

**Bright Beginners Preschool
& Infant Care Program
a Ministry of
St. Timothy Lutheran Church**

**Parent / Child
Handbook**

2015 Revision

Bright Beginners Preschool and Infant Care

**14225 Hargrave Road
Houston, Texas 77070
281.469.2921**

Mission Statements

St. Timothy Lutheran Church

We are a biblical community that is
constantly seeking to be more like Jesus.

Bright Beginners

We offer families a loving, Christ-centered
environment in which young children are
nurtured as they grow spiritually,
intellectually, socially,
emotionally, and physically.

**BRIGHT BEGINNERS PRESCHOOL AND INFANT CARE
PARENT / CHILD HANDBOOK**

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BRIGHT BEGINNERS PRESCHOOL AND INFANT CARE PARENT / CHILD HANDBOOK

I. PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES

A. Philosophy

We believe that each child is a precious child of God; therefore, we consider it a great responsibility to care for your child.

We believe in nurturing the whole child, helping the child grow spiritually, physically, socially, emotionally and intellectually.

We believe learning should be enjoyable with hands-on experiences that help children develop a positive "Christ-esteem" and to know that they are loved by and made valuable through God's love to them in Jesus.

We believe our goal is to provide a quality program that ensures all children the opportunity to learn and develop at their own rate and in their own way.

B. Non-Discrimination Statement

Bright Beginners Preschool and Infant Care (the "Center") admits children of any race, color, national or ethnic origin and extends all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to children at the Center.

C. Licensing

The Center is licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

D. Disclaiming Statement

To assure that St. Timothy Lutheran Church (the "Church") and Bright Beginners Preschool and Infant Care achieves and maintains the purpose of this handbook and to assure the continued ability to meet its needs and those of its parents, children and employees under changing conditions, the Church and Center reserve the right to modify, augment, suspend, or revoke any and all policies, procedures and statements contained in this handbook at any time.

II. ADMISSIONS

A. Enrollment Type

Full-day – 6:30 a.m. to 6:15 p.m. for 4 or 5 days per week

Part-day – 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. for 4 or 5 days per week

Mornings – 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Monday/Wednesday/Friday or Tuesday/Thursday

B. Age Requirements

Children entering the two, three, and four-year-old programs must turn two, three and four respectively on or before September 1. In the infants (age 6 weeks to approximately 12 months) / toddler (approximate ages 12-24 months) programs, children will be assessed and placed in the developmentally appropriate age group.

C. Admissions and Withdrawal Process

1. Admissions

A registration form and fee must be received in the Center office for newly enrolled children while space availability exists. Updated information forms, medical forms, shot records and parent handbook acknowledgement forms must be completed for **all** children and submitted annually to the Center office.

2. Withdrawal

We request a written two week notice when withdrawing your child from our Center. You may give the director a signed and dated letter stating your child's last day, or you may complete a withdrawal form. This form may be obtained from the Center office.

D. Tuition, Fees, Discounts, and Vacation Credits

Tuition = Total yearly program cost broken into equal monthly payments.

1. Tuition

Tuition is due on the 1st of the month. All checks should be made payable to *Bright Beginners* and include the entire amount due unless other arrangements have been made in advance with the director. **THERE ARE NO DEDUCTIONS IN TUITION FOR ABSENCES OR HOLIDAYS.**

2. Fees

a) Enrollment and Activity Fee

The Registration Fee for all new students is payable in full at the time of registration.

Note: The Fee Schedule found in Appendices gives the cost of the above items.

b) Supply Fee

The supply fee is a yearly fee of \$50 to cover on going supplies and in-house field trips that come to the school.

c) Late Payment of Tuition

Late fees are assessed for tuition not paid by 5:00 p.m. on the 3rd business day of the month. A \$25 late fee will be charged on the 4th business day. An additional \$25 late fee will be charged on the 5th business day. Your child will not be allowed to come to school on the 6th day or until tuition and late fees are paid in full.

d) Late Pick-up of Children

Late fees are assessed for children picked-up after 3:00 p.m. for part-day children and 6:15 p.m. for full-day children. The late fees will be assessed at a rate of \$1 per minute per child.

e) Returned Check Fee

A fee of \$25 will be assessed should your check be returned to us by the bank.

f) Early Arrival Fee (Part-Day Children Only)

Children that are dropped off before 9:00 a.m. will be charged \$1.00 per minute for those minutes before 9:00 a.m.

3. Discounts

a) Sibling Discount

A 10% discount is available for families with more than one child enrolled in our Center. This discount is for the **tuition** of the second, third, etc. children or the child whose tuition is less. Extra hours paid on an hourly basis are not discounted.

b) Annual Prepayment Discount

A 5% discount is available for any family who pays all fees and tuition charges for an entire year in advance.

c) Church Member Discount

A 10% discount is available for all active members of St. Timothy Lutheran Church.

d) Family Referral Discount

This program offers parents of presently enrolled children a tuition discount for any new child (or children) that they bring into our Center. The discount is \$45 per month and is in effect for a maximum of 3 months providing:

- The new student remains enrolled at the Center and
- Both accounts are paid in full.

This discount becomes effective the month following the new student's first month paid tuition. There is no limit to the number of students a parent may refer to the Center. (The more students a parent refers, the greater that parent's discount.) This discount is in addition to existing discounts (sibling and St. Timothy membership.)

NOTE: In the event of disputes regarding this special discount program, the Bright Beginners Director along with the Director of Operations and/or the Board of Directors of STLC will rule on the dispute on a case-by-case basis.

4. Vacation Credits

Each child enrolled in our 4- or 5-day program is eligible for a one week \$100 vacation credit per year when absent from the center for an entire week. The term "week" is defined as the number of days a child is registered to attend in any given Monday-to-Friday period. Please notify the school secretary in advance when you plan to use this credit in order to insure the accuracy of monthly statements.

E. Extended Care for Part-Day Children

WITH ADVANCE NOTICE, the Center offers hourly care for children in the part-time class who occasionally need care before 9:00 and/or after 3:00. The rate is \$8.00 per hour in one-hour increments only. Children in the morning class can make arrangements for extended care from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. only. There is no extended care before 9:00 a.m. for this class. Call the Center office to make prior arrangements for this service.

Extended Care for Children in the Morning Class

The Center offers hourly care for part-day children who need care after 12:00, but only until 3:00. The rate is \$8.00 per hour in one-hour increments only. Please call the center to make prior arrangements for this service.

F. Additional Day (For part-time and full-time children only)

If your child is enrolled for less than 5 days and on an occasional basis you need to have your child attend an additional day, please make prior arrangements with the director. There are no "Swap Days."

Additional day charges are as follows:

- Infants \$40
- Preschool age \$35
- School age child \$30

G. Enrollment Status Changes

It may become necessary for parents to change between our five and four-day programs and/or to change from full to part-day. Additionally, parents of four-day students may need to change the days of the week that their child attends. CHANGES MUST BE MADE ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE MONTH. Any changes made on the second day or after will be assessed a fee of \$25 per child payable at the time of the requested change.

NOTE: Changes in attendance have the potential of creating serious staffing issues. Please do not ask for repeated changes.

III. ATTENDANCE

A. The Morning Blessing

Each morning children in the Main Building enjoy "Jesus Time" in their rooms. This includes Bible stories, singing, and prayer.

B. Center Hours

Full-day hours are Monday to Friday 6:30 a.m. to 6:15 p.m. Part-day hours are 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Morning class hours are 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (If you want a conference with your child's teacher, please make an appointment. Because of responsibilities to the children, teachers cannot meet for a conference during morning arrival.)

Note: If you need to pick your child up early, please arrange to do so before your child's rest time. This will allow the other children to have an uninterrupted rest.

C. Arrival and Departure Times/Procedures

1. Arrival

Upon arrival an adult must escort your child from the vehicle into the classroom and sign the child in. **Note:** Part-day parents: Unless you have prior approval from the director, please do not arrive before 9:00 a.m. Children arriving before that time will be charged a \$1 per minute fee.

2. Departure

All children will remain with their caregiver/teacher until an authorized adult arrives and the child is signed out. A \$1 per minute late charge will be assessed for the morning class children picked up after 12:00, part time children picked up after 3:00, and full-day children picked up after 6:15.

3. Special Release

Children are released only to their parents or other persons listed in writing, on the enrollment forms. In the event someone else must pick up your child, the child's teacher or the director must receive a note, signed and dated by you, naming the person authorized to pick up your child. As a safety precaution, if anyone other than the parent picks up the child, our policy is to ask for a driver's license or photo ID.

D. Holidays

The Center will be closed in observance of these holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- July 4 Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- The Friday after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

Note: The morning class will follow all Cy-Fair school district Holidays i.e., Thanksgiving break, Christmas break, and spring break, along with all the above listed holidays.

IV. ACADEMICS AND PROGRAM OF STUDIES

A. Curriculum

Our curriculum is Christ-centered and Bible-based, supporting our objectives of Christian education as outlined in the mission and philosophy statement. The Christian faith is taught, not as an added subject, but rather as a way of life going through the entire curriculum.

We will be using Voyages a Bible based curriculum along with Innovations the comprehensive Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Curriculum. The curriculum is center-based and developmentally appropriate. It is designed to meet the individual needs of the children enrolled in our program. It provides a preschool education in spiritual and social living (self-help skills, relationships, morals, values); communication arts (speaking, listening, reading, writing), expressive arts (art, drama, movement, music); wellness (health, nutrition, safety, fitness); and discovering the world (math, social studies, science).

We believe that growth and learning occur through play in settings such as centers, the playground, and classroom activities. These allow your child to have hands-on opportunities for individual and group exploration, experimentation, discovery, and social interaction. Children participate in activities such as music and movement, sand/water play, art, math, science, writing, reading, dramatic play, and block construction. Spanish and Music class will also be offered once a week for children in the preschool building.

The children in the two-year-old through four-year-old classes will also participate in chapel every Wednesday at 9:15 a.m. Parents and others are invited to attend. Worship is a natural effect of daily walking with God, and we encourage our children to learn how to worship.

B. Conferences/Progress Reports to Parents

Progress reports are given to all parents of children in the preschool program. These reports will be issued in the fall and spring. We believe that age-appropriate methods of evaluation are a necessary part of a quality program. Conferences and/or observations can be arranged with the classroom teacher upon request.

C. Meals/Rest Time/Snack Time

1. Meals

There are 2 choices for breakfast for our full-day children: your child may eat at home or bring breakfast. Please do not send donuts or high sugar content foods. **All breakfast things are put away at 8:00**, so children must arrive early enough to eat before that time, or you will need to feed them at home.

All children bring a lunch to school each day. There is a **refrigerator** and **microwave** in each of the infant rooms for food/drink storage and heating. There are microwaves in each of the preschool room, but NO refrigerators. Therefore, please include a re-freezeable cold pack with the lunch to avoid spoilage. Please include nutritional food; **candy and carbonated drinks are not allowed**.

2. Rest Time

After lunch, children have a nap/quiet time which provides an essential break from an active morning schedule. Your child may bring a small pillow and/or small blanket for naptime. Blankets and/or towels should be taken home for laundering at the end of each week. We cannot store any large blankets or pillows; they must fit into a small cubby, and children

must be able to put them away themselves. We provide a sleep mat for the nap/quiet time. Children who wake early or don't fall asleep after a certain time are encouraged to read books or other quiet activities. Rest time is from 12:30 to 3:00 for children in the main building, and varies according to age in the infant building. After 3:00, afternoons are spent enjoying a variety of indoor/outdoor activities in a relaxed atmosphere.

3. Snack Time

Nutritional snacks are provided by the Center at midmorning and mid-afternoon. A menu is posted in the school kitchen or available upon request.

V. DISCIPLINE, GRIEVANCES, AND DRESS CODE

A. Discipline

Discipline is not punishment but rather a teaching of self-control, Christian attitudes, and orderliness. Children model the behavior they see around them. We as parents and teachers must model the values and behaviors we want our children to develop.

In the classroom, the teacher is the primary disciplinarian. The teacher's attitude toward each child will show respect and care for that individual. Harsh words, angry voices, and physical force will not be used to discipline your child. No corporal punishment or harsh actions will be taken toward a child, nor will a child be used as an example of negative behavior. Positive choices of behavior will be discussed with the child.

Each school year will begin with a discussion of the classroom rules. This will be done for the first few weeks and periodically thereafter for the remainder of the year. The teachers are familiar with those actions that are acceptable for the age level they are teaching. Inappropriate actions will be redirected to stop any behavior that interferes with learning. If a certain unacceptable behavior persists, the child will be removed from the classroom, and the parents will be informed of the action. If the same behavior is repeated, a conference will be set to include the parent(s), teacher, and/or director. A report of the incident will be documented on an incident report form which is signed by the teacher and the director.

The following items are not allowed to come to school with the children: *money, gum, videos, hair clips and bows, jewelry and all toys*. Parents are asked to help ensure that these items are *not* brought to school. These items will be held by the director for parent pick up. Uncollected items will be donated to NAM (Northwest Assistance Ministries). Special opportunities to bring items from home will occur throughout the year at the discretion of the teacher.

B. Grievances

Following the Matthew 18 principle (Matthew 18:15-20), the handling of all grievances begins first between the two people involved. If no solution can be reached, the director should be informed of the problem in an attempt to reach a solution agreeable to both parties. If the director is unable to bring about such a solution, the matter will then be taken to the Senior Pastor and then if necessary, to the Board of Directors of St. Timothy Lutheran Church. Any decision by Board of Directors is final.

C. Dress Code

Think of your child's comfort: provide simple clothing that can be laundered and is easy for your child to remove for the bathroom. Keep in mind that art materials as well as playground activities can be messy. Provide clothing that is both sturdy and washable. No open toed shoes are allowed.

Remember that Houston's weather is changeable [sunny and bright in the morning and cloudy and cool in the afternoon]. It is much better to remove an unneeded item than to be cold and get chilled. All removable clothing needs to be labeled with your child's name.

Clothing for children in diapers should have snaps along the crotch or elastic around the waist so that the whole outfit does not have to be pulled off. Children who are using the potty themselves need clothing they can manage with minimal help from adults (pull-downs with elastic around the waist are easiest). Accidents happen sometimes because children can't get their clothing undone soon enough. Some jeans also are hard for the child to snap or unsnap. Children who are potty training should have at least 4 clean complete sets of clothing at the Center at all times. Accidents happen and can be traumatic for the child if they have to wear someone else's clothing from the

Center clothes box.

The Center keeps a limited number of extra pieces of clothing on hand for children. When your child comes home in something belonging to the center, **please** launder it and send it back as quickly as possible.

Good grooming and proper dress contribute positively to the climate of our Center and to the emotional attitude of your child. Children are expected to be dressed in accordance with health and safety standards as well as in good taste. Rubber-soled shoes are recommended for your child's safety, especially on the playground. If sandals are worn they must have a strap on the back of the shoe. Please, no flip flops.

Please mark all removable clothing (sweaters, jackets, hats, etc.) with your child's name. A complete change of clothing, stored in a zippered bag, should be kept at Center at all times.

Please realize that if children are on the playground and playing creatively, clothes and skin can get dirty quickly. But caregivers and teachers will try to have your child reasonably clean when you arrive to pick him or her up at the end of the day. If you want your child in clean clothes at the end of the day, make sure you put this in writing along with the clothing, and give it to the teacher to pass on to the afternoon teacher.

VI. HEALTH AND SAFETY

A. Medication Policy

State licensing requires that all medication be administered **only with written permission** of the parent. Medication must be brought in the original container with the child's name, date prescribed, dosage, physician's name (if prescribed) and expiration date. Parents must fill out the Authorization for Dispensing of Medication Form and sign it with your full name before authorized personnel can administer the medicine. There is a medicine log and basket in each room.

B. Health and Immunization Records

The State requires a health form and immunization record to be on file by your child's first day of school. These must include a validated history of all required immunizations. A physician stating that your child is in good health, is free of contagious disease, and has received necessary immunizations must be on file. Because we are a licensed facility, your child will be excluded from school attendance if you have not met the following requirements.

Vaccine Requirements

Younger than 2 months

No vaccines required

2 months through 3 months

One dose polio vaccine
One dose DTP/DTaP vaccine
One dose Hib vaccine
One dose hepatitis B
One dose *pneumococcal vaccine*

4 months through 5 months

Two doses polio vaccine
Two doses DT/DTaP/DTP vaccine
Two doses Hib vaccine
Two doses hepatitis B
Two doses *pneumococcal vaccine*

6 months through 7 months

Two doses polio vaccine
Two doses Hib vaccine
Two doses hepatitis B
Three doses DTP/DTaP/DT vaccine

6 months through 11 months

Three doses *pneumococcal vaccine*
OR
Two doses if a child received 1st dose of *pneumococcal vaccine* from 7 months through 11 months of age

8 months through 16 months

One dose MMR vaccine received on or after first birthday
One doses Hib vaccine
Two doses polio
Two doses hepatitis B
Three doses DTP/DTaPDT vaccine

12 months through 23 months

Four doses *pneumococcal vaccine*
OR
Three doses if a child received 1st dose of *pneumococcal vaccine* from 7 months - 11 months of age, and at least one dose was administered on or after 12 months of age
OR
Two doses if a child received the 1st dose of *pneumococcal vaccine* from 12 months through 23 months of age

17 months through 19 months

One dose MMR vaccine on or after first birthday
One dose Hib vaccine on or after first birthday
One dose varicella vaccine on or after first birthday
Three doses polio vaccine
Three doses hepatitis B
Four doses DTP/DTaP/DT

20 months through 25 months

One dose MMR vaccine received on or after 1st birthday
One dose Hib vaccine received on or after 1st birthday
One dose varicella vaccine received on or after 1st birthday
One dose hepatitis A received on or after 1st birthday
Three doses polio vaccine
Three doses hepatitis B
Four doses DTP/DTaP/DT

24 months through 59 months

One dose of pneumococcal vaccine if a child is unvaccinated or partially vaccinated and healthy
OR
If a child is unvaccinated or partially vaccinated and at high risk, **Two** doses of pneumococcal vaccine are required

26 months through 43 months

One dose MMR vaccine received on or after 1st birthday
One dose Hib vaccine received on or after 1st birthday
One dose varicella vaccine received on or after 1st birthday
Two dose hepatitis A
Three doses polio vaccine
Three doses hepatitis B
Four doses DTP/DTaP/DT

C. Testing of Vision and Hearing

The State requires that children receive a vision and hearing examination after four years of age. The Center will bring in a qualified person to perform these tests for a fee if you desire to have it done at the Center. If you wish to assume the responsibility to have this done yourself, the Center must have a statement specifying that tests have been administered and the results.

D. Emotional Crises

Because a child's mental health affects his or her learning ability and classroom behavior, teachers and caregivers appreciate knowing of any emotional crisis (e.g., serious illness in the family, separation/divorce of parents, death of a pet, extended separation due to work, illness, vacations of child and either parent, etc.) in order to be better equipped to help your child through these situations. Professional privacy is maintained at all times.

E. Sickness, Contagious Diseases and Emergencies

An ill child will not be admitted for care if one or more of the following exists:

1. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in facility activities.
2. The illness results in a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children.
3. The child has any of the following:
 - Oral temperature of 100.4 degrees or greater; rectal temperature 101.4 degrees or greater; axillaries or armpit temperature 99.4 degrees or greater; accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness until medical evaluation indicates that the child can be included in the facility's activities.

- Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness (such as lethargy, uncontrolled breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, vomiting illness [two or more episodes in 24 hours], rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, wheezing, behavior change or other unusual signs) until medical evaluation indicates that the child can be included in the facility's activities.
- Children diagnosed with a communicable disease must be kept at home until medical evaluation determines that the child is no longer communicable and is able to participate in the Center's activities. Please notify the Center so that other parents may be notified. (Examples: chicken pox, fifth's disease, head lice, measles, etc.)

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES (TDPRS) REQUIRES THAT CHILDREN BE FREE OF FEVER, VOMITING, and/or DIARRHEA FOR AT LEAST 24 HOURS BEFORE RETURNING TO SCHOOL.

Regrettably, our Center is not able to meet the needs of sick children.

If your child becomes sick during the day, he or she will be isolated and you will be notified as soon as possible and asked to pick up your child promptly. Bright Beginners does not have a school nurse on duty nor do we have the facilities to keep a sick child all day.

Minor injuries will be promptly treated. An accident report will be placed in your parent folder or on your clipboard to keep you informed of the facts. Please check your parent folder/clipboard daily. In such cases where the injury has been caused by another child, an incident report is also completed and given to that child's parent.

Our staff is trained in CPR and first-aid procedures and will give treatment as needed. In case of an accidental injury, we will make an immediate attempt to contact you. If you cannot be reached, we will call the child's physician.

If necessary, we will call an ambulance. Until the arrival of a parent, the physician, or an ambulance, the director or staff member in charge will make all decisions concerning the care of your child. You are expected to assume the responsibility for the resultant expense. The Center maintains a signed parent's consent form agreeing to this provision.

It is in your child's best interest to keep the Center updated on current phone numbers, emergency numbers, and other pertinent information.

F. Bad Weather/Closing of Center

The Center will follow the Cy-Fair Independent School District regarding the closing of the Center due to bad weather. During the school year and throughout the summer, school closings will be announced on local television (Channel 2, 11, 13, 26, 48 and 51) and radio stations (KIKK FM 95.7; KILT FM 100; KTRH AM 740; KKBW 93Q FM 92.9; and SUNNY FM 99.1) usually between 6:30 and 7:30 a.m.

G. Fire Drills/Emergency Evacuations

Bright Beginners follows local regulations regarding such drills. Fire and severe weather drills are conducted periodically and documented. Detailed escape routes are posted inside the door of each classroom. Children are moved to an outside area a safe distance from the building in cases of fire. You will be contacted if an emergency evacuation is necessary.

H. Gang Free Zone

Bright Beginners Preschool is a gang-free zone. A gang-free zone is a designated area where prohibited gang related activity is subject to increased penalty under Texas law. The gang-free zone is within 1000 feet of our child care center. The area that falls within a gang-free zone can vary depending on the type of location. The purpose of gang-free zones is to deter certain types of criminal activity in areas where children gather by enforcing tougher penalties.

VII. PARTIES AND SPECIAL EVENTS

A. Birthday Parties

If you wish to provide a special birthday snack for your child's class, please contact the teacher ahead of time. We suggest a child's favorite food, cookies, or ice cream for a birthday treat. These treats may be given out during regular scheduled lunch or snack time. If you would like to do something special for your child's birthday, we ask that you donate a book in your child's name to our Center library.

B. Special Activities

The following special events will be held during the school year. We encourage all children and/or parents to participate.

Church/Worship - Several times during the year your child will participate in worship activities here at Bright Beginners.

Trunk or Treat - On Halloween evening, St. Timothy host's a "Trunk or Treat". It is fun for everyone as the children experience trick or treating in a safe, supervised way.

Children's Christmas Program with refreshments is held each December. You will be notified in advance of the date of this program. This is a family event and is open for all to come and enjoy.

End of School Program & Four's Graduation – This program is held in May. Parents, friends and other family members are encouraged to attend

C. School Pictures

Pictures are taken in the fall and spring by professional photographers. More information will be provided at a later date.

VIII. PARENT-CENTER PARTNERSHIP

A. Communication

1. Newsletter

- A Center newsletter is distributed to all parents by means of your child's folder. The newsletter highlights current events along with other miscellaneous information.
- Children in the preschool building will receive a weekly newsletter, lesson plans, informing you of their weekly activities.

2. Child Folders

Each child has a folder used to receive Center mail and notes. ***PLEASE CHECK YOUR CHILD'S FOLDER DAILY.***

3. "My Days"

This is a daily record of your child's activities which will be sent home each day with children 18 months and younger.

4. Phone Calls

The director is available during most of the regular operating hours. If she is in meetings, or with another parent of a child, you may leave a message and your call will be returned. The Center number is 281-469-2913. Deanna's cell number is 281-804-8993.

B. Fund Raisers

Several fund raisers are held during the year. Proceeds are used to purchase items benefiting the children. Watch for further information on these events. Our ongoing fund raisers are:

1. Box Tops for Education (General Mills Products)

We receive \$.10 for each box top. That mounts up over a year with everyone saving and turning in your box tops. Collection boxes and product lists for Box Tops are at the sign in desks and on the table outside of the church nursery.

2. Randalls Good Neighbor Program

Fill out a Remarkable Card application at the courtesy booth to link your card to our **Good Neighbor account - #3402**. We will receive a percentage of your purchases, so be sure to use your Remarkable Card every time you shop.

A Parent's Guide to Day Care

Dear Parent:

When you choose licensed day care, you and your family join your child in new experiences and relationships. You, the day-care director, child-care staff, and other people in the day-care center have a responsibility to protect the health, safety, and well being of your child. The Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services, Licensing Division, is part of this partnership, too.

Minimum standards require your day-care provider to give you a copy of this pamphlet. You need to sign the receipt form to verify that you have received it and discussed the material with facility staff.

What is day-care licensing?

I The Licensing Division was established by law to regulate child-care facilities to help protect the health, safety, and well being of children in care.

I With the assistance of child-care providers and experts in areas such as child development, early childhood education, fire safety, health, and sanitation, the Licensing Division develops minimum standards.

I Licensing staff inspect day-care centers, private kindergartens and nursery schools, some unaccredited private schools, group day-care homes, and drop-in care centers to be sure that minimum standards are met. The staff also investigate complaints about violations of the minimum standards and the child-care licensing law.

Your day-care facility is responsible for meeting minimum standards. Many day-care programs exceed these requirements. Licensing does not regulate day-care fees, collection policies, or the kind of learning program your day-care facility offers. Each facility has its own special personality and approach to educating and caring for children. Parents can choose the kind of program that best meets the needs of their child and family.

It is important for you to know

- When you visit a day-care facility, ask to see the license. The license means that the day-care facility met the minimum licensing standards the last time it was inspected for such things as fire, sanitation, and safety; the number of child-care staff required; staff qualifications; and requirements for special services.
- Minimum standards prohibit persons who have been convicted of certain crimes from having contact with children in care.
- Compliance with minimum standards does not guarantee high quality child care. They are called "minimum standards" because no one is allowed to operate below these standards.
- A copy of the minimum standards is available for you to review at your day-care facility. You can also request a copy of these standards from your local day-care licensing office. A list of these offices may be found on the PRS website: www.tdprs.state.tx.us or by calling the Child Care Information Line at 1-800-862-5252.

Establish a good relationship with the day-care facility

- Spend time at the day-care facility before you enroll your child. Ask questions about the program and observe the activities. Make sure the day-care facility has all the information needed about your child and family to provide good care.
- Work with the staff of the day-care facility you choose. Parent involvement is an important part of a successful experience with day care.
- Read all the material the day-care provider gives you. In addition to material required by licensing standards, each facility has its own policies and requirements. It's important that you understand these requirements before you enroll your child. It's equally important, once your child is in care, to read the notices, special requests, notes, and other materials the day-care provider sends home.
- Drop in occasionally during the day to observe how your child interacts with staff and other children, and get a good picture of the day-to-day activities at the center. Be careful not to disrupt activities.
- Keep your side of the bargain. Pick up your child on time.
- Discuss concerns with the day-care director. Be aware that the teacher's main responsibility is working with the children. Don't be offended if the teacher can't spend much time talking with you when you drop off or pick up your child. If you need more time to talk about your child, set up a conference.
- It's important to let the day-care facility know about things at home that may affect how your child is doing in day care.

When your child starts day care

- Remember that it's normal for a child to have some fears and misgivings about starting day care. Children need time to get used to new situations. Prepare your children for the change as far in advance as possible. Discuss their concerns. If you're enthusiastic, chances are they soon will be, too.
- Depending on their ages, some children will temporarily "act out" their feelings by clinging to you and refusing to let go, forgetting their toilet training, having bad dreams, sucking their thumbs, or other such behavior.
- Work with the day-care director and your child's teacher on this.

Talk things over with your child

Make an opportunity each day to gently ask questions when your children are quiet and feeling secure and protected. Share their excitement about new friends, new skills, and new abilities; listen to their concerns; and give them a chance to boast about their achievements.

Parent responsibilities

The day-care facility must get certain information and records from parents to ensure the child's health and safety, handle emergencies, and meet minimum standards. If you do not provide this material, the day-care facility will not be in compliance with the minimum standards.

- Complete an enrollment form that includes basic information about your child; telephone numbers where you can be reached during the day; authorization for emergency care for your child; and written permission for swimming, other water activities, and transportation services.
- Tell the caregiver about any special concerns or needs, including allergies, medical history, and current medications.

- Give the day-care facility a copy of your child's immunization record showing immunizations against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, Haemophilus influenzae type b, Hepatitis B and varicella. In some parts of Texas, a tuberculosis test report and Hepatitis A vaccine is also required. For school-age children, you can sign a statement that these records are on file at the school.
- Provide a doctor's statement that your preschool child is physically able to participate in the day-care program.
- Inform the day-care facility in writing about who is permitted to take your child from the facility. Generally, the day-care facility may only release your child to you or to an adult you designate.
- The facility may allow a school-age child to leave the facility alone or allow an older brother or sister to pick up a child if you request this in writing. The facility is only allowed to do this when all safety considerations have been met.
- Make sure that child-care staff know the child has arrived. Make sure that staff are aware when you come to pick up your child. Don't leave your child at the front door, and never leave your child at the facility before opening or after closing.
- Other requirements must be met if the day-care provider gives medication to your child, if your child is an infant, or if your child needs special care or a special diet.

What happens if your child is ill or injured?

- The day-care facility is not allowed to admit a child who seems to be sick unless a doctor or nurse gives approval in writing. This may cause problems for parents, but it is necessary to prevent a sick child from infecting other children.
- If your child has been absent because of a contagious illness, the day-care facility must follow guidelines concerning when the child can return to day care.
- If your child appears seriously sick or injured while at the center, the caregiver must call you immediately. It's important that you pick up your child as soon as possible.
- If your child needs immediate medical attention, the center must call your child's physician, take the child to the nearest emergency room or minor emergency clinic, or call for an ambulance. This is why the day-care facility must have your authorization for emergency medical care.

Liability insurance requirements

- Ask the day-care director whether or not the facility carries liability insurance. Texas law requires day-care facilities to carry liability coverage in the amount of \$300,000 per occurrence to cover a child when the child is in care of the facility.
- Liability insurance coverage is not required if the insurance cannot be secured due to financial reasons; if the licensee is unable to locate an underwriter willing to issue a policy; or if the current policy limits have been extended. You are to be notified, in writing, that the coverage is not available.

Take a good look

As you become more familiar with your child's day-care program, you will see many strong points. Almost all day-care facilities strive to provide a warm, loving, safe, and healthy environment for children. Look for these characteristics, but also be aware of warning signals that tell you something is wrong.

Feel secure when you see that:

- the facility welcomes you to visit any time, and you are invited to observe the class or participate in activities.
- staff are alert and involved with the children.
- staff seem warm and interested in the children. There is spontaneous laughter, hugging, and eye-to-eye contact.
- staff are gentle, but firm when necessary.
- the facility is clean and attractive.
- your child is relaxed and happy after the initial adjustment period.
- your child seems physically well cared for. Staff inform you of minor accidents and tell you when your child doesn't feel well.
- children seem involved with constructive activities, and they get individual attention.

Be seriously concerned when you see that:

- parents are not encouraged to visit the facility.
- children are left without direct adult supervision.
- adults spend much time scolding, ordering, and yelling at children.
- adults are physically rough with children or allow rough play.
- the building is dirty, or you see unsafe conditions.
- your child is unhappy about being left at the facility, and this doesn't improve with time.
- a child comes home bruised or injured, and the center can't explain what happened. (The child may not remember minor bruises and scrapes received when playing, however.)
- children seem aimless, bored, angry, or frustrated, or there are too many children to supervise.

When things aren't going well

You may find yourself displeased about something that has happened at the facility. Talk about these things with facility staff. There may be a misunderstanding that can easily be resolved.

If the situation isn't resolved and you believe minimum standards are not being met, call the local day-care licensing office. They will handle your call discreetly.

A licensing representative will investigate your complaint. The licensing representative may need to interview you and your child and may also interview other children at the facility.

If the licensing representative finds that a standard has been violated, the facility will be notified and a time set for the facility to correct it.

Licensing staff may revoke a license if a facility doesn't meet minimum standards. The department does not take action to revoke a license unless children are in immediate danger or the licensee refuses to comply with standards.

If you suspect child abuse

Most day-care facilities, like most parents, take good care of children. Child abuse is rare, and it is very unlikely that anything like this will happen to your child.

If you do suspect that your child has been abused or sexually molested, report the situation immediately. Use the toll-free Child Abuse Hotline number (1-800-252-5400), available 24 hours a day. The situation will be investigated immediately, and you will be given referrals or recommendations for help for your child and family.

Should agency staff interview or examine your child during an abuse investigation, a reasonable effort will be made to notify you within 24 hours after the interview or examination.

Parents who suspect or believe that their child has been abused in day care sometimes remove their child from care, but don't report the problem. This leaves other children in danger. State law requires everyone, including day-care providers, to report suspected child abuse or neglect immediately.

Immunity

When people make a report of suspected child abuse in good faith, they are immune from any liability. When the department investigates a complaint, the identity of the complainant is not revealed.

The Child Care Information line is 1.800.862.5252 or find more information at your [Local Child Care Licensing Office](#)

Child Abuse Hotline: 1.800.252.5400

Texas Department of Families and Protective Services:

www.dfps.state.tx.us

713.940.5200

1.800.252.5400

Bright Beginners Preschool & Infant Care Program
a ministry of St. Timothy Lutheran Church

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Parent's Acknowledgement

This is to acknowledge that Bright Beginners Preschool and Infant Care Program, "Preschool," has provided me with "A Parent's Guide to Day Care" (pages 17-21 of the Parent / Child Handbook) and has discussed its contents with me.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

(Date)

1. Child-care facilities must provide parents with a copy of "A Parent's Guide to Day Care" and review its contents with them.
2. Parents acknowledge receiving the Parent's Guide by signing and dating this form.
3. This acknowledgement is kept in the child's record as long as the child remains at the facility

Note: Failure to provide parents with "A Parent's Guide to Day Care", review its contents, and obtain a signed receipt, is a violation of standard 2300.A, Day Care Minimum Standards and Guidelines.

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**Bright Beginners Parent / Child Handbook Acknowledgment**

Child(ren)'s Name(s), first and last: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of Parent(s), first and last: \_\_\_\_\_

**Tuition (page 4)**

I understand that tuition is due and payable by the first of each month. Late fees are assessed for tuition not paid by 5:00 p.m. the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the month. A \$25 late fee will be charged on the 4<sup>th</sup> day. An additional \$25 late fee will be charged on the 5<sup>th</sup> day. Your child will not be allowed to come to school on the 6<sup>th</sup> day or until tuition and late fees are paid in full.

Parent Initial \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that there are no deductions, credits, refunds, or make-up/swap days for holidays, sick days, or inclement weather days.

Parent Initial \_\_\_\_\_

**Charges for Late Pickup (page 5)**

I understand that if I have not picked up my child by 12:00 p.m. for Morning Preschool, 3:00 p.m. for Part-Day children, and 6:15 p.m. for Full-Day children, I will be charged \$1.00 per minute (per child).

Parent Initial \_\_\_\_\_

**Charges for Early Drop Off (page 5)**

*FOR PART-DAY AND MORNING PRESCHOOL PARENTS ONLY:* I understand that without prior approval from the director, if my child arrives before 9:00 a.m. I will be charged a \$1 per minute fee for every minute they arrive early.

Parent Initial \_\_\_\_\_

**continued on the back side of this page**

**Withdrawal from Program** (page 4)

I understand that I must give two weeks written notice when withdrawing from the Preschool

Parent Initial \_\_\_\_\_

**Vacation Credit** (page 5)

I understand vacation credits are given as follows: 1 week of vacation credit between January 1 and December 31. The term "week" is defined as the number of days a child is registered to attend in any given Monday-to-Friday period. Please notify the Director in writing in advance when you plan to use this credit so your monthly statement will be accurate.

Parent Initial \_\_\_\_\_

**Daily Sign-in** (page 7)

I understand that I am to sign my child in daily indicating the time my child was dropped off. I understand that I am to also sign my child out indicating the time of pick up.

Parent Initial \_\_\_\_\_

**Child Release** (page 7)

I understand that my child is to be released only to those persons named on the registration form and that I must designate in writing any additional persons permitted to pick up my child(ren). I agree to furnish the Preschool with license numbers of these people, that they will be carded and allowed to pick up my child(ren) with my written permission.

Parent Initial \_\_\_\_\_

**Clothing** (pages 11)

I understand that when my child comes home in clothing supplied by the Preschool, I am to launder and return the clothing in a timely manner.

Parent Initial \_\_\_\_\_

**Personal Items/Toys/Jewelry** (pages 10-11)

I understand that my child is not to bring toys, money, jewelry or videos to the Preschool. All personal items such as clothing, pillows, blankets, backpacks, and lunch boxes are to be labeled with my child's name.

Parent Initial \_\_\_\_\_

**Medications** (page 12)

I understand that I need to bring the medication in it's original container and sign the medicine log in my child's room *each day* my child needs medication administered; that I will list the time(s) my child should have the dosage and the amount of medication needed.

Parent Initial \_\_\_\_\_

**Illness/Good Health** (pages 13-14)

I understand that I will be notified if my child becomes ill, and that it will be necessary for me to have my child picked up as soon as possible after I am notified. I agree to follow the state guidelines outlined on pages 13-14 when returning my child to the preschool. I agree that if my child is exposed to or contracts a communicable disease, I will notify the Preschool. I understand that I will be notified of any communicable disease in accordance with the Health Department regulations.

Parent Initial \_\_\_\_\_

**I have read, I understand, and I will adhere to the policies set out in this Handbook.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or Guardian Signature(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date