Retta
Christian Learning Center

Early Childhood Education Program

FAMILY HANDBOOK

Revised March 2026

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Retta Christian Learning Center

WELCOME

Dear Family,

Welcome to **Retta Christian Learning Center**! This **Parent Handbook** contains information that will help you understand our services and procedures.

- If you have any questions or concerns about your child's schedule or activities, please contact the teacher.
- Questions and concerns about policies, procedures, and billing can be addressed to a member of the administration.
- The Director advocates for parents, children, and teachers, intent on fostering a family atmosphere and good relationships. Therefore, you are welcome to request a private conference to learn about your child's developmental progress.
- Parent participation in special events at the center is encouraged, and parents are welcome to attend all special events with their children.

Retta Christian Learning Center is licensed by the Health and Human Services (HHSC) of the State of Texas. We receive regular inspections by this agency, the Tarrant County Health Department, and the local Fire Marshall. We follow state and federal guidelines in all the prescribed health and safety standards areas. You can view the Minimum Standards for Licensed Childcare Centers and our most recent HHSC Inspection Report in the Center's office.

Thank you for choosing **Retta Christian Learning Center**. We look forward to providing your child with a caring and enriching environment.

Sincerely,

Suzette Deer
Director
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Retta Christian Learning Center

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About Us

Purpose

Retta Christian Learning Center is designed…

- To provide a safe, loving, and nurturing environment
- To stimulate childhood growth and development through age-appropriate activities
- To foster the emergence of a positive self-image and self-reliance in each child
- To introduce the child to the world God made through observation and learning activities
- To provide developmentally appropriate opportunities for each child to develop physically, socially, cognitively, emotionally, and spiritually
- To increase parents' awareness of a child's needs for love, protection, and time with family.

Mission

Our mission at **Retta Christian Learning Center** is to help children develop their God-given potential, touch lives with the love of Jesus and His teachings, and strengthen the family.

Definition of Family

In this handbook, we refer to the family as a parent, legal guardian, sponsor, or anyone else who provides for the well-being, best interests, and responsibility of the child in our care.

Hours of Operation

Child care services are provided Monday through Friday from 6:30 AM to 6:00 PM. School-age care will also be conducted at these times for before/after school, holidays, and summer care.

Holidays

We are closed for certain holidays: Good Friday, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and the day after, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, and one teacher work day (Friday before Mansfield ISD starts school). A director will notify us of any further closures with notice.

Admission & Enrollment

All admission and enrollment forms must be completed, and the enrollment fee and first tuition payment must be made prior to your child's first day of attendance.

An enrollment fee of $70.00 is due at the time of enrollment. This fee is non-refundable.

Supply Fees of $60.00 are due for all enrollments during January and August (twice yearly). For new enrollments, the amount owed at the time of enrollment will equal $10 per month left in the supply period. (ex. Enroll in October = $30 Supply Fee)

Our facility admits children from 6 weeks to 6th grade based on availability and openings.

Children are admitted without regard to race, culture, sex, religion, national origin, or disability. We do not discriminate based on special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided.

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Ease of Transition for Child

To help ensure the child's positive entry into the Center, we recommend that the child visit the classroom before coming for the first full day of class. Visits are made by **appointment only**. Visiting allows the child to acclimate to the classroom setting with less stress.

Inclusion

Retta Christian Learning Center believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance, and belonging in child care. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage the full and active participation of all children in our program based on their individual capabilities and needs.

If your child has an identified special need, please meet with a director to ensure appropriate measures are taken to accommodate it.

Non-Discrimination

At **Retta Christian Learning Center,** equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

Family Activities

Each family is a child's first teacher. We value families as partners in the growth and development of children in our program. We encourage parents and other family members to be involved in the program, visit children's classrooms, participate in events, and provide feedback on the program. We offer a variety of ways in which families can participate in helping us establish and reach our program goals.

Please see the list of Family Activities at the end of this booklet.

Confidentiality

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released except for what our regulatory and partnering agencies require. All records concerning children in our program are confidential.

Staff Qualifications

Our teachers and caregivers are hired in compliance with the state requirements and qualifications as a base minimum. Infant/Child CPR, First Aid, and AED certification is required.

Caregivers participate in orientation and ongoing training in child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism.

We strongly discourage families from entering employment arrangements with staff (i.e., babysitting). Any arrangement between families and caregivers outside our programs and services is private, not connected to or sanctioned by **Retta Christian Learning Center.**

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Child-to-Staff Ratios

Children are supervised at all times. All caregivers receive scheduled breaks, which reduce fatigue and help ensure alertness.

We maintain the following standards for child-to-staff ratios (some of our max group size is limited to the physical size of the room):

Age	Child to Staff	Maximum Group Size
< 12 months	4 to 1	8
13-18 months	5 to 1	10
18-24 months	9 to 1	12
2-year-olds	11 to 1	12
3-year-olds	15 to 1	12
4-year-olds	18 to 1	14
5-year-olds	22 to 1	14
School Agers	26 to 1	50

Communication & Family Partnership

Daily Communications. Daily notes from center staff will inform you about your child's activities and experiences at the center. Notes will be placed into your child's lunch box or backpack at the end of the day.

Online Application. Our teachers and staff heavily rely on online and mobile applications to communicate with families.

Bulletin Boards & Front Desk. The assistant's office and the front desk will provide center news, upcoming events, holiday closing dates, announcements, etc.

Family Visits. Family participation is encouraged. Visit an event or field trip, or eat with your child. Signing in is required for the safety and protection of our children. Each visitor must wear a visitor's badge while on the premises and sign out upon leaving.

Conferences. Family & teacher conferences occur as needed or requested. During these conferences, we will discuss your child's strengths, likes and dislikes, and learning styles. We will work together to set goals for your child's growth and development. You may request additional conferences regarding your child's progress at any time. We encourage you to communicate any concerns.

Open Door Policy

We are delighted to have family members participate in our program. The infant room welcomes parents/guardians to nurse or feed their infants.

Open Door Policy does not mean the doors will be unlocked. For the safety and protection of the children, external doors will be kept locked at all times.

Our team will always do their best to speak with parents/guardians. Since staff days are devoted to caring for children, having a long discussion during regular program hours is usually challenging. If a situation requires a more extended discussion, kindly arrange an appointment. This will be altered in the event of a pandemic or viral outbreak.

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Publicity

Occasionally, photos will be taken of the children at the center for use within the child's classroom, and class photos on Procare are only accessible to the classroom families. If you have any concerns, please speak with a member of the administration.

We will not use pictures and names of children for publicity outside the classroom unless the family indicates that they want their child to participate.

CURRICULA & LEARNING

Learning Environment

We provide a rich learning environment with curricula that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom that tie in Biblical concepts. Our flexible day routine allows children to advance at their own pace. We strongly believe that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through interest areas. Our program is designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem-solving, responsibility, independence, and reasoning. We encourage openness to what is different from us and the ability to work and play with others.

Curricula & Assessment

Retta Christian Learning Center uses the Horizons and Gospel Light curriculums. As part of this curriculum, we gather information about each child's developmental abilities and evaluate progress to modify and adjust our classroom activities to deliver the best-individualized instruction. This evaluation is communicated to families periodically during the school year using various formal and informal tools, forms, and resources.

For information about your child's day, please see copies of daily schedules and lesson plans posted in each classroom.

Outings and Field Trips

Weather permitting, we conduct 60-90 minutes of supervised outdoor play and daily walking trips on church grounds for all children. Children are accounted for at all times.

During the summer, school-aged children will be supervised on field trips, and we encourage you to join your child on the journey. *Permission Slips* must be signed by the child's family at enrollment or if required by a specific venue.

For field trips, please dress your child appropriately for the season. Walking shoes are a must. Sandals and flip-flops are inappropriate for walking and make it difficult for your child.

The safety of children and staff will be guarded in all activities of childcare programs. Proper restraint systems (seat belts) and the correct use of them are critically important during travel to/from the child care program and field trips.

Transitions

Your child's transition into child care should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. We will work with you and your child to ensure the smooth transition occurs as new routines and people are introduced.

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The transition from home to the center

Before your child's first day, you can tour the center, meet with your child's teachers, and communicate any anticipated concerns. At this time, please share the best communication methods that the teacher may use to reach you.

The transition between learning programs

Children are transitioned to the next program based on age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. During the transition, current and future teachers will meet to propose a plan for introducing your child to the new program. You will then have an opportunity to meet your child's new teacher.

The transition to elementary school

Transition activities such as a field trip to a local elementary school, creating a mural of special friends, and memorable times at our center will be part of your child's education at our center. We will provide you with information on local schools, what to expect, and ideas on how to talk to your child about going to elementary school.

Electronic Media

Our regular daily routine (not including drop off and pickup time) does not include electronic media (television/TV, video, DVD) viewing and computer use. Still, from time to time, we may use a television show without advertisements as a teaching aid and discussion stimulator. All electronic media will be screened before use and consist of non-violent and high-quality educational material. Our focus is to provide your child with a positive experience and increased understanding of the world. Electronic Media will be offered only as a free choice, used to meet a developmental goal, and limited to no more than 30 minutes per day per child.

Texas rules prohibit any screen time for children under two. This includes TV, videos, and computers.

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for everyone and our environment. We utilize books, music, games, and a wide range of activities to teach our children respect for our world and the diversity of life in it.

Celebrations

Our holiday policy encourages an enhanced understanding of and respect for the different cultures and beliefs of children, families, staff, and the community while placing more of an emphasis on Christian holiday practices. Families wishing to send their child's class a treat on their birthday may do so as long as it is store-bought, peanut-free, and enough for all the children in the class.

Rest Time

Infants sleep according to their schedule and are put to sleep on their backs. Caregivers/teachers directly observe infants by sight and sound at all times and directly check on sleeping infants every 15 minutes. According to Texas State law, an infant must sleep in a bare crib on top of a tightly fitted sheet; no blanket or restricted device is allowed.

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After lunch, all children participate in quiet rest time. They are encouraged but not required to sleep and may be given quiet activities if they are restless.

Although not required, school-age children shall be provided with an opportunity for a regular rest period if they desire it. For children who do not want to rest, space and time for quiet play will be made available.

Toilet Training

The most critical factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they are interested or curious. We are committed to working with you to ensure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.

GUIDANCE

General Procedure

Retta Christian Learning Center is committed to each student's success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our center ensures that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the school community.

Thoughtful direction and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem-solving help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair and respectful of other people and property and learn to understand the results of their actions.

Discipline Policy

We have created a discipline policy that reflects our philosophy of positive guidance with children. A copy of the discipline policy is included in your enrollment package for you to review and sign.

Challenging Behavior

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness.

Each student at **Retta Christian Learning Center** has a right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place
- Be treated with respect
- Receive the help and support of caring adults

When a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all of the children. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show

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them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent, and understandable to the child. We maintain a zero tolerance to bullying. If you have any concerns about this at any time, please report them to the Director of the Center.

Physical Restraint

Physical restraint is not used or permitted for discipline. There are rare instances when we need to ensure a child's safety or that of others, and a director may restrain a child by gently holding her or him only for as long as is necessary to control the situation.

Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families

If a child's behavior or circumstance is of concern, communication with the parents will be the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. We will then work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

Because your child's safety and well-being are important to us, we have implemented a four-step Biting and Hurtful Behavior Policy. Although we understand that biting and hurtful behavior may be part of some children's development, we feel it is necessary to explain our policy concerning them.

STEP 1: Your child bites or hurts someone for the first time. You will be informed through an incident report explaining what happened. We will ask you to speak with your child about the incident at that time. The Director will evaluate the incident, the classroom, and the supervision.

STEP 2: Your child bites or hurts someone a second time. You will receive an incident report, and the Director give you literature and referrals to help you deal with the situation as a parent and let you know how we are dealing with the problem at school.

STEP 3: Your child bites or hurts someone a third time. If the two previous steps prove ineffective, the family will meet to develop a plan of action to help the child develop according to their needs. A letter of warning of termination of care will be issued to the parent/guardian. If the family and center staff agree and productively work towards correcting the behavior, no further action will be taken at that time.

STEP 4: If an agreement has not been made, your child will be terminated from the program, and a termination of care letter will be issued.

TUITION AND FEES

Tuition Rates

Registration Fee **(Non-Refundable)**	$100.00
School Age	$50.00
Supply Fee	$75.00
School Age	$35.00
(Assessed August & January 1)	

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Six weeks thru 17 months	$265
18 months thru 23 months	$240
Two-Year-Old's	$230
Three to Five-Year-Old's	$225
School Age Drop Off AM and Pick Up PM	$ 110 weekly
Drop Off AM Only	$ 65 weekly
Pick Up PM Only	$ 90 weekly
Summer School Age with Activities	
Rate School Age	$ 175 weekly
Field Trip Fee	$ 15 per trip
Daily Rate for School Age for No School/Teacher In-service Days	$ 50 daily
Full Week off from school (Thanksgiving, Christmas, Spring Break) regardless of attendance	$175.00

Families contract for a specific weekly schedule as indicated on the *Enrollment Agreement* Form. Payment for this contracted schedule is required every week year-round, whether or not your child attends; this enables us to pay teachers a stable salary every week all year. No credits are given for sick or vacation days, holidays, staff training closures, or closures due to inclement weather. You are paying for the child's spot, not just the days they attend.

Payment

Payment is required in advance, with no deduction for absences, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control. Payments over two weeks behind will be sent to you in a notice, except when a draft agreement is in place. As outlined in the Enrollment Agreement, payment is due weekly by the end of the day on Tuesday.

A non-refundable registration fee of $70 is due at enrollment

Methods of Payment

Several methods of payment are available for families' convenience. Families can pay by cash/check/money order at the center or by mail. Credit/Debit card transactions

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online through ProCare will have an added 2.75% processing fee, or a form can be filled out to place a bank account on file to be auto-drafted for no additional fee.

Late Payment Charges

Late payments can pose serious problems for our programs, so the business does not have the latitude to allow families to accrue a balance equal to more than two weeks of tuition. **Late payments will result in the imposition of late payment fees. Failure to pay child care payments will result in child care services being terminated.**

If payment is not received on the day it is due, a late fee of $25 will be added to your next tuition payment for each day it is late. **Repeated late payments will require your family to set up automatic payments or a week's payment in advance to keep enrollment status.**

Any payments made will be applied to the oldest charges, and late fees may apply if the account still needs to be paid in full by the following tuition due date.

If payment is more than 30 business days past due, we may attempt to recover payment in small claims court, and your account may be sent to a third-party collection agency. You will be responsible for all expenses associated with these actions, **including all court and attorney fees.**

Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges

All returned checks will be charged a $30 fee. Two or more returned checks will result in your account being placed on "cash only" status.

Late Pick-up Fees

Late pick-up is not a normal program option and will only be considered an exceptional occurrence. Late fees of $1 per minute will be assessed beginning at 6:05 PM and will be due upon arrival. Repeated late pick-**up may result in childcare services being terminated.**

Tuition & Assistance

Retta Christian Learning Center accepts CCMS (Child Care Management Service) offered through the Workforce Commission for qualifying families. For further information visit.

- https://tarrantcountyccms.org for families residing in Tarrant County
- https://www.dfwjobs.com/child-care/parents for families residing in Johnson County

Credits & No Credits

- **Families contract for a specific weekly schedule** as completed on the *Enrollment Agreement* Form. Payment for this contracted schedule is required every week year-round, whether or not your child attends; this enables us to pay teachers a stable salary every week all year. No credits are given for sick or

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vacation days, holidays, staff training closures, or closures due to inclement weather.

- **Credit may be given for Serious Illness/Injury—In the unfortunate event of extenuating circumstances, such as your child being hospitalized or** absent due to a serious contagious disease or serious illness or injury, credit may be issued. A written doctor's note is required to receive a credit.

ATTENDANCE & WITHDRAWAL

Absence

If your child will be absent or arrive after 10:30 AM, please call or message us through the communication application. We will be concerned about your child if we do not hear from you.

If a school-age child is not attending before—or after-school care, please notify us so we do not have to wait or contact the school office.

Vacation & Sick Weeks

Vacation weeks only apply if your child is typically scheduled to attend on those days. Each child is given one week of vacation for every 12 months of enrollment.

You must let the Assistant Director of Bookkeeping know you would like to use a vacation or sick week for it to appear on your account.

Withdrawal

The center requires written notice, two weeks in advance when a child is being withdrawn. Failure to notify will result in two weeks of non-attendance being charged to your account.

The director at Retta Christian Learning Center reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child at his/her discretion or for the following possible reasons:

• Non-payment or excessive late payments of tuition and fees.

• Not observing the center's rules as outlined in the parent agreement.

• The child has special needs that we cannot adequately meet with our current staffing patterns.

• Physical and verbal abuse of staff or children by parent or child.

• Expired or non-immunization and physical.

Transfer of Records

Your child's records will be transferred internally, whether transitioning to the next program setting or to a new classroom.

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Closing Due to Extreme Weather

Should severe weather or other conditions (i.e., snow, storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, blizzards, loss of power, loss of water) prevent us from opening on time or at all, we will follow the decisions of Mansfield ISD.

If we need to close early, we will contact you or your emergency contacts as soon as possible. You are responsible for arranging your child's early pick-up.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

General Procedure

We open at 6:30 AM. Please do not drop off your child before the opening. Parents are expected to accompany their children and check them in.

We close at 6:00 PM. Please allow enough time to arrive, check your child out, and leave by closing time.

Pickup and dropoff will be outside the main entrance (foyer area) of the center. An employee will be available for assistance. After 10:30 AM and before 3 PM, you must call or ring the doorbell for pick up and drop off, and someone will come out.

Cell Phone Usage

The times you spend in the center dropping off and picking up your child are the primary windows of time we have to communicate with you about your child. To make the best use of these opportunities and be attentive to your child and other children, we ask that you NOT use your cell phone at any time while visiting the center.

Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up

Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. If you want a person not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick up your child, you must notify us in advance, in writing. Your child will only be released with prior written authorization. The person picking up your child must show a picture ID as verification and will be given their code to sign out with. Do not share codes; each pick-up person has their unique code. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy.

To safeguard your child, we will need copies of court-ordered custody agreements. Without a custody agreement, we cannot prevent the release of your child to a parent.

If a child has not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. Provisions will be made for someone to stay with your child as long as possible, but if after 1 hour we have not been able to reach you or a person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency.

Right to Refuse Child Release

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick up the child, or we may call the

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police to prevent potential harm to your child. Reoccurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

Personal Belongings

What to Bring

- **Infants**: enough clean bottles for a day's use, at least six diapers per day, and at least two changes of clothes daily. All bottles must be labeled and dated.
- **Toddlers**: enough clean bottles for a day's use (if applicable), six diapers, and at least two changes of clothes per day. All bottles must be labeled and dated. Nap time items (blanket, pillow, stuffed animal, etc.).
- **Older toddlers:** at least two changes of clothes or more per day if going through the toilet training program, as well as nap time items (blanket, pillow, stuffed animal, etc.).
- **Preschoolers:** at least one change of clothes, socks and shoes, nap time items (blanket, pillow, stuffed animal, etc.).
- **After School Care Children:** books for homework, appropriate play clothes. For holidays and summer, you may bring a blanket and pillow for rest.

Please label all items brought from home with your child's name (e.g., clothes, bottles, diapers, pacifiers, crib sheets, blankets, etc.) to prevent misplacement or loss. We are not responsible for lost or damaged items. Sheets and soiled clothing will be sent home as needed for laundering and return to the center.

Cubbies

Upon enrollment, each child will be assigned a "cubby." Cubbies are labeled with your child's name.

Lost & Found

You can look for lost items and bring found items to the Lost-and-found Box in the assistant office. Please note that we are not responsible for lost personal property.

Toys from Home

Please do not allow your child to bring toys from home into the center unless they are part of a show-and-tell activity.

Nutrition

Lunch

At this time, we do not provide lunches. You must pack a lunch for your child each day of attendance.

Foods Brought from Home

Food brought from home is permitted under the following conditions:

- Limit items that need to be heated due to limited time for lunch. Bring warm foods in thermos-related containers. We will only warm items for 30 seconds.

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- **We are a peanut-free facility**. Peanut substitutes (WOW butter, Nutella, soy-based butter, etc.) are acceptable. Any item containing peanuts will be sent back home and not given to your child. Please label with the substitutes being used.
- While in attendance, children can only drink water, milk, or 100% juice with no sugar added. Juice must be in its original container (8oz or less) labeled 100% juice, with no sugar added.
- Perishable food to be shared with other children must be store-bought and in its original package. Homemade baked goods are not permissible, under any circumstances, to be shared.
- Children will not be allowed to share food provided by the child's family unless the food is intended for sharing with all of the children.
- Lunch containers should be labeled with the child's name.
- Please only pack one sweet item. Your child must finish a substantial amount of their main course before opening the sweet.

Good Lunch Box Suggestions for a Balanced, Nutritional Lunch.	
Bean & cheese dip Tortilla chips (crackers) Tropical fruit salad Broccoli Milk	Chicken strips Whole Wheat Roll Orange wedges Broccoli Milk
Cheese quiche Fresh fruit cup Broccoli Milk	Whole Wheat Macaroni & Tuna Salad Green Beans Carrots Milk

Food Prepared for or at the Center

Food (snacks) prepared for or at the center will be adequately planned, prepared, and portioned according to the Child and Adult Care Food Program (http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/) and the state requirements for food service.

Food Allergies

If your child has a food allergy, you must notify us in writing so we can make appropriate substitutions. The written notification should list appropriate food substitutions and must be updated at least annually.

Food allergies can be life-threatening, and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician.

Meal Time

At mealtime, the dining table is set with plates and flatware, and the food is placed in small bowls, which the children can use to help themselves. Everyone sits at the same table. Good

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table manners are modeled and encouraged. Monthly snack menus are posted on the front desk for parents/caregivers to view.

A caregiver trained in first-aid for choking is present at all meals.

Infant Feedings

Infant feedings follow these procedures:

- Infants will be held for bottle-feeding until they are able to hold their own bottles. Bottles will never be propped.
- Infants are fed "on cue" to the extent possible (per feeding schedule designated by parent/guardian) and by a consistent caregiver/teacher.
- Breastfeeding is supported by providing a place for nursing mothers to feed their babies. If frozen or kept cold during transit, exposed breast milk may be brought from home. All breast milk and formula shall be returned to the child's home or discarded at the end of each day. Previously frozen, thawed breast milk must be used within 24 hours. Bottles must be labeled with the child's name and the date the milk was expressed.
- Breast milk and formula from home must be dated and labeled with the child's name.
- The labels on all milk/formula containers should not lose the name and date/time when washing and handling.
- Solid foods will only be introduced after a consultation with the child's family.

Children 24 Months and Older

- Children shall only go up to 4 hours with a meal or snack provided.
- Children are encouraged to self-feed to the extent that they have the skills. Children are encouraged but not forced to eat a variety of foods.

School Aged Participants

- Before and after-school childcare participants will be offered a light snack each session. These snacks are not meals. If your child will be arriving before 8:00 AM, arrangements can be made to serve your child breakfast. Otherwise, please ensure your child has had breakfast before arriving at child care and is supplied with an adequate lunch if required for school.

HEALTH

Immunizations

Immunization records or an affidavit for exemption from immunizations must be provided before a child can attend. All immunization records for toddlers and preschoolers must be kept current. Parents should submit validated proof of immunizations as the child receives new immunizations or booster shots**. All immunizations records require a doctor's signature or the doctor's clinic stamp.**

Out-state regulations regarding the attendance of children who are not immunized for religious or medical reasons are as follows. Unimmunized children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine-preventable illness as directed by the state health department.

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If your child is four and older, be sure you ask for a hearing and vision screening test when you have your child's physical. Otherwise, you must return to the doctor's office for these tests.

The TDFPS does not require employee TB testing and immunization for employees in Johnson County.

Physicals

Routine physicals are required according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. A copy of your child's physical should be received before but no later than 30 days after your child begins the program. Families are responsible for assuring that their child's physicals are kept up-to-date and that a copy of the results of the child's health assessment is given to the program. **All immunizations records require a doctor's signature or the doctor's clinic stamp.**

Illness

We understand it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but you may not bring a sick child to the center to protect other children. The center has the right to refuse a child who appears ill. You will be called and asked to retrieve your child if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms. This is not an all-inclusive list. We will try to keep your child comfortable, but he/she will be excluded from all activities until you arrive.

- Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities.
- Illness that results in a greater need for care than we can provide.
- Illness that poses a risk of spreading harmful diseases to others.
- Fever (100°F or higher under the arm, 101°F or higher in the mouth, 102°F or higher in the ear) accompanied by other symptoms.
- Diarrhea – stools with blood or mucus and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet.
- Vomiting – green or bloody, and/or more than two times during the previous 24 hours.
- Mouth sores caused by drooling.
- Rash with fever unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease.
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo until 24 hours after treatment.
- Strep throat until 24 hours after treatment.
- Head lice is recommended until treatment and all nits are removed.
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Chickenpox until all lesions have dried and crusted.
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough) until five days of antibiotics.
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after immune globulin has been administered.
- Tuberculosis, until a health professional indicates the child is not infectious.
- Rubella, until six days after the rash appears.
- Mumps, until five days after onset of parotid gland swelling.
- Measles, until four days after onset of rash.
- Has a physician or other health professional written order that the child be separated from other children?

Children who have been ill may return when:

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- They are free of fever, vomiting, and diarrhea for 24 hours.
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.
- They can participate comfortably in all usual activities.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless:
    - The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious and;
    - A bandage can cover the involved areas without seepage or drainage through the bandage.
- If a child has a reportable infectious disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required.

Allergy Prevention

Families are expected to notify us regarding children's food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed allergies must provide us with a letter detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments, and care. A list of the children's allergies will be posted in the central area and kitchen. We are trained to familiarize ourselves and consult the list to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

Medications

- All medications should be handed to a staff member with specific written instructions for administration. Medications should never be left in the child's cubby or with the child to administer independently. Our staff will ensure that the medication is recorded along with the directions and proceed to dispense the medication as directed.
- **Prescription medications** require a note signed by the family and a written order from the child's physician. The label on the medication meets this requirement. The medication must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and the name and phone number of the physician. All medications must be in the original container (you may request pharmacies to fill your prescription in two labeled bottles). Please specify the dosage and time(s) to be administered for each medication.
- **Non-prescription medications** require written permission and instructions from the child's primary care physician. The written authorization must include your child's name, dosage, current date, and frequency, and all medications must be in the original container. Non-prescription medication should not be administered for more than a 3-day unless a physician's written order is received.
    - **Non-prescription topical ointments** (e.g., diaper cream or teething gel), sunscreen, and insect repellant require a note signed by the family, specifying frequency and dosage to be administered as well as the length of time the authorization is valid, which cannot exceed 12 months.

Communicable Diseases

When an enrolled child or an employee of the center has a (suspected) reportable disease, we must notify the local Board of Health or the Department of Public Health. We will notify families about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments. Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:

- Bacterial Meningitis
- Botulism
- Chicken Pox
- Diphtheria

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- Haemophilus Influenza (invasive)
- Measles (including suspect)
- Meningoccocal Infection (invasive)
- Poliomyelitis (including suspect)
- Rabies (human only)
- Rubella Congenital and Non-congenital (including suspect)
- Tetanus (including suspect)
- H1N1 Virus
- Any cluster/outbreak of illness
- Tuberculosis

SAFETY

Clothing

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will participate in various activities, including painting, outdoor play, sand, weather, and other sensory activities. Our playground extends the center, and daily programs are conducted outside whenever weather permits.

One particular aspect of concern is the risk associated with children's clothing becoming entangled with climbing or sliding equipment, which could lead to choking or other serious harm. As a precaution, all drawstrings from children's clothes should be removed.

Sandals and flip-flops are inappropriate for center play and make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities. Closed-toe shoes are highly recommended.

Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play

Outdoor play will not occur if the outside temperature is greater than 90 °F or less than 40 °F degrees for more than 20-30 minutes.

Communal Water-Play

Communal, unsupervised water play is prohibited. Supervised children are permitted to engage in water play. Precautions are taken to ensure that communal water play does not spread communicable infectious diseases.

Injuries

Safety is a significant concern in child care, so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area to prevent injuries. A trained caregiver will administer first aid if your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an incident report outlining the incident and the course of action taken. You will be contacted immediately if the injury produces any swelling or needs medical attention. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit that meets state regulations.

In a severe medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, and we will try to contact you or an emergency contact.

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Biting

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants, toddlers, and sometimes even preschoolers. Most young children will try it at least once.

When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the biter learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting.

Notes will be written to the bitten child and the biter's family. We will work together with the families of each to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change.

Respectful Behavior

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. We expect the same from all of our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior from a child or adult. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your children from our care.

Smoking

Secondhand smoke's poisons are especially harmful to infants' and young children's developing bodies. Therefore, the indoor and outdoor center environment and vehicles are non-smoking areas at all times. Tobacco use in any form is prohibited on the center's premises.

Prohibited Substances

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on the center's premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is not permitted.

Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances is required to leave the premises immediately.

Dangerous Weapons

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which, by the manner it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children, staff, or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases clearly involving a gun or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be called, and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

Child Custody

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal custody rights. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. Without court documentation, we will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody.

Suspected Child Abuse

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is

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suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may investigate. It then becomes the agency's role to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

Emergencies & Safety

Emergency Preparedness Plan

GENERAL:

1. Emergencies happen. The purpose of this plan is to describe the actions to be taken in an emergency to keep the children and staff of this center from harm. Children's safety and well-being shall always be a priority over all other considerations.
2. A copy of this plan will be kept in the Learning Center office.
3. The plan will be reviewed and updated annually and after every emergency.
4. The Rendon Fire Department reviews this plan.
5. Monthly fire drills are conducted and documented by Learning Center staff.
6. Severe weather drills will be conducted and documented every three months.

SITUATION:

1. The center is in the Baptist Church at 13201 Rendon Rd, Burleson, TX 76028.
2. The center primarily uses the preschool area and the gym building.
3. The center could be affected by severe storms, tornadoes, fires, criminal acts, utility losses, and chemical spills.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS:

1. The Learning Center's operating hours are 6:30 a.m.–6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, year-round (closed for major holidays). The center is licensed for 140 children, and the average attendance is 90-115.
2. Samantha Craig is the Director of the Learning Center, and Amanda Conley and Brandi Hickman are the Assistant Directors. During an emergency, the director or assistant will work closely with the Rendon Fire Department and the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department to ensure the safety of all staff and children.
3. Depending on the type of emergency, the decision will be made whether to *shelter in place, lockdown,* or *evacuate the building*.
    A. Shelter in Place means that the staff and the children in the daycare center will remain in the center's building. Sheltering can be used in emergencies such as severe storms. Any outside children or staff will be brought in, accounted for, and placed in assigned hall areas. All children are in the hallway outside their room, with no windows. In the case of Sheltering in Place, it is the advice of the authorities that parents not remove children until all is clear.
    B. Lockdown: This action is taken when the threat of violence or gunfire is identified or directed by law enforcement and is necessary to prevent the perpetrator(s) from entering occupied areas. During the Lockdown, staff and children are to remain in

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the classrooms at all times, as there are no windows. All doors into the Learning Center area are coded and remain locked.

C. Evacuation: Many hazards could cause an evacuation. The most common would be a fire in or near the center's buildings or an evacuation order issued by the sheriff or fire department. If the emergency is limited to a single building or area, staff, and children will exit the building to the east and west of the building (as practiced in fire drills). Staff will account for all children.
D. If the entire Retta Baptist campus must be evacuated, staff and children will be moved to Tarver Rendon Elementary School, 6065 Retta Mansfield Rd, TX 817-299-7880. Staff will notify parents and guardians to get their children to the evacuation site. In any evacuation, children will be accounted for at the start and again at the completion.
    a. Text messages, cell phone calls, or communication applications will notify parents.
    b. Administration mobile phone 817-678-9184
    c. Emergency personnel will lead the transportation of staff and children to Tarver Rendon Elementary in church vans.
E. A triage area will be set up away from the emergency area to handle all injuries. Emergency personnel will be directed to that area for injuries.

COMPONENTS OF PLAN:

1. Emergency Preparedness Plan – reviewed periodically by staff, emergency personnel
2. Fire Drills (evacuation) – Monthly (Director)
3. Severe Weather Drills (Shelter in Place) – Every three months (Director)
4. Staff Training – During orientation, staff memos (Director)
5. Informing Parents of Plan – Parent Handbook (Director)
6. First Aid Kits are available in all rooms and vans and are kept stocked. (Asst. Director)
7. Enrollment forms kept up to date (Asst. Director)
8. The Learning Center Administration carries cell phones for communication. In case assistance is needed, they call the office.
9. Walkie Talkies carried by all staff members for communication.
10. Security cameras are in the main preschool area and exterior doors.

ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. The director or assistant will call 911 and implement an emergency plan. The decision will then be made to evacuate or establish a shelter.
2. The primary responsibility of Learning Center Staff is to evacuate/relocate children, account for all children, assess possible injuries, and follow the instructions of emergency personnel.
3. Once emergency personnel arrive, Learning Center staff will follow their instructions relating to the situation while focusing on the well-being of the children in their care.
4. Staff members will be provided a copy of the plan and trained to follow it.
5. The director will contact the TX Department of Family and Protective Services as required.

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Evacuations

Alert Phase

1. What is the threat?
    a. Fire: evacuate the building.
    b. Gas Smell: evacuate the building
    c. Damaged Building: move children away from the damaged area and evacuate.
    d. Water Leak: move children away from the leak.
    e. Hazardous Materials Release: If time permits, move children to an off-site location. If not, shelter in place.

Action Plan

1. Primary Staff Actions:
    a. Director/Asst. call 911
    b. Caregivers gather the daily class roll, emergency roll, and cell phone. The Assistant Director gathers enrollment cards, cell phones, and emergency bags.
    c. Move children quickly and quietly to assembly areas outside (older children to the east and younger children to the west)
    d. Account for all children and staff
    e. Check for injuries
2. Secondary Staff Actions:
    a. Keep children assembled and calm while emergency personnel assess the situation
    b. All Retta Baptist buildings will be assessed for damage. The gym or fellowship hall will be the first relocation site if the Learning Center is unsafe. Parents will be contacted and instructed on pick-up areas.
    c. If the entire Retta Baptist campus must be evacuated, staff and children will be moved to Tarver Rendon Elementary School, 6065 Retta Mansfield Rd, TX 817-299-7880. Emergency personnel will assist in this relocation.
    d. Once all children and staff are accounted for at Tarver Rendon by roll call and visual, parents will be contacted and instructed on pick-up.

Recovery Phase

1. After evacuation, does a danger exist in the building?
    a. If yes, do not allow children or staff to re-enter the building.
    b. If not, the children and staff may re-enter the building
2. Is the area dangerous with flood waters, live wires, etc.?
    a. If yes, do not allow children or staff to re-enter the area.
    b. If not, the children and staff may re-enter the area.
3. Wait for emergency personnel to clear the area before re-entering.
4. If parents have been called to pick children up, follow the proper procedures for releasing children using the information on the emergency card.
5. The director contacted the TX Dept. of Family and Protective Services.

Severe Weather

Alert Phase

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1. Is there a severe weather watch for the area?
    a. If yes, turn on the weather radio and listen for more information.
2. Is there a severe weather warning for the area?
    a. If yes, move children and staff to the assigned space in the hallway outside the classroom. Monitor weather radio for all clear.

Action Phase

1. Primary staff action actions:
    a. Caregivers move children to their assigned area in the hallway outside of classrooms, bringing the admission form, sign-in/sign-out daily sheet, and cell phones.
    b. Caregivers account for all children by visual and roll call.
    c. Director/Asst. The director monitors weather alerts.
    d. Remain in a sheltered area until all is clear.
    e. Keep children and staff calm and reassured.
    f. Director/Asst. The director calls 911 in case of building damage/injuries.
    g. The director will contact the TX Dept. of Family and Protective Services if damage/injuries occur.

Recovery Phase

1. Is anyone hurt?
    a. Perform first aid.
2. Is anyone missing?
    a. If yes, start an immediate search and call for help.
3. Is the building damaged?
    a. Determine severity and evacuate if necessary.
4. Follow instructions of emergency personnel.

Lock Down

Alert Phase

1. Has there been a threat of criminal action against the center, either a bomb threat or any other type of criminal action?
    a. If yes, call the proper authorities immediately.
    b. If yes, account for all children and staff.
    c. If yes, have staff on alert for suspicious persons or activity in or near the center.
2. Is a criminal or mentally unstable person present in the center, threatening some action?
    a. If yes, the director/assistant. The director calls 911 immediately.
    b. Keep children and staff out of reach of the person.

Action Phase

1. Primary Staff Actions:
    a. Director/Asst. The director calls 911.

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b. In case of a bomb threat, evacuate the building (if ordered by emergency personnel and wait safely away from authorities.
c. If a person is threatening or committing criminal acts, get children and staff away from the person and follow lockdown procedures:
    i. If inside, teachers lock doors and move children away from doors. Inside classrooms, there are no windows.
    ii. If it is outside, children will move into their classrooms if it is safe. If not, staff will direct them to nearby buildings (gym, fellowship hall).
    iii. Staff and children will remain in the classroom or secured area until further instructions are given by emergency personnel.
d. If anyone is harmed, perform first aid.

2. Secondary Staff Actions:
    a. Account for all children and staff.
    b. Keep other people away from the center.

Recovery Phase

1. Ensure authorities have issued an all-clear that the person or bomb has been removed or otherwise rendered harmless.
2. Return to normal activities as soon as possible.
3. The director reported the incident to the TX Dept of Family and Protective Services.

COVID-19 & Pandemic

General Guidance:
Health Screening at Entry: Take the temperature and check symptoms for staff, children, and anyone else upon entry each day. Ask if medications were used to lower the child's temperature and if any household members had COVID-19. Use forehead or disposable thermometers, **not** oral thermometers.

Social Distancing:
Reduce group sizes to no more significant than ten people, including children and adults (e.g., one adult and nine children, two adults and eight children, etc.). Keep groups together throughout the day, and do not combine groups (e.g., opening and closing). To the degree possible, maintain the same groups from day to day. This will help reduce potential exposures and may prevent an entire program from shutting down if exposure does occur.
Limit rooms to 10 people in typical childcare or school-age facilities to maximize space between groups. Large rooms, like gyms, could be divided into two rooms. When dividing an ample space, create clear barriers with cones, chairs, tables, etc., to ensure a minimum of 6 feet between the two groups. The groups should remain separate throughout the day.
Incorporate social distancing within groups to the degree possible, aiming for at least three size feet between children and minimizing the time children are in close contact.

Suggestions include:
- Eliminate extensive group activities.
- Limit the number of children in each program space
- Increase the distance between children during table work.
- Plan activities that do not require close physical contact between multiple children.

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- Limit nonessential visitors and postpone or cancel the use of classroom volunteers.
- Do your best to help create distance between infants and toddlers. Do not use cribs or other containing devices, and do not overly restrict the movement of infants and toddlers during waking hours.
- At nap time, ensure that children's naptime mats are spaced out as much as possible, ideally 6 feet apart.
- Limit item sharing. If items are shared, remind children not to touch their faces and wash their hands after using them. Limit water or sensory tables, and wash hands immediately after using these tools.
- Minimize time standing in lines for children, such as during bathroom breaks or lunch lines.
- Incorporate additional outside time and open windows frequently.
- Adjust the HVAC system to allow more fresh air to enter the program space.
- Avoid gathering in larger groups for any reason. Outside time and lunch should be taken with a group (no large gatherings or combining groups).
- Cancel or postpone special events such as festivals, holidays, and performances.
- Restrict field trips. Restrict training, staff meetings, and gatherings.

Outside play:

- Offer outdoor play in staggered shifts. If multiple groups are outside simultaneously, they should have a minimum of six feet of open space between outdoor play areas or visit these areas in shifts so they do not assemble. Always wash hands immediately after outdoor playtime.

Meals and snack time:

- Meals and snacks should be provided in the classroom to avoid congregating in large groups.
- If meals must be provided in a lunchroom, please stagger mealtimes, arrange tables to ensure at least six feet of space between groups, and clean tables between lunch shifts.
- To reduce the spread of germs, eliminate family-style meals or have employees (not children) handle utensils and serve food.

Drop-off and pick-up:

- Do not combine groups in the morning or afternoon.
- You may wish to have alternative drop-off and pick-up times for each small group to avoid having many people congregate outside the facility to pick up.
- Wash hands or use hand sanitizer before and after signing children daily. Do not share an ordinary pen. Parents should use their pens if possible. If check-in is electronic, try to provide alcohol wipes and frequently clean the screens or keyboards. Wipe down any swipe cards used.
- Ideally, the same parent or designated person should drop off and pick up the child daily.

Hygiene Practices:

- Practice frequent hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. When entering the classroom, handwashing is required upon arriving at the center, before meals or snacks, after outside time, after going to the bathroom, and before leaving for home. Help very young children ensure they are handwashing effectively.

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Clean and Sanitize Toys/Bedding:

- Toys and materials that cannot be cleaned and sanitized should not be used.
- Toys that children have placed in their mouths or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion should be set aside until they are cleaned by a person wearing gloves and air-dried.
- Only one individual should use machine-washable cloth toys at a time or not at all. They should be laundered before being used by another child.
- Only share toys with other infants or toddlers if they are washed and sanitized before being moved from one group to the other.
- Set aside toys that need to be cleaned. Place them in a dish pan with soapy water or a separate container marked for “soiled toys.” Keep the dishpan and water out of children's reach to prevent drowning. Washing with soapy water is the ideal cleaning method. Try to have enough toys so that they can be rotated through cleanings.
- Children’s books, like other paper-based materials such as mail or envelopes, are not considered a high transmission risk and do not need additional cleaning or disinfecting procedures.
- Keep each child’s bedding separate. Bedding that touches a child’s skin should be cleaned weekly or before use by another child.
- Follow disinfecting solutions guidelines or CDC guidelines. The CDC recommends four teaspoonfuls of bleach for every 32 ounces of water.

Emergency Transportation

Suppose your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency. In that case, an ambulance will be called if no other authorized person can be contacted and if the need for transportation is essential. A proper escort will accompany the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

Child Care Licensing Agency

The contact number is 817-321-8604

Texas Abuse Hotline

To report suspicions of abuse/neglect of children or abuse/neglect/exploitation of persons 65 years or older and adults with disabilities, the **Abuse Hotline** toll-free number is **1-800-252-5400,** 24 hours a day, seven days a week. **This number is accessible from across the United States.** For situations that do **not** require a response within 24 hours, you may report through their secure website: https://www.txabusehotline.org.

Unsafe Children’s Products

Recalls of unsafe consumer products, including children’s products, are available. It is easy and free to find out. Go to the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission website at www.cpsc.gov or access the recall information at the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services website at www.dfps.state.tx.us.

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Gang Free Zones

House Bill 2086 designates certain areas (1,000 feet) around childcare centers as “gang-free zones.” Under Texas law, specific gang-related criminal activity is prohibited and subject to increased penalties.

CENTER POLICIES

This handbook includes our center policies. They are reviewed yearly and updated as needed, and the center director can review them upon request.

Family Activities

We offer various ways for families to participate in our program's growth and improvement and encourage families to take an active role.

Family Events: Several events throughout the year bring our entire community together. Watch for the announcements!

- Open House
- Back to School Night
- Holiday Gathering
- Book Fair
- Fall Festival
- Pick Up Events

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