

Parent Handbook

Mission

The purpose of this program is to provide quality care for children of working and/or educating parents or guardians in the community.

Philosophy

We work at providing a high quality childcare environment, which encourages children to develop the desire to learn and continue learning by actively engaging in interactions with materials, peers and adults. This includes attending to and providing for them in such a way as to foster trust and promote a positive sense of self-worth.

We believe that all children learn through active participation with their environment. Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers learn about their environment through meaningful "hands-on" experiences that promote active thinking and reasoning. We provide an environment and activities rich in developmentally appropriate experiences that support and challenge children's individual needs and interests. As the school age years near, or for those children currently attending school outside the child care, we continuously research what is new in the field with respect to school age programs and expectations from our school districts as we believe it's important in the lives of each child to "bridge the gap" between the child's home, school and child care program.

Parents are encouraged to visit and participate in their child's program at any time, and are considered an integral part in planning for the development of their child(ren).

Goals

- Build healthy and positive self-concepts
- Provide opportunities to enhance social skills
- Encourage children to think, reason, question and experiment
- Promote language development
- Respect cultural differences
- Develop initiatives and decision making skills
- Provide opportunities for physical development
- Encourage and demonstrate sound health, safety and nutrition habits
- Encourage creative expression and appreciation for the arts and music

Guidance Policy / Discipline Children

We provide a caring environment that encourages growth in self-control and respect for the rights of others. A child's attempt to learn, participate and respond to people and activities in the program is respected from not hurting themselves and others. Guidance in this program is a process of teaching, which allows socialization to take place. Adults are the models for children. We practice techniques that are fair, consistent and respectful of children and their needs. In this way, a child will know the importance of similar behavior in his or her own life.

The following is considered inappropriate in this center:

- causing physical harm to another child or adult
- use of inappropriate language, spitting or other forms of verbal abuse directed to children or adults
- repeated refusal by a child to comply with center or room rules and/or failure to listen to caregivers
- children's behavior that is potentially harmful to themselves

Appropriate guidance techniques:

- redirecting the child to another activity
- planning ahead to prevent problems
- encouraging appropriate behaviors
- having clear consistent rules that are developed in conjunction with children and discussed with them to make sure they understand
- applying logical and natural consequences in problem solving

Humiliation or frightening punishment is strictly forbidden. This includes:

- physical punishment
- verbal abuse, threats or derogatory remarks about the child or his/her family
- restriction or confinement by physical means
- with-holding of meals/snacks to change behavior

Occasionally, there are children who have difficulty adjusting to large groups. If group care is not conducive to a child, we may recommend a smaller setting such as Family Child Care. If need be, teachers will arrange for the director to come observe the child and the classroom. If further action needs to be taken, the director will consult with teachers and make arrangements to conference with the parent to discuss the problem and work together on probable solutions. If any inappropriate behaviors continue, the director will recommend alternate care.

Staff to Child ratios:

We have set our child/staff ratios below what the state requires in child development settings. Our belief is that the children learn and play better with a lower child/staff ratio than what the state of TX requires.

Child/Staff Ratio are as follows:

6 weeks - 11 months:	1:4 or 2:10
12-18 months:	1:5
18-23 months:	1:8
2 yrs	1:9
3 yrs. (Preschool):	1:15
4-5 yrs. (Pre-Kinder):	1:18
School Age:	1:20

Gang Free Zone

Playworks is located in a gang free zone. A gang-free zone is a designated area around a specific location where prohibited gang related activity is subject to increased penalty under Texas law. The specific locations include day care centers. The gang-free zone is within 1000 feet of a child care center.. For more information about what constitutes a gang-free zone, please consult sections 71.028 and 71.029 of the Texas Penal Code.

Curriculum / Lesson Plans / Parent Conferences

The goal of our curriculum is to provide an environment rich in experiences to enhance social, emotional, cognitive, creative, language and physical development. Strong emphasis is placed on child-initiated play experiences. Activities and experiences are planned around children's interests and needs. Individualism is considered, as each child's learning styles are different. Respect for the range of differences in each child is considered.

Preschool & Pre-Kinder plans will be enhanced with much research and will follow the states Kindergarten readiness guidelines for school readiness.

Progress reports will go home twice a year. Parent conferences will be scheduled at least once a year. This is a time to sharing and discussing their child(ren)'s progress. Younger children may require more than two conferences a year, as they grow and change so rapidly. We believe the parent is an important part in planning for their child(ren), and input for planning goals will be highly encouraged.

Field Trips

Field trips are an important aspect of our program and will be scheduled frequently for children in the preschool & pre-kinder program. Each child must have written and signed permission from the parent or guardian before they are allowed to go on each field trip. All children will wear the program's field trip shirts on each trip.

Parent chaperones are encouraged on field trips. Parents who would like to chaperone must follow the daycare van on trips. Parents will not transport children on field trips. If you would like to transport your own child, *you must sign him/her out of the program* prior to leaving.

Parents chaperones will need to fill out a criminal background check, and will never be left alone to supervise a group at any time or assist any child other than own child in the restroom.

Swimming Pool

Due to insurance requirements, children under the age of five (5) are prohibited from using the three (3 1/2) foot in-ground pool located on the premises. Additionally, children under the age of six(6) are prohibited from attending field trips to public Parks and Rec. swimming pools.

A certified Life Guard will be required for all in-ground swimming activities either on or away from the premises.

Tuition

Weekly tuition is due *Friday prior* to the week of care. Monthly discounted tuition rates can be made either on the first or 15th of each month.

Tuition for drop -in daily care will be due prior to service by cash only and needs to be paid prior to care; hourly care will be paid at time of pick up.

If checks are written, there will be a \$50.00 bounced check fee; and other fees for resubmission of checks by the bank for clearing! All uncollectible NSF checks will be reported to the District Attorney's office for collection.

Holiday Closings:

Playworks will be closed for the following 10 paid holidays:

- New Eve Day
- New Years Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day & the day after
- Christmas Eve Day, Christmas Day & the Day after Christmas

Enrollment Procedures

Enrollment procedures include a tour of the facility, to include notification of where to review the following:

- licensing inspection reports (and where to review any location online)
- children's product safety certification
- gang free notification
- emergency phone numbers
- staff information and list of employees

A meeting will be scheduled with new family and child's lead teacher, and appointment with director to complete the following paperwork prior to the child's first day:

- DFPS Admission Form
- DFPS Discipline and Guidance form
- DFPS Medical Authorization form
- Immunization records for children not enrolled in a public school
- Signature parent(s) have a copy of Parent Handbook / Operational Policies
- Playworks tuition agreement

Severe Weather and/or ICE or FREEZE days:

The daycare center will close on days where NISD has reported school closings for any of the following schools: Nichols Elementary, Krueger Elementary, Steubing Elementary & Beard Elementary. Closed days for severe weather closings will not be made up.

Arrival and Departure / Release of children / Children left after hours:

All children need to arrive by 9:00am unless they are scheduled for an appointment somewhere that morning, making for a late arrival. Please ensure your child brings in a doctor's note if a morning appointment makes for late arrival.

If activities are going on when you arrive with your child, please be brief with drop off as to not be disruptive to the classroom learning activities going on at that time.

Children may be released to people listed on the pick up list with parent prior permission.

NO EMPLOYEE OF PLAYWORKS is aloud to act as an emergency contact person for picking up your child due to illness, or another situation. You must choose people who are not employed with us!

Children left after hours may not be taken home with employees; unless an employee has been authorized to pick up your child and it is included on your enrollment paperwork. Every attempt will be made to contact parents and emergency contacts. If no designee can be located within one hour, the police department will be contacted and given the name of the parent/guardian.

If the child is released to authorities for temporary care, and the center is closed, a note will be left on the front door advising the parent of the situation.

Parents/guardians abusing closing policy may be subject to immediate termination from the program.

Releasing children to apparently intoxicated Parents

If the individual authorized to pick up the child appears to be intoxicated and intends to operate a motor vehicle to transport the child, staff will ask if there is someone else who is present and in a better condition to drive.

Staff will release the child(ren) only if another person who does not appear to be intoxicated agrees to drive. If there is no other parent, we will offer to call someone else to come and drive you and your child(ren) home.

Should the parent refuse to have their child(ren) driven home by someone who is not under the influence of alcohol, then staff are mandated to immediately call the police department.

The following reporting procedures will be applied:

- Report to the police department
- Report to child protective services (CPS)
- Fill out an incident report and report to TDFPS within 24 hours

School Pick up Policy

If your child will not be picked up from school, *please call and leave a message at your earliest convenience, and no later than 2 pm*. If staff does not see your child out in the back of the school, and the monitors (school staff) are unable to locate your child, staff will be held up at the school (and possibly LATE to the next school for pick up) and will make the following phone calls:

1. you first, if no answer...
2. your spouse, if no answer...
3. phone the school's front desk to inquire who signed out your child and at what time. If they don't have record of this, staff will immediately phone the director and report the incident. The director will initiate the next step...
4. phone the police department to report the incident and parents again

If the incident continues, the inconvenience caused may result in termination from care.

Smoking

Please do not smoke within 75 ft of the Child Care building.

Parking

Please park in either the Super Star Parent parking spaces for pick up and/or drop off or under the carport...pulling forward at high traffic times of day.

Special Days

You are welcome to bring food, decorations, games, or treats to celebrate your child's birthday or a special event, as long as there is enough for everyone. Please check you're your teacher or the director in advance. You will be briefed on any allergies in the classroom, so you can modify anything you plan to bring in so that all children can be included. (ie: If a child is allergic to chocolate, nothing chocolate may be brought in)

Illnesses

Children who have exhibited any symptoms of infectious illness WITHIN 24 HOURS PRIOR TO ARRIVING AT THE PROGRAM are likely to be contagious and should remain at home. Examples of associated symptoms include, but are not limited to: fever of 99.6 (under the arm); nausea or vomiting; diarrhea; sore throat; loss of voice; hacking or continuous coughing; rapid breathing or labored breathing; severe cold; stiff neck; runny nose (yellow or green discharge); draining eyes or ears; yellowish skin or eyes; rash; lice; contagious illness of any sort; and/or too ill to participate in daily activities. **WE WILL NOT ACCEPT ANY CHILD IF ANY OF THE LISTED SYMPTOMS ARE PRESENT OR HAVE BEEN PRESENT WITHIN THE LAST 24 HOURS.**

- If a child displays any of the above symptoms while in care, he/she will be removed from the group. The parent or authorized adult will be notified to come pick up the child.
- Parents/authorized adults have **ONE HOUR** from time of notification to pick up the child and may not return to care for a minimum of 24 hours from the time the child is signed out.
- Unless circumstances make it impossible or strict adherence to parental instructions would result in a life-threatening situation, medical emergencies will be handled as agreed to by the parents on the Emergency Medical Release Form.

Medications

We will not administer any **prescription or OTC** medication, including aspirin or cough drops/syrup, without a doctor's written authorization. Ensure you have a list of medications your child will be using (unforeseen allergies, etc) signed by the physician and updated annually in your child's records.

For prescription drugs, the container should be clearly labeled with the child's name, name of the medicine, dosage, administration frequency, and the name and telephone number of the child's physician. The medication must be in the original container as dispensed by the pharmacist.

Non-prescription medicine will be administered according to written directions on the doctor's written permission and on the bottle.

For medications administered:

Twice a day: this is done at home

Three times a day: We administer the 2nd dose at 2pm

Four times a day: We administer the 2nd and 3rd doses at 10am & 2pm

Immunizations

Immunizations must be up to date as per requirements by TX Health Department to include a medical health statement signed by child's physician and a vision and hearing screening for four (4) yr olds.

School age children attending a public school to include Preschool are exempt from submitting immunization records by providing the name, address and telephone number of the public school of attendance.

Injuries / Accidents

Every attempt will be made to ensure that your child will be in a safe environment, but no matter how much we monitor conditions, accidents do occur. In the event of a serious accident, you will be contacted for instructions. If you or your emergency contact person is unable to be reached, emergency actions and/or whatever means is necessary will be taken in order to provide the best care for the health of your child. All incidents and accidents will be documented on an accident report for your signature.

In case of a major emergency, I will attend to your child first, call 911, and then notify you as soon as possible. If a parent is not available, other family or friends on your enrollment form will be notified.

Your child will be taken to the hospital, which you have designated on the enrollment form, if that becomes necessary. **IT IS INCUMBENT UPON YOU TO CHECK WITH THE HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM TO FIND OUT WHAT KIND OF FORMS ARE REQUIRED TO BE ON FILE FOR TREATMENT IN CASE OF PARENTAL ABSENCE.**

Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect

If any of our staff suspects a child has possibly been abused and/or neglected, this will be reported to the director. The proper authorities will investigate incidents. Child Abuse and Neglect cases **will never be discussed** in or out of the program.

It is the law to report any allegations for suspected child abuse and/or neglect to proper authorities.

Substitutes

When a substitute is scheduled, you will be notified with sufficient notice...unless it's an emergency, or a teacher was not able to make it in the morning of care. If you are interested in volunteering in one of our rooms, please notify me for the requirements.

Weather

- Cold Weather = between 36-40 F, including the wind chill factors, outdoor activities may continue provided children have adequate clothing.
- Hot weather = between 90-95, outdoor activities will continue; 95-100, continue outdoor activities in shaded areas. Any temperatures over 100, children need to come indoors.

Toys and Materials

All toys and materials should be left at home. If you have something to share, which you feel will benefit all the children educationally, please contact your child's lead teacher and/or director for prior approval.

I-Pods, MP3's, Play Station games, and other expensive equipment may be brought in if cleared by the parent and teacher. We will not discourage the use of modern technology; however, the child...NOT THE TEACHER...will be responsible for personal items at all times! TEACHERS WILL NOT BE ACCOUNTABLE FOR lost, stolen or broken items while children are in our care. When in doubt...leave at home!

Dress Code

Your child is expected to arrive well-groomed and wearing appropriate clothing. Socks and tennis shoes (or sturdy closed toed shoes) need to be worn at this program. You will be notified if your child violates the dress code. Inappropriate clothing may inhibit your child from participating in certain activities...(ie: a child may be sitting out from playground play if appropriate close-toed shoes are not worn). Full cooperation and respect for this program with regards to this issue is appreciated!

Meals

Meals are provided for all children on table foods. No outside food/drinks will be allowed. The exceptions to this are below. Children will be served Breakfast, Lunch & PM Snack.

EXCEPTIONS:

- Infants not yet on table foods
- School age will receive am & pm snacks...and bring lunches on school holidays

Nap / Rest Time

All children in care are required to rest quietly each day. Naptime is normally scheduled after lunch, and as needed for infants and young toddlers.

Additional Infant Safety Factors

- All adults, with the exception of the infant's own parent(s), entering the program will be required to wash their hands before touching any infants under 10 months of age. Parent permission must be given for adults other than staff members to pick up any infants...and at no time will other children be aloud to pick up infants!
- All bottle-fed children will be held. No child will be aloud to walk around with bottles.
- If pacifiers are used, they will be given to the child to sooth him/herself at naptime. No child will be aloud to walk around with pacifiers in their mouths.
- Food cautions include: popcorn, peanuts, raisins, grapes & hotdogs. These foods are high risk for choking in young children and will not be served. (Exception: Hotdogs & grapes cut into quarters may be served)
- A film canister (equivalent to a commercially bought "choke tube" tester) is used to test materials in the environment. If any items slip through this canister, extra caution is taken when children under age 3 are present!
- No balloons will be used for any activities for children under the age of 3.

Toileting / Potty Training

We will "assist young children with their toileting skills". Toileting is mastered when the child is ready. This generally occurs around 2 1/2 years of age, maybe a few months later. Toileting is another child developmental milestone, and as with all stages of development, it cannot be forced. You cannot force a child to roll over, sit up, crawl, walk, etc. It is a natural progression that will occur when the child is physically, emotionally, and developmentally ready. Toileting is another step towards independence. We need to be there to assist, NOT INSIST. We let the child decide when she/he is ready. We read books on toileting with the children periodically. We elaborate on the pictures and explain what the child is doing in the picture. However, I do not relate "toilet learning" to being a "big boy" or "big girl". I also do not believe in high praise every time they use the toilet. We believe in encouragement throughout the process. Toileting is a natural bodily function, so we prefer not to make a huge deal out of it. If you are relaxed about the process, children will be also. I'm sure you've already noticed with young children that no matter what you would like for them to do, if you INSIST, they may RESIST.

Diapering

Diapers must be checked every 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours for infants and young toddlers, and every 2 hours for older toddlers. Parents must bring a full bag of diapers, and expect to go through 8 or more a day. I don't recommend the most expensive brand, as they are generally designed to hold a load. We don't let the children get to that point; so do yourself a favor and purchase a less expensive brand, that fully fits your child. You will be at ease to know your child is changed when soiled.

Along with this, **no diaper powders are tolerated at this program.** If a medicated cream is necessary, bring in a doctors not for application and sign a medication authorization form.

Divorce Records / Custody Agreements

Divorced parents are required to provide a copy of custody papers, or court orders signed and dated by a judge, to be kept in the child's file at the time of enrollment. Without proper paperwork, we have no legal way of preventing the child's natural parents from removing them from the facility. If we do have copies of papers, we can then call the police if the non-custodial natural parent does try to remove your child. If the non-custodial parent attempts to pick up a child or makes an unscheduled visit during daycare hours, the custodial parent will be verbally advised. When dealing with these delicate matters, the health and safety of all of the children in my care must be considered. If the non-custodial parent continues to abuse his/her rights, the director will have no choice but to terminate childcare services for that child.

Visiting and Participating in the Daycare Program

Parents are encouraged to visit the daycare program at any time their child is in care. Parents will also have opportunities to participate in daycare activities with their child and other daycare families.

You may be asked to complete a TX background check form if necessary, and at no time will parents be left alone with a group of children or be aloud to assist children other than their own in toileting!

Trial Period

To ensure the compatibility of all children and staff are well matched, all children are encouraged to visit and spend a day in the class he/she will be enrolled. It's important children and families feel comfortable with the teacher, children and environment prior to making final decisions on childcare services.

If at anytime during the first two weeks of care the teacher, director or parent feels this particular program does not meet the needs for the child or family in any way, the parent(s) will not be responsible for further payments, and child care services will immediately terminate.

Complaints/Grievances

Complaints should not be discussed around the children, other parents, or staff whom is not your child's lead teacher. If there is a problem, it should be referred to your lead teacher, the director or supervisor on duty for help with a resolution.

The Licensing Department, Inspection Report and Important Phone numbers:

You may obtain information about licensing standards, procedures, or this programs most current inspection report by calling the toll-free number: 1-800-862-5252 or visiting the website: tdprs.state.tx.us

Other important numbers: Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400
Poison Control Center 1-800-764-7661

I also have a keep a copy of the current licensing standards & inspection report for this program if you would like to review them here!

Withdrawal or Discharge Policy

Reasons for *immediate* possible discharge are as follows:

- If a child is having an extremely difficult time adjusting to his/her parent leaving or is making it difficult for the teacher to properly care for the other children.
- If a child exhibits severe emotional or social problems that are detrimental to the other children in care.
- If a child is prone to destructive behaviors that result in constant, severe, or recurrent damage to others, the home, or its contents.
- If a parent abuses the policies and procedures set forth in the parent handbook.

Parents will be notified with any changes to the operational policies and a new hand book will be distributed as well as posted on our web site.