing regulations and to protect the health of all children, current medical information is required prior to enrollment. This includes a Health Statement from your child’s physician stating that the child can be enrolled in a child care setting and a current immunization record.

**Immunization Requirements:** Children two years of age and older are required to meet applicable immunization requirements. Immunization records must be submitted by the date of admission and updated to remain current at all times. This means that a new immunization record needs to be submitted with each additional immunization the child receives. Exemptions for immunization requirements must meet criteria specified by Texas Department of State Health Services rules in 25 TAC § 97.62. You can access information from the website at [www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize).

## Child Illness

On average a preschooler experiences almost eight to ten illnesses a year. An ill child can create an inconvenient situation for a parent when he needs to leave work or school early. The child’s caregiver struggles as she cares for a sick child while meeting the many demands of the day. For parents and staff, it can become easy to get frustrated under the circumstances. To respect those involved in the situation, we have implemented policies that we believe meet the needs of the child, parent and staff member.

**Daily Wellness Check:** A wellness check is done daily on each child as he arrives. If the child appears ill upon arrival, the parent will be asked to take the child home. Parents are asked to report any noticeable changes in the child’s behavior and appearance. This will assist the child’s teacher in monitoring the child for any further changes and to update the parent when necessary.

**Illness:** In addition to the above, we commit to current immunization records; good hygiene at all times; daily sanitation of toys, play areas, nap mats, changing areas; safe/hygienic food preparation; and routine hand washing procedures. Children experiencing any of the following symptoms listed below will be isolated from other children and sent home immediately. This includes but is not limited to any of the following symptoms: fever, uncontrolled bowel movements, vomiting, an unexplained rash, open/draining skin lesions, or contagious child diseases (listed below).

Infectious Conjunctivitis (pink eye)	Scarlet Fever	Hepatitis A
Infectious Diarrhea	Scabies	Influenza
Impetigo	Lice	Strep Throat
Chicken Pox	Ringworm	Staph Infection

- The above mentioned contagious diseases are to be reported to the center in order to alert other parents of possible exposure.
- Children experiencing fever, diarrhea, vomiting, an undiagnosed rash or skin lesions, or any of the above mentioned illnesses are to remain home until they are free of symptoms for one full day before returning or until they have met the incubation period of the illness.
- A note from the child's medical provider is required before a child that has contracted a contagious disease may return. The note must specify a return date.
- Children being treated with an antibiotic are to remain home one full day before returning or until they have met the incubation period of the illness.
- Ill children that are sent home with fever are to be free of a fever-reducing medication for one full day before returning or until they have met the incubation period of the illness.
- Ill children that are sent home with diarrhea are to be free of symptoms for one full day without the aid of medication or until they have met the incubation period of the illness.
- Children who are sent home with other illnesses are to be free of symptoms without the aid of a fever-reducing medication for at least one full day before returning or until they have met the incubation period of the illness.
- All prescribed and over the counter medications are to be registered in the assigned location. These medications must be age-appropriate and meet the standard criteria before being administered. A doctor's note concerning dosage times and amounts must accompany any over the counter medication.
- The final decision to exclude a child from the program due to an illness will be made by the attending supervisor when it is in the best interest of the child.
- Ill children are to be picked up with 1 hour after notification for the child's comfort and to reduce the risk of contagion.
- Illness reports are completed on any child who becomes ill at the center. Parents are required to sign the report to verify they have been informed of the illness within a 48-hour period of the incident.

Exclusion from the center is sometimes necessary to reduce the spread of infectious germs. Children experiencing any of the following symptoms will be excluded from the center:

- Inability to participate comfortably in daily activities
- Care for an ill child that compromises the health and safety of other children
- Fever – fever free without aid of fever reducing medication for one full day
- Children with fever that suffer with febrile seizures – requires physician note
- Uncontrolled diarrhea – until free of diarrhea without aid of medication
- Uncontrolled vomiting
- Mouth sores associated with drooling
- Rash with fever or behavioral changes, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease
- Conjunctivitis – one full day after treatment begins
- Impetigo – one full day after treatment begins
- Strep throat – one full day after treatment begins
- Head lice until after treatment and all nits are removed
- Scabies – one full day after treatment begins
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted (usually 7 days)
- Pertussis (whooping cough) - five days of appropriate antibiotics
- Hepatitis A virus until one week after onset of illness, after immune globulin has been administered.
- Flu – remain home one full week until symptoms and fever are gone

**Reportable Contagious Diseases:** It is the legal responsibility of center staff to notify parents when an enrolled child or employee has been exposed to a reportable disease. Possible exposure of these diseases requires notification of public health agencies in order to promote the health and safety of staff members and the children and families we serve. This may require further information, testing or preventive measures. Reportable illnesses include the following:

Bacterial Meningitis  
Chicken Pox  
Diphtheria  
Haemophilus Influenza (invasive)  
Hepatitis A  
Measles  
Meningococcal Infection (invasive)

Pertussis  
Poliomyelitis (including suspected)  
Rabies (human only)  
Rubella, congenital and non-congenital  
Tetanus  
Any cluster outbreak of illness

## Infection Control

All teachers are trained in proper hygiene practices which include hand-washing procedures, general infection control, safe food handling, blood-borne pathogens, diapering, and toileting procedures. Procedures are posted in the classroom. Hand sanitizers are conveniently located in the hallways for adult use. Parents are encouraged to sanitize their hands before entering classrooms to prevent the spread of germs. Planned activities help teach children healthy habits. Hands of small children are routinely washed after diaper changing, toileting, and mealtimes.

**Facility Cleaning Routines:** Classroom surfaces, toys, and equipment are sanitized daily by our staff. The center uses a commercial solution registered by the Environmental Protection Agency and is mouth safe for young children. An outside service provider is responsible for daily cleaning of the facility including mopping surfaces, cleaning and sanitizing toilet areas, vacuuming carpets, and disinfecting doorknobs and handles.

### Infection Control/Care of Classroom Materials:

- Children are instructed to cover their mouths properly when coughing and sneezing
- Parents are notified of exposures
- Ill children are isolated and sent home
- Toys are sanitized daily or after they have been mouthed
- Clinic blankets and fabric toys are laundered as needed
- Blankets and washable toys are sent home at the end of each week for washing
- Water table play is closely supervised and disinfected after use
- Diapering surfaces are cleaned and disinfected after each use
- Food preparation and eating surfaces are cleaned and disinfected before and after use
- Hand-washing procedures are followed throughout the day
- Routine housekeeping procedures are followed daily

## Allergy Prevention

Parents of children diagnosed with food or environmental allergies or asthma are required to provide the center with an individualized health care plan. The plan is to include details of the child's symptoms, reactions, treatment, all necessary medications, and instructions on medical devices if needed. A class list of children with allergies or special needs is posted in each classroom. Staff members are aware of the list to prevent children from being exposed to substances to which they are allergic.

A severe peanut allergy can be critical or even fatal. In the event a child develops such an allergy, the center will take a proactive approach to create a safe environment for the child. The staff will carefully monitor all food ingredients to avoid peanuts and peanut products. Despite our efforts to eliminate and raise awareness of the risks, it is impossible to prevent children from sharing food or for an allergen to be brought into the center. Parents need to decide if group care is appropriate for their child.

**Medical Devices:** Parents must authorize and instruct personnel on how to use medical devices used for children. A copy of the instruction sheet will be kept on file in the center. Limitations on medical devices are set due to lack of experience, skills and certification of staff members.

**Ozone and Weather Restrictions:** Ozone restrictions are followed for the health and safety of all children in the center. The center remains alert to extreme weather conditions on hot and cold days for the protection of the children.

**Pesticides:** Signs are posted to inform parents of any pesticide application that has been administered in the center. Pesticides and herbicides, if used, are applied according to the manufacturer's instructions

when children are not at the facility and in a manner that prevents skin contact, inhalation, and other exposure to children.

**Smoke Free:** The center is a smoke-free environment.

## Flu Prevention

Children under age five are at a higher risk for severe complications from the flu. We recommend these preventative steps:

- Staff and children should be immunized before the flu season begins.
- Children are to be monitored throughout the flu season for any symptoms.
- Children who exhibit any symptoms of flu and fever will not be allowed to attend school.
- Any family member that has symptoms of the flu should seek medical attention.
- Persons diagnosed with flu infections are instructed to stay at home for seven (7) days after the start of the illness.
- Thorough hand-washing procedures should be followed at all times.
- Persons diagnosed with the flu should be isolated from other family members..
- Family members should follow routine procedures of covering mouths and noses when coughing or sneezing.
- Parents should notify the center when their child has contracted the flu.

## Blood-borne Pathogens and Blood Spills

To minimize exposure to blood-borne pathogens, employees take preventative measures by wearing gloves when caring for an injury involving blood and bodily fluids. All equipment and surfaces are cleaned and decontaminated as soon as possible after contact with blood or a potentially infectious material and discarded in a safe manner.

## Hepatitis A Screening

State regulations require that all children enrolled in a child care setting be screened for Hepatitis A.

## Food and Nutrition

A child's nutritional need is different from that of an adult. His stomach empties readily and is easily irritated. He may be sensitive to food tastes and smells and may not eat much at any given time. The foods he eats can have a direct effect on his behavior; therefore, his meals must be well-balanced. Parents should avoid sweet foods and juices. These provide no nutritional value to the child. Licensing regulations also restrict the intake of fruit juices. Juice may only be served occasionally to children two years and older. Servings are restricted to only 4 ounces of 100 percent juice.

**Food Preparation:** Teachers are instructed to properly wash their hands before and after handling food and shall wear gloves during the preparation of foods.

**Microwave Usage:** The center does not provide children or children's food access to microwaves.

## Child Injuries

Incident reports must be completed on any child that has been injured, no matter how minor the incident. The report must be signed by the teacher, parent, and a supervisor to verify that the parent has been notified within 48 hours of the incident. For privacy purposes, only information concerning the injured child will appear on the incident report.

## Injury Prevention

Teachers are responsible for routine safety inspection of rooms, equipment, and playground areas. Defective equipment is either removed or repaired for injury prevention. Objects that may present a choking hazard are not allowed. Children's personal items such as small barrettes, earrings, necklaces, and beaded jewelry are strongly discouraged. Staff and visitors must ensure that purses, briefcases or

backpacks are not left within the reach of children. All medications are stored in the location designated for medications and never left in a backpack.

**Balloons:** Only Mylar balloons are permitted in the center. If you wish to send something special for your child's birthday or for another celebration, we recommend items such as birthday hats, streamers, etc.

**Clothing Hazards:** All drawstrings must be removed from clothing to prevent strangulation. This includes shirts, jackets, sweatshirts, jewelry or articles that are tied around the neck or waist, including scarves or gloves.

**Clothing/Personal Belongings:** Children should wear comfortable, washable clothing that can withstand energetic activity. Each child attending the center must have a complete change of clothing that is clearly labeled to ensure proper identification. Clothing will be kept in each child's backpack and used as needed. Parents of younger children are required to provide diapers, pull-ups, wipes and additional clothing when toilet training. Parents are to refer to the child's daily sheet for supplies that may be needed. The center is not responsible for personal belongings such as toys. These items must be placed in the child's cubby, unless there is a class activity associated with the item.

**Footwear:** Children are required to wear shoes that are appropriate for active, outdoor play such as climbing, running and jumping on various surfaces. Sandals, flip flops and open-toe shoes are not permitted for safety purposes. We recommend sneakers or closed-toe shoes with an enclosed back.

**Pacifiers: The center discourages the use of pacifiers.**

**Playground Safety and Standards:** To ensure the on-going safety of all children, playground equipment and surfacing is inspected routinely to maintain them in good condition. Height limits are set on equipment. Children are closely supervised in age-appropriate play areas and expected to follow playground rules.

## **Biting**

Biting is a normal stage of development and almost all young children will experience it at least once. It can be scary, frustrating and very stressful for everyone. Children bite for any of the following reasons: oral exploration, teething, hunger, fatigue, frustration, lack of communication skills, to show affection, cause and effect, and impulsiveness. Brief episodes of biting do not mean a child is having a social or emotional problem. It does mean that the child is going through a particular stage of development. It is a natural occurrence and not something to blame on children, families, or teachers. Toddlers often try it out as a way to get what they want from another child. This is a time for the child to begin learning what is acceptable and what is not.

Our response is to care for the child who is bitten, redirect the biter to a more constructive behavior, and examine our program environment to find a cause. The focus is never on punishment. Our focus is to work together with the families involved and to develop strategies for change. We strive to modify the behavior quickly. We encourage parents to talk to the child about his behavior; however, we caution that delayed punishment at home, hours after the incident, may not be understood by the child.

Incident reports are written for all children involved in the biting incident. Names of other children involved are not disclosed.

## **Emergency Preparedness**

Emergency fire drills are held monthly to acquaint children with evacuation procedures. Tornado drills and lockdown drills are practiced quarterly throughout the school year.

**Evacuation:** Evacuation procedures are posted in every classroom, and procedures are practiced routinely. Each classroom has an evacuation roster with emergency contact numbers of parents and an evacuation bag filled with necessary items that would be used during an emergency.

If a need arises to relocate children off-site during an emergency situation, we will go to either Molina High School or Clay Academy. Molina High School is located at 2355 Duncanville Road, less than one mile from the center. The phone number is 972-502-1000. Clay Academy is located at 3303 Potter's House Way and is three miles from the center. The phone number is 214-467-4143.

**Fire:** In the event there is a fire in the building, the children will be relocated to the nearest parking lot adjacent to the building. The severity of the fire will determine if relocation is necessary.

**Locked Vehicle:** We follow these procedures when a child is locked in a vehicle on Gospel Lighthouse Church's property:

- Ensure that the child is not jeopardized by extreme heat/cold.
- Call 911 if conditions threaten the safety of a child. (The center reserves the right to call 911 when an emergency situation jeopardizes a child while on our premises.)
- Break the car window if conditions are extreme.
- Contact a locksmith when a child is not jeopardized.

**Tornado:** In the event there is a tornado warning, the children will be moved to the classrooms on the west side of the hallway. Children and staff will remain there until an all-clear advisory is given and it is safe to return to the classroom.

**Power Outage:** Flashlights are located in all classrooms. The building is equipped with battery-powered emergency exit lighting for unexpected power outages. If the power remains out for an extended period of time, parents will be contacted to pick up their child. Regulations require that the center is to remain closed until power is restored.

**Medical:** A medical emergency is a situation that requires immediate medical attention by a medical professional. The situation can be an injury or a situation that places a child at high risk such as high fever, injury or a contagious disease. Our medical emergency procedures include:

- Stabilizing the injured person.
- Calling 911 if the child must be transported to an emergency care facility.
- Notifying the child's parent of the injury or illness, medical care given, and location of where the child has been transported.
- Following up with the family.
- Complying with licensing notification requirements within 48 hours.

**Medical Storage and First Aid Kit:** All medications and first aid supplies are stored in a locked cabinet at all times. Medications that require refrigeration are stored in a refrigerator labeled for medication. The following first aid supplies are available at all times: thermometer, Band-Aid's, sterile gauze pads, tape, and gloves, first-aid booklet. Non-latex gloves are worn to prevent a possible allergic reaction in an injured person when administering first aid

## **Child Abuse and Neglect**

Individuals working with children are required to report to the proper authorities any suspected physical abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect. Staff members are taught how to identify and report suspected abuse and neglect. Child abuse hotline numbers are located on the bulletin board in the main hallway of the center. Once authorities have received the report, an appropriate action will be taken. It will become the agency's role to determine if the report of abuse or neglect is substantiated. The center will cooperate fully with any investigation and maintain confidentiality.

**Visibility of Children:** All staff is instructed to position themselves so that they can observe children at all times in the classroom, on the playground and in the gym. Teachers position themselves to be visible from the doorway.

# 4

## Procedures

Procedures provide clear instructions and guidelines on what should/must be done in a particular set of circumstances or with regard to a particular issue.

### Registration Procedure

Registration is done online. Receipt of the registration form and a non-refundable registration fee is required before your child's name is added to our enrollment list. Enrollment is based on availability.. When a class fills, children's names are added to a waiting list. When a space becomes available, we will notify you and schedule a confirmed start date. The parent is responsible for payment of tuition if the start date is delayed without a two week prior notice.

### Enrollment Procedure

Children must be between the ages of 2 years to 4 years (pre-k) to be enrolled in the program. Prior to enrollment, the child's parent is required to acknowledge receipt of our program policies, provide the child's immunization record and signed health statement, and complete all enrollment forms. These forms include medical information, emergency contact information, consent forms, and developmental information. Routine updating of records is required to facilitate communication and ensure accurate information is available at all times.

**Health Statement:** Health status information is critical to ensuring that the individual needs of children are met. Each enrolled child is required to have a written statement from an attending physician stating that he has been examined by the physician and is in good health. The form must be completed before admission.

**Full-Time Enrollment:** Full-time enrollment means a child is enrolled five days of the week. Tuition is due for any planned absence or center closing.

**CCG Requirements:** Parents enrolling children in the center through the Child Care Group Assistance Program must comply with CCG requirements. These requirements include reporting attendance and absences on time and paying tuition as required by the center. Tuition is due the first day of each month prior to services being offered. If a parent fails to report an absence on time, the parent is responsible for payment to the center. Failure to comply with attendance and tuition requirements will result in termination of services.

### Program Placement

Children are placed in the appropriate classrooms according to their developmental and chronological ages, as well as space availability. State regulations specify the age range and number of children that may be enrolled in a classroom.

### Child Records

A current file must be maintained on all children enrolled in the center and all documents must comply with state licensing requirements. The center maintains confidentiality of these files by restricting the individuals that review them. Upon reasonable request, a parent may review documents maintained in his child's file under the supervision of the Director or Assistant Director during regular office hours. At no time will originals be removed from the files. The center reserves the right to deny any request to photocopy any portion of these files. As a parent, you have the right to add information, comments, data, or other relevant material to your child's records.

When a child is overdue for a routine health check, evidence of an appointment for the services is required.

Child's records include:

- Current immunization or required immunization form for exemption
- Current emergency contact information
- Required family and medical history
- Medical release form
- Health statement from a physician
- Photo Release Form
- Discipline and Guidance Form
- Child care Agreement
- Application Form

## Arrival/Departure

Parents are requested to bring children to the center no later than 9:00 a.m. and pick them up no later than 6:00 p.m. to avoid a late fee. Parents or authorized persons are required to bring the child into the building and sign them in/out at the classroom door. Advance notification by the child's parent is required when an individual not listed on the emergency contact card is picking up a child. Persons picking up a child must be 18 years of age or older and present proper identification. The name on the identification card must match the name provided by the child's parent.

**Security Measures for Arrivals and Departures:** Parents and authorized persons are required to sign the child in/out at the designated area when bringing/picking up the child. Children are released only to authorized persons whose names appear on the emergency contact card and are required to show proper identification when necessary. In the event of an unexpected delay or a parent cannot pick up a child, the parent must notify the center by phone with the name of the authorized person picking up the child. The authorized person must show proper identification upon arrival at the center.

## Basic Care Requirements

Caregivers comply with basic care requirements set forth by Licensing Standards for each age group. These requirements include but are not limited to meeting individual needs, never leaving a child unattended, ensuring a safe environment, and interacting with children.

**Mealtime:** The center provides a well-balanced lunch that children need to grow, think, fight infection, and fuel their bodies. Morning and afternoon snacks that meet Licensing Standards are served daily. Milk is served during lunch, water or occasionally juice during snacks.

**Separation Issues:** A child will pick up on his parent's confidence that he is in a safe and good place while the parent is away. Good feelings are contagious. Parents should establish a consistent routine such as walking in, hanging up the child's coat and backpack, walking to the classroom, and saying good-bye.

## Birthdays

Families may choose to celebrate their child's birthday or other special event at the center. Due to the Licensing Standards, please follow the recommended guidelines for birthday parties:

- Coordinate the date and time with your child's teacher at least one week in advance.
- Limit decorations to paper goods, tablecloths and Mylar balloons. Latex balloons, candles and any decorations hung from the ceiling are prohibited.
- Limit food to cookies, cupcakes, or simple treats during afternoon snack. Candles are prohibited.
- Restrict beverages to 100% juice and serving sizes to 4 ounces per child.
- Do not exchange presents.
- Keep doorways free of clutter to allow vision of children at all times.

## Classroom

Each classroom is set up according to age-appropriateness and Licensing and Accreditation Standards. The set-up allows children and teachers to move freely from one activity to another with comfort. Children

are encouraged to assist in keeping the room organized. A parent information board offers information regarding classroom activities.

**Classroom Rules:** Proper guidance gives children a sense of security. Simple rules such as we walk, we listen, we take turns, we clean up, and we use kind words are used to guide children in a positive manner.

**Inclusion:** Efforts are made to accommodate children with disabilities and special needs, including identifying and securing needed services and equipment. If an enrolled child begins to show signs of either a physical, developmental or emotional disability, the parent will be contacted to jointly develop an appropriate plan. Rooms are arranged to benefit both mobile and immobilized children to encourage independence. While the center does accept children with special needs, we are not specialized in caring for all needs. Our services may be limited due to lack of skills, certification and experience.

**Lesson Plans:** Lesson plans are completed weekly and implemented the following week. These plans are posted for parent review on the parent board in the classroom.

**Postings:** All classrooms are required to post the following information: list of children's names and birthdates, evacuation plans, lesson plans, schedules, calendars, snacks, and sign in/out sheets. All closings and/or planned events are posted 48 hours prior to the event. Information regarding employees, licensing and inspections is located on a bulletin board in the hallway. The center is required to post the center's license, most recent licensing inspection, the Keeping Children Safe licensing notice, emergency and evacuation relocation plans, most recent fire inspection, most recent sanitation inspection, gas inspection report, telephone numbers specified, list of current employees, and minimum standards.

**Three year old and Pre-Kindergarten Classes:** Children must already be toilet trained to enter these classes. We follow the State of Texas September 1 birthday deadline when determining placement of a child.

## Daily Routines

**Breastfeeding:** A nursing room is provided for moms or dads who have older children in the center and desire to nurse or bottle feed their infants in privacy and comfort.

**Nap Times:** Just as children need proper nutrition, children need proper sleep for development. We know sleeping patterns vary from child to child. While one may want to nap, others may want to play. Licensing regulations require that a closely supervised sleep or rest period after lunch must be provided for all children 18 months or older who are in care 5 or more consecutive hours per day. Children are encouraged to engage in a quiet period while relaxing to soft music. We will not force a child to sleep.

Young children may enjoy a security item at this time to help them rest. Parents will provide a nap mat that is sanitized daily after use; blankets are sent home for laundering weekly. The room must have adequate lighting to allow visual supervision of the children at all times.

**Schedules:** Routine schedules help children predict what comes next. Class schedules include center or activity time, circle time, rest time, transition time for bathroom breaks and clean up, outdoor and indoor play, and mealtime. Schedules are posted in each classroom for parent review.

## Diapering

Children that are not yet toilet trained are checked at least every 2 hours throughout the day for diaper changing or as needed when soiled or wet. The information is charted daily. Baby powders are avoided as part of the diaper changing practice to prevent it from getting into the baby's lungs and leading to breathing problems. Powders can also cause an inflammatory reaction in some children when a diaper rash exists. Children who develop a severe diaper rash may be required to seek medical attention. State licensing standards affirm that a caregiver's hand on the child is an acceptable safety mechanism when changing a child's diaper.

## Dress Code

During the school year, children wear khaki or navy trousers or shorts with either a red or blue polo shirt. Closed-toe shoes are to be worn.

## Toilet Learning

There are many views on how and when toilet learning begins. Research indicates there are developmentally age-appropriate readiness signals. Many pediatricians say that most children under the age of 2 are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. In general, girls are ready to start toilet training by the time they are 2 to 2 ½ years old, while boys usually aren't ready until after 2 ½ to 3 years of age. Physical readiness signals include a child who is 2 or older; diapers are staying dry for more than 2 hours at a time; can pull his or her own pants up and down with little or no assistance; verbalizes words that relate to toilet training like toilet, wet, dry, and underwear; wakes up dry from naps or in the morning; and demonstrates emotional and social readiness by following simple directions and wanting to please others. We are committed to making sure that toilet learning is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities. A child who is pushed too hard to accomplish toilet training may lack a sense of self-worth. It is important to understand that the child will accomplish this task with gentle guidance when he is ready. We request that pull-ups are used during the toilet training period to ensure sanitary provisions for the classroom.

### Toilet Learning Guidelines:

- Children are supervised and encouraged for their efforts and accomplishments.
- Individual developmental abilities of each child will be considered before beginning toilet learning.
- Children will not be punished for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet.
- Parents will provide extra clothing in the event of a toileting accident.
- Parents will be advised of their child's progress.

## Food and Mealtime Preparation

Mealtime is an important part of the day. At mealtime children receive many of the daily nutritional requirements they need. Mealtime provides opportunities to learn self-help skills and experience social interaction with peers. While children are never forced to eat, they are encouraged to taste new foods. Meals are prepared and served by a contracted caterer and are very relaxed.

**Snacks:** A light morning and afternoon snack consisting of two components: grain, dairy, or fruit and water is served.

**Juice:** Licensing standards require that no sweetened beverages be served during snacks or meals except on special occasions such as holiday or birthday celebrations. Any juice that is served must be 100% juice and limited to a serving size of 4 ounces per child age 24 months and older

**Water:** Water must be served with every snack, meal and after vigorous play.

## Teaching Environment

**Active Play – Indoor/Outdoor:** Active play is necessary for the development of large muscle skills and is offered for toddlers and older children daily during morning and afternoon times. Active play includes indoor and outside play, weather permitting. Children must be served water during or after active play. To ensure safety, proper clothing should be worn to prevent entrapment or entanglement of a child. Proper clothing includes clothing with no strings, loose clothing and no open-toe shoes. Staff is required to stand within visual and speaking distance of the children to intercede quickly when a need arises.

**Children's Friendships:** Research has heightened an awareness of the social and emotional importance of friendships in the early years. Enrollment in early childhood programs offers children social experiences. Interaction with and acceptance by peers has long-term effects on a child's life. Young children develop social competence in initiating interactions, maintaining ongoing relations, and solving conflicts. They learn to express opinions and ideas, as well as to respect others.

**Creative Play and Involvement:** Free play is preparing the classroom to invite and encourage children to use their imagination, to practice motor skills, and to offer opportunities to play cooperatively. Free

play is a time for children to learn about themselves. Play is how children learn. Play allows children to discover things through trial and error. It can be joyful, serious, solitary, or social. It is frequent, repetitive, and always creative. Play helps children to understand what they see and experience in the real world. Play is how they acquire, practice, and master everyday skills. When children play, they feel successful. The role of a teacher is to set up the equipment for play, provide freedom and guidance to explore, experiment and discover.

**Curriculum:** Curriculum is designed with the child in mind and provides a variety of activities to stimulate the child to make choices. It offers hands-on small group and large group experiences and is developmentally age appropriate. Special attention is given to the spiritual growth of each child by teaching simple Bible truths.

**Developmentally Appropriate Practice:** When you enter an early childhood classroom you may hear lots of noise or see children doing things, talking, playing or exploring. Research and experience tell us that to be effective we need teaching practices that are “developmentally appropriate.” This means we must think first about what young children are like and then create an environment with experiences that are in tune with the characteristics of children. Interesting and relevant play and exploration are vital to the developmentally appropriate practice. Centers provide chances to explore and learn, make choices, work and play, and put into practice the things a child has learned.

**Fostering Tolerance and Respect:** Children are born without biases about other people of any race, culture, gender or disability. Unfortunately, society changes us. We strive to provide an environment that brings balance. We choose books, dolls and pictures that display diversity of their community and their world. We want children to grow up with confidence in their own identity and be respectful of those around them.

**Intentional Teaching:** Intentional teaching means that teachers act with specific outcomes or goals in mind for development and learning. It is planful, thoughtful and purposeful. When an unexpected opportunity arises, a teacher can recognize a teaching opportunity and take advantage of it. Teachers recognize that children acquire knowledge through their own exploration and experience and through interactions with peers.

**Program Enhancements:** In addition to regularly scheduled activities, the center offers educationally enhanced opportunities that include music, chapel time, center-wide events, community helper visits and field trips. Pre-K children are invited to attend Wednesday evening church activities.

**Walking and Field Trips:** Only Pre-Kindergarten classes are involved with field trips. Parents are encouraged to participate when available but must be cleared through a criminal background check. Children and staff attending are identified with matching T-shirts and name badges that include the location and phone number of the center. Notification of the event is posted 48 hours prior to the event. A signed permission slip to transport and attend a field trip is required for each child. See Transportation below.

**Television/Video/Computers/Video Games:** Activities using TV, video, computer, or video games may be used for children 3 years and older but may not replace daily activities. These activities must relate to planned activities, be age-appropriate and not exceed 30 minutes per week.

## **Tuition/Fees**

Tuition rates are subject to change with advance notification. A non-refundable registration fee is required before entry into the program. Tuition is due in advance for all enrollees, including children on CCG with no deductions for any absences, holiday closings, illness or closures due to inclement weather, power outages or other situations beyond the center’s control. Tuition statements are provided upon request.

**Tuition Payments:** Payments are made through an automatic bank draft that is set up in the Finance Office prior to the child’s first day of school.

**Government Programs - CCG:** Families receiving assistance through Child Care Group and assigned a co-payment are required to have the payment paid in full at the beginning of each month.

**Late Payments:** If tuition is not paid on time, a late fee will added to the weekly tuition. Payments that are delinquent for one month will result in suspension from the center until the current balance is paid. Your child's space will not be reserved.

**Insufficient Funds:** A fee will be charged for a check returned for insufficient funds. The center may refuse to accept future checks from a person whose previous check did not clear the bank.

**Withdrawals:** Withdrawing a child requires a two week advance written notice submitted to the center's director or assistant director. Failure to comply with this notification requirement may result in fees being charged for these two weeks.

**Re-enrollment Fee:** Parents opting to remove their child from the center and then re-enroll him at a later date may be charged a new enrollment fee. Re-enrollment will be determined by availability of space.

**Refunds:** When a child is terminated and his account is overpaid, his parent may opt to do one of the following: request a refund check, transfer the amount to another child, or make a contribution to the center.

# Policies

## 5

Policies help to ensure and endorse the well-being of all families, children, staff, and everyone who is connected to the program. When policies are well thought out and, most importantly, implemented they provide common understanding and agreement on how things should be done. Policies help us to know what to expect. Policies must be regularly reviewed to ensure that they meet all the needs of everyone.

### **Absence**

Parents are encouraged to call the center by 8:00 a.m. to report a child's absence. Tuition is charged for all absences, including illness, vacation, closings and holidays. Such action is necessary to hold the child's space.

**Absences, CCG:** Children that are enrolled in CCG are not to exceed 30 paid absences in a calendar year. The one year time frame is considered the child's "service year" for excessive absence purposes. Days not recorded by the parent are included in the absences. The center reserves the right to terminate child care if the child exceeds this maximum number of absences.

### **Authorized and Unauthorized Release**

Parents are required to submit a list of emergency contact names and numbers on the Emergency Contact Card. This information is reviewed periodically for updates and is critical for medical emergency situations. At no time will a child be released to a person whose name is not listed in the contacts. The center is to be notified in advance of an alternate person who is not listed on the original form to pick up your child. This person must provide photo identification. We will not release your child without your advance permission.

**Unauthorized Persons:** Parents must notify or provide documentation to the center of any unauthorized person(s) that is not to have access to the facility or a child.

### **Babysitting**

To help maintain a professional status for the center and prevent potential conflicts of interest, the center does not endorse any babysitting of LLC students by its employees. If an employee chooses to provide babysitting services, they may not occur on the center's premises. Any such arrangement is solely between the babysitter and child's parent, fully independent of the center.

### **Center Safety**

The center has a secured entrance. Parents must have a key fob to access the building. For the safety of the children, we ask that you not allow others to gain access to the center on your entrance to or exit from the center.

**Gang Free Zone:** The Texas Penal Code requires that any area within 1,000 feet of the center is to be a gang-free zone. Guns are not allowed on site.

**Recalls:** Current product recalls are posted for notice for parents and employees on the Licensing Board in the hallway. The center complies with these recalls.

### **Child Custody**

We cannot legally deny access to a parent unless there is an active restraining order on file or a specific court-ordered visitation order. A parent must resolve any child custody matters through the court system. The center will act in a way that ensures the safety of children and staff at all times.

## **Confidentiality**

Any and all information whether written, verbal or other form that may be obtained during enrollment is to remain confidential at all times unless required by law to be disclosed. Measures are also taken to ensure compliance with the HIPAA Act in regard to the privacy and security of an individual's health information.

## **Late-Pick Up**

Children are very tired at the end of a ten hour day and want to go home. In addition, our staff has family and personal obligations. We ask that you please be considerate of our time by abiding with our scheduled opening and closing times. A late pickup fee will be charged for any child who has not been picked up by 6:00 p.m. After 6:05 p.m. the rate increases substantially. The fee is owed to the center, not the attending teacher.

## **Medication**

Medications will be administered to your child in accordance with the center's medication policy and licensing regulations. Prescribed medications are administered at set times throughout the day. These medications are administered by a qualified staff member when the following criteria are met:

- written parent permission to administer the medication is on record at the center
- medication is in the original container
- medication is labeled with the child's name only
- prescription medications contain the date filled, current expiration date and physician's name
- medication request forms are completed on each medication and filled out weekly as needed
- medications are given according to recommended dosage
- medications are not to be kept in backpacks or diaper bags

**"No Tylenol" Policy:** The center does not permit the use of Tylenol or any other fever reducing medications to be administered to a child while at the center.

In the event of a medication error, a supervisor, parent and poison control center will be contacted immediately. The incident will be properly documented.

## **Pets/Animals**

The center is a pet-free zone. Parents are not to bring in their personal pets when picking up their child. State regulations restrict contact with the following reptiles and animals: chickens, ducks, and reptiles such as snakes, turtles, lizards, iguanas, and amphibians, such as frogs and toads.

## **Photographs**

School pictures are taken once a year. There is no charge at the time of the session, and purchase of the pictures is optional. Photo release forms must be signed by the child's parent.

## **Profanity**

At no time is an employee or a parent to use profanity on the center's premises. Persons involved in such behavior will be dismissed from the premises.

## **Privacy Invasion**

All information regarding a child and their family is kept confidential. A photo release form must be completed on each child. The form allows parents to either grant or decline permission for still photographs, videos or audio to be used for classroom purposes, sharing with other parents, websites, Facebook or promotional events. This includes the posting of full names of children and contact information. In addition, information will not be shared through texting or sharing of photos on cell phones.

## **Process of Dis-enrolling**

Despite our best efforts to support families, on occasion there are situations or actions that may warrant a need to find a more suitable setting for a family and their child. The following are examples of these situations:

- failure to abide by center policies
- demands for special services that are not provided
- family is physically or verbally abusive to center staff, children or any other person in the center
- the child's tuition is delinquent
- the center is subjected to harmful behavior
- a child is unable to participate in group experiences

## **Process of Suspending a Child**

We seek to provide support to every child's growth. Because our center seeks to accommodate a wide range of individual differences, a child's behavior may warrant suspending him from the center. Some examples include:

- Any situation that causes a child to endanger himself or others.
- Medical, psychological or social service personnel determine that continued care at the center could be harmful to the child.
- Any situation which places a burden on center resources or finances and removal is in the best interest of child or the center.

Furthermore, a parent's actions or requests may warrant suspending his child from the center. Some examples include:

- Parent fails to abide by center policies or licensing requirements.
- Parent demands special services which are not provided to other children or are outside the philosophy of the center.
- Parent is physically or verbally abusive to center's staff, children or anyone else at the center.

## **Refusal to Release Child**

If there is reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that could endanger the child, we hold the right to refuse to release the child and/or to contact the police. We will attempt to notify a person on the child's emergency contact list.

## **Summer Drop-outs**

A parent who opts to drop his child from the program during the summer months but wants his child's space reserved for fall enrollment must comply with the following requirements:

- Re-enroll for the school year that will begin in August.
- 

Sign financial agreement for the upcoming school year's tuition.

- Those who do not comply with the above requirements but desire fall enrollment should place their children's names on the fall waiting list. Re-enrollment is contingent on space availability and is subject to a new enrollment fee.

## **Transportation**

Parents are responsible for transporting their children to and from the center. Parents are advised to follow State Law requirements on appropriate car seats and seat belt laws for children. No child is to be left in a vehicle unsupervised by an adult.

During all walking trips and field trips, staff will take their evacuation bags which include the following items: attendance book, schedule, emergency medications, first aid kit, emergency information cards, and a cell phone. Staff is responsible for teaching children proper pedestrian safety. A designated staff member will supervise the front of the line and the end of the line. Children will be accounted for on a regular basis. Children will wear a tag with the center's name and phone number should they be separated from their group. Staff ratios are maintained and children are supervised at all times.

Parents are required to sign a permission form for each field trip. No personal vehicles are used to transport children on field trips. Children will be accounted for as they enter and depart from the vehicle

following appropriate guidelines. The vehicle will be inspected thoroughly after each departure. A transportation log will be maintained for each field trip.

## **Water Related Activities**

Teacher/child ratios are strictly enforced during water activities, and children are supervised at all times.

## **Weather**

Extreme heat and cold can be hazardous to children when playing outdoors. Drinking cool water helps the body to maintain a comfortable temperature during hot summer days. Play periods should be shortened during these times. Children must be dressed with appropriate coats and gloves to go outside in cold weather.

If the temperature is:

- Below 32 degrees, children will remain inside for play.
- Between 32 degrees and 90 degrees, outside play will be allowed.
- Above 90 degrees, staff must use good judgment.
- If the heat index is high or the wind chill factor is low, staff will use good judgment in determining if children play outside.

The purpose of this handbook is to keep parents up-to-date on the policies and procedures of the center. This handbook supersedes and replaces all prior statements of policy and procedures, whether written or verbal.

All parents are to receive a copy of this handbook and are responsible for reviewing the contents and adhering to the policies and procedures therein. The center will notify parents in writing of amendments or changes to this handbook.

Parents must submit a signed policy receipt form to the center upon their child's enrollment or when a revised handbook has been issued. Completed policy receipts are placed in the child's record.

Please sign and return this page.

---

I have read and understand the operational policies of Lighthouse Learning Center.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Child's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher