

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

**Parent / Child
Handbook**

www.stlhouston.org

Bright Beginners Preschool and Infant Care

**14225 Hargrave Road
Houston, Texas 77070
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Mission Statements

St. Timothy Lutheran Church

Follow Jesus. Make a Difference.

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 Health and Human Services. Parents can find the Center's most recent Licensing Inspection Report posted in the front of the Preschool; by the student mailboxes. You can also access minimum standards for child care at <https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/>

D. Disclaiming Statement

To assure that St. Timothy Lutheran Church (the "Church") and Bright Beginners Preschool and Infant Care (the "Center") 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. Attendance Options & Costs

Infant/Toddler childcare

	5 days 6:30 to 6:15 = \$1120
	4 days 6:30 to 6:15 = \$1020

	5 days 9:00 to 3:00 = \$800
	4 days 9:00 to 3:00 = \$730

Preschool (ages 2 and older) with childcare

	5 days 6:30 to 6:15 = \$930
	4 days 6:30 to 6:15 = \$820
	3 days 6:30 to 6:15 = \$620
	2 days 6:30 to 6:15 = \$410

	5 days 9:00 to 3:00 = \$690
	4 days 9:00 to 3:00 = \$630
	3 days 9:00 to 3:00 = \$490
	2 days 9:00 to 3:00 = \$320

Preschool only (Ages 2 and older) – (Follows Cy-Fair School Calendar as pertains to days off)

	5 days 9:00 to 12:00 = \$470
	3 days (M/W/F) 9:00-12:00 = \$260
	2 days (T/Th) 9:00 to 12:00 = \$230

	3 days (M/W/F) 9:00 to 3:00 = \$390
	2 days (T/Th) 9:00 to 3:00 = \$310

B. Age Requirements

Preschool Program: Children entering the two, three, and four-year-old programs must turn two, three and four respectively on or before September 1.

Infant and Toddler Program: 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 Preschool office for newly enrolled children while space availability exists. All enrollment fees must be paid prior to the child starting in our program. Enrollment information forms, Statement of Health, shot records, Allergy Action Plan (if necessary) and parent handbook acknowledgement forms must be completed for **all** children and submitted annually to the Preschool 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.

D. Tuition, Fees, Discounts, and Vacation Credits

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

1. Tuition

Tuition can be paid on the 1st or the 1st and the 15th. Tuition is due in full on the 15th of the

month. Tuition may be paid by check or online. The online link for tuition payments is <https://www.eservicepayments.com/>. 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, INCLEMENT WEATHER, COVID-19 ABSENCES OR HOLIDAYS.**

2. Fees

a) Registration and Activity Fee

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

Registration Fee: (Based on number of days enrolled)

4 or 5 days = \$300

2 or 3 days = \$200

b) Supply Fee

The supply fee is a yearly fee of \$75 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 6:00 p.m. on the 15th 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 12:00 or 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) Church Member Discount

A 10% discount is available for all active and regularly attending members of St. Timothy Lutheran Church. New members must complete the new member class before a discount will be added to your account.

c) 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 in advance when you plan to use this credit in order to ensure 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 \$15.00 per hour in one-hour increments only. Call the Preschool 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 \$15.00 per hour in one-hour increments only. Please call the Preschool office to make prior arrangements for this service.

F. Additional Day

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", once you pick your day off that day needs to remain consistent.

Additional day charges are as follows:

- 6:30 to 6:15 = \$45 Preschool / \$50 Infant Care
- 9:00 to 3:00 = \$40 Preschool / \$45 Infant Care
- School Age = \$35 a day

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.

H. Policy or Tuition Changes

- a) Bright Beginners reserves the right to change tuition or other fees as needed. If changes were to be made you would be notified in writing with a month notice.
- b) If any Bright Beginners policies were to change or be updated you will be notified in writing of the changes and asked to sign and date an acknowledgement form stating that you have received and understand the changes made.

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 and Visiting the Center

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. The Center is open 12 months a year.

Parents may visit the Center at any time during the operating hours to observe their child, the Center's activities, the building, the premises, and the equipment without having to secure prior approval.

There are several times throughout the year that parents may participate or help during the school day. We will have holiday celebrations that you may attend, opportunities to volunteer and support your child's classroom. Each individual teacher will post these opportunities to their class Shutterfly page throughout the school year.

All visitors will need to sign in at the front office before going to their child's class.

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 a staff member will greet you at the door and escort your child to their classroom. Drop off will happen at the door till 9:05. After that time you will be asked to take your child to their classroom.

2. Departure

All children will remain with their caregiver/teacher until an authorized adult arrives. You will pick your child up from their classroom. Before leaving the building we ask that you sign the child out up front and check their mailbox for any information from their class or the school.

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 that is not on the authorized list, 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: (If the holiday falls on the weekend the holiday will be observed on the closest business day)

- New Year's Eve and Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- July 4 Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- The Friday after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day (There will be 5 closed days in observation of Christmas and New Years. The closed days may vary depending on how the Holiday falls.)
- Teacher In-Service- the Thursday and Friday before the first day of the new school year in August.

Note: The M/W/F and T/Th classes will follow ALL Cy-Fair school district holidays i.e., Thanksgiving break, Christmas break, and spring break, along with all the above listed holidays and any other days listed as closed on the Cy-Fair calendar.

*Please see yearly calendar for the complete list of days.

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.

Infants – Innovations the Comprehensive Infant Curriculum is used to guide teachers in setting up a classroom environment that will meet the child's individual needs. This curriculum provides activities that help infants meet developmental milestones at an individual pace.

Toddlers and Two Year Olds – Frog Street Press is designed around the latest scientific early brain development research. This program focuses on enhancing the joy of learning while equipping teachers to nurture curiosity through exploration. Activities are centered around 5 developmental domains: language development, cognitive development, approaches toward learning, physical development and social-emotional development.

One In Christ Religion is our religion curriculum for toddlers and two year olds. This curriculum assists in nurturing the faith of the very young by providing age-appropriate activities. The activities are organized under four main headings; explore, express, relate and create.

Three and Four Year Olds – The three-year-old classrooms receive an introduction to Learning Without Tears which covers beginning handwriting, language, and literary skills.

The four-year-old classrooms follow the Learning Without Tears curriculum to teach writing, language, and literacy skills. These skills include phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, concepts about print, comprehension, oral language and writing.

Everyday Math is used in the classroom to teach the children counting, number recognition and concepts, beginning operations, beginning graphing, shape recognition, position and spatial relations, and patterns.

Voyages: Exploring God's Word is our Bible Story Curriculum. It teaches Bible Stories and provides activities to extend knowledge of the Bible. Each week includes one story told in a variety of ways to help the children relate to and remember the story.

All curriculum provides for center-based and developmentally appropriate lesson planning. It is designed to meet the individual needs of the children enrolled in our program. Each classroom provides a preschool education that includes spiritual and social living (self-help skills, relationships, morals, values); language and literacy (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 small and whole group 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. Music and Spanish classes 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. Promotions of Indoor and Outdoor Activity

Bright Beginners Preschool strongly believes and supports the need for physical activity each day. When children participate in physical activity every day, multiple health benefits accrue. Regular physical activity builds healthy bones and muscles, improves muscular strength and endurance, reduces the risk for developing chronic disease risk factors, improves self-esteem, and reduces stress and anxiety. Outdoor play extends opportunities for large muscle development, social-emotional development, and small muscle development through ways that are not attainable in a confined indoor space. Research has shown that physical movement can affect the brains physiology.

Infants will be given opportunities for physical activity, including supervised tummy time.

Toddler age children will participate in a minimum of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.

Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten children will participate in a minimum of 90 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.

Opportunities for active play may overlap with outdoor play when weather permits. Physical activity may take place in the classroom, in the gym, in the big room or on the playground, when weather permits.

Bright Beginners Preschool will promote all children's active play every day. Children will have ample opportunity to do moderate to vigorous activities, such as running, climbing, dancing, skipping, and jumping, to the extent of their abilities.

All children will participate each day in:

- Two occasions of active play outdoors when weather permits.
- One or more structured or teacher-led activities or games that promote movement over the course of the day.
- Continuous opportunities to develop and practice age-appropriate gross motor and movement skills.

When participating in physical activity, children's clothing should protect them from sun exposure and permit easy movement (not too loose and not too tight) that enables full participation in active play. Footwear should provide support for running and climbing. Hats may be worn to protect children from sun exposure.

Examples of appropriate clothing/footwear include:

- Gym shoes or sturdy shoe equivalent
- Clothing for the weather, such as a lightweight, breathable jacket without any hood and neck strings.

When weather conditions prohibit outdoor play, physical activities will occur in the classroom, the Big Room or the Gym during the scheduled outside time. Classroom teachers have activities planned in advance for "rainy days".

C. **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.

D. **Meals/Snack Time**

1. **Meals**

There are 2 choices for breakfast for our full-day children: your child may eat at home or bring breakfast. Breakfast foods may be warmed in the microwave.

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.

Children bring a lunch from home 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 and toddler rooms, 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. **Snack Time**

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

2. **Breastfeeding/Nursing**

If you would like to nurse your baby while at school, there is a room provided for you right outside of the statuary in the church building. There is a couch, adult chair and a sink in the nursing room. Please feel free to ask any staff member on the exact location. Also, labeled breastmilk may be stored in the classroom refrigerator or freezer.

Rest Time

After lunch, children have a nap/quiet time which provides an essential break from an active morning schedule. We provide your child with a nap bag and a blanket. You child may bring a small lovey to sleep with if they would like. We ask that it stays at school and will be kept in their nap bag. We will wash all blankets and loviess on Friday. We also provide a sleep cot for 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 2:30 for children in the toddler and preschool classrooms and varies according to age in the infant classrooms.

Safe Sleep

All infant rooms practice safe sleep methods. Every infant will have their own crib with a firm, flat, waterproof mattress that snugly fits the sides of the crib. Except for a tight-fitting sheet, all cribs will be bare for an infant younger than 12 months, this includes but is not limited to, blankets, toys, swaddles, pacifier clips, etc. Infants are not allowed to sleep in restrictive devices. Infants arriving at the center asleep must be removed from car seat and placed in a crib. If an infant falls asleep in a restrictive device, they will be removed from the device and placed in a crib as soon as possible. Infants not yet able to turn over on their own will be placed in a face-up sleeping position in the infants' own crib. Infants may not be laid down to sleep or rest on any surface while being swaddled. (If your Infant needs to sleep in a way that does not follow these rules you must have a completed Sleep Exception Form that includes a signed statement of health-care professional stating why it is medically necessary for them to sleep like that.)

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. In the classroom the teachers will practice Conscious Discipline techniques that promote social and emotional learning as well as discipline and self-regulation.

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 Center holds the right to remove a child from their program if they feel it is necessary.

The following items are not allowed to come to school with the children: *money, gum, videos, 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. 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 the 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.

Remember that Houston's weather often changes quickly [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. All removable clothing needs to be labeled with your child's name.

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.

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 can happen because children can't get their clothing undone soon enough. Children who are potty training should have at least 4 clean, complete sets of clothing at the Center at all times. Accidents happen and children are most comfortable in their own clothes.

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.

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 the Center at all times.

Please realize that if children are on the playground and playing creatively, clothes and skin can get dirty quickly. 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.

There is a lost and found box at the front of the preschool building for any items that may have been lost and do not have the child's name labeled on the item.

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. All over the counter medication must have dosage directions on the label for your child's age. If the medication does not have the appropriate dosage directions you will need a letter from your child's doctor stating the name of the medication, dosage to be given and the doctor's signature. Parents must fill out the Authorization for Dispensing of Medication Form and sign it with your full name before the medicine can be administered. The authorization form is in the front office. All medication is kept in the front office.

B. Food Allergies

If your child has a food allergy they must have an emergency plan (allergy action plan) on file before starting school. The allergy action plan must list the known allergy that has been diagnosed by a health care professional, possible symptoms if exposed to the food on the list, and the steps to take if the child has an allergic reaction. The child's health care professional and parent must sign and date the plan. Our Center does NOT administer unassigned epinephrine auto-injectors.

C. Insect Repellent/ Sunscreen

If you would like insect repellent or sunscreen applied to your child prior to going outside, you will need to supply it from home and label the bottle with your child's name. A current signed permission slip must be on file in order for it to be applied while at school.

D. 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. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that your child's immunizations are current. Failure to keep children current on immunizations may lead to disenrollment.

TUBERCULIN TESTING REQUIREMENTS

Based on local health department guidelines, proof of TB testing is not required in order to be Enrolled in or employed at our program.

STAFF IMMUNIZATION RECORDS

We do not require Bright Beginners Staff to have a copy of their immunization records.

E. 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.

F. 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.

G. 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 100.0 degrees or greater; rectal temperature 101.0 degrees or greater; axillaries or armpit temperature 99.0 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 illness that would exclude a child from school is uncontrolled breathing, diarrhea, vomiting, rash, mouth sores, wheezing, behavior change or other unusual signs until medical evaluation indicates that the child can be included in the facility's activities and/or the child is symptom free for 24 hours without the help of medication.
 - 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 HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES 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, to the best of our ability. 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 child's mailbox or on your clipboard to keep you informed of the facts. Please check your child's mailbox/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 Adult and Pediatric CPR, First-Aid and AED procedures and will give treatment as needed. In case of an accidental injury, we will make an immediate attempt to contact you.

If a medical emergency occurs, we will call an ambulance. Until the arrival of a parent, 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.

H. COVID-19 Protocols

If You Test Positive for COVID-19:

- Report your positive case to the school by contacting the office, 281-469-2913 or emailing Kim (kim@stlhouston.org)
- Choose a return to campus option regardless of vaccine status:

Option 1 – *Standard Return*: You may return to school/ work after all of the below are met:

- at least 10 days have passed since the onset of symptoms or asymptomatic test date,
- at least 24 hours fever free has passed without the use of fever-reducing medications, and
- your symptoms are improving.

Option 2 – *Early Return*: Stay home for 5 days after the date your symptoms began or the date of your test if asymptomatic.

- no symptoms or your symptoms are resolving after 5 days, and
- you have been fever free for at least the last 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.

If you have a close contact (in your household) positive for COVID-19:

- Report the positive household case to the office
- Choose a return to campus option:

Option 1 – *Standard Return*: You may return to school/ work after at least 10 days have passed since exposure.

Option 2 – *Early Return*: Stay home for 5 days following last exposure to positive family member, return on Day 6 with negative test on day 5.

Exposure on campus

- If a child or staff member test positive and was on campus, contact tracing will be done. Anyone who was determined to have close contact will be notified of exposure by email. The entire school will also be notified of the positive case by email.
- No exposure/close-contact quarantines will be mandated on campus. However, please review the following situational guidelines we will follow at this time (*noting that changes may occur based on the level of cases*):
 - In the event that there is active spread on our campus – *identified as campus positives resulting from contact with a positive on our campus* – action will be taken to prevent that class from intermixing with others on campus, including but not limited to:
 - reducing their large group activities when possible
 - eliminating the use of shared spaces when possible
 - In the event that a quarantine is necessary due to number of cases, we will follow the recommendation of the Health Department to quarantine
- Since quarantines will not be required, we ask that you monitor your child carefully for any symptoms for 10 days after exposure. If they begin to experience symptoms, we ask that they stay home until a negative test can be confirmed and they are 24-hour symptom free. If you choose not to test your child, we will treat them as a presumed positive.

I. 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. Cy-Fair will announce this information on their website and Facebook page. As soon as the Center knows the school district decision regarding the weather it will be posted on the Preschools Facebook Page. You can find the Facebook page listed under Bright Beginners Preschool and Infant Care.

J. Fire Drills/Emergency Evacuations/ Lock Down Drills

Bright Beginners follows local regulations regarding such drills. Fire, severe weather drills and lock down drills are conducted monthly 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.

K. 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 childcare 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.

L. Emergency Preparedness Plan

Below is the Emergency Preparedness Plan designed for Bright Beginners Preschool. Parents are encouraged to read this information carefully. In the event a parent is present in the building during an emergency, Bright Beginners Preschool will ask parents to participate accordingly.

In all situations in this Emergency Preparedness Plan, "Director" refers to Kim. In the Director's absence, the Assistant Director on duty (Miriam or Shawna) assumes the role of Director and then designates another staff member to assume the responsibilities of the Assistant Director. In all situations in this Emergency Preparedness Plan, the Director or designated person in charge will notify Child Care Licensing and/or the Health Department and/or call 911 as each situation dictates. In all situations in this Emergency Preparedness Plan, the Director or designated person in charge may delegate any portion of his/her duties to other staff members, volunteers or emergency personnel as he/she deems necessary.

TORNADO/SEVERE WEATHER

- Stay calm. Watch the kids, not the situation.
- Teachers should bring their sign-in/out sheet, Emergency Binder and their flashlight.
- Children in the Preschool building rooms 1-6 will be seated along the wall outside of their classrooms.
- Children in the Preschool Building in rooms 7, 9, and 10 will go immediately with their lead teacher to the Big Room and be seated against the north wall and in the area by the floor into the Preschool hallway, with the door closed.
- Children in the Preschool Building room 11 will go into the girl's restroom and the children in room 8 will go into the boy's restroom.
- Infant classroom: Place your babies in two cribs and cover the top with a mattress from another crib. Place mattress sideways across top of the crib and huddle next to it. Role the cribs to the Narthex of the church and into the adult restrooms.
- Stay there until advised that the bad weather has passed.
- It can be helpful to quietly sing songs with the children to help them keep calm.
- The Director in charge will monitor local weather.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE OUTBREAK

- All staff members will vigilantly follow policies and procedures regarding diaper changes, toileting, hand-washing, food preparation and general common sense measures such as keeping surfaces clean, changing bedding, teaching children how to cover coughs and sneezes, etc., to prevent the spread of germs that cause illness in the first place.
- In the event of an outbreak, the Director, or person in charge, will notify the Health Department and Child Care Licensing to inform them of the situation and ask for instructions and guidelines to follow for specific illness or outbreak.
- The Director, or person in charge, will inform all staff members of instructions and guidelines and require them to follow the same.
- The Director, or person in charge, will also notify all parents about the situation in writing within 48-hours as required by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and Child Care Licensing.
- All staff is to follow the school's confidentiality policies when speaking of the above outbreak. Any violation of the confidentiality policy is grounds for immediate termination.

ACCIDENT

- Breathe and stay calm.
- Make sure all children are supervised. If you are alone, tell them to sit down near you.
- Comfort the child by speaking in a low, quiet voice.
- Apply first aid as needed.
- Call the office if you need further assistance and/or the Director, or person in charge to call 911.
- If the child is bleeding profusely, apply pressure to stop the bleeding. (In an extreme case, take off the child's shirt and use that.)
- If injury is to the head or face, report it to the office immediately - even if it is minor.
- Complete an Accident/Incident Report, have the Director sign it immediately, and have the parent sign it when the child is picked up.
- Turn the Accident/Incident Report in to the Director, or person in charge, before you leave on the same day.
- Keep the Accident/Incident Report confidential while in your presence.
- In the event of serious illness or injury involving an adult, contact the office and a Director, or the designated person in charge, will call 911 and/or the person's emergency contact.

ILLNESS

- Ask the child, "What doesn't feel good?"
- Contact the front office and have the child's temperature taken. If the fever is over 100 degrees, the Director, or person in charge, will contact the parent.
- If no fever, make the child comfortable and keep an eye on him.
- If the child complains of pain, ask him to point with one finger where it hurts the most and then investigate that spot for injury or discoloration and call the office.
- Light vomiting or mild diarrhea: If no pain, call the office after the third episode.

EXPLOSION, CHEMICAL SPILL OR GAS LEAK

That occurs INSIDE the facility

- See procedures for FIRE and OFF-SITE EVACUATION AND RELOCATION

That occurs OUTSIDE the facility

- Close doors and lock if possible.

- Turn off air conditioner/heater.
- Turn off lights, computers, TV, radio, CD player, aquarium pump or anything else that may cause a spark.
- Keep children seated on the floor and calm. Sing quiet songs or read stories.
- Be prepared to evacuate if told to do so by the Director, or person in charge, or emergency personnel.
- If you detect a strong odor, show the children how to lift up and breathe through their shirts.
- If told to evacuate, consider crawling to avoid strong fumes that are floating higher in the air. Ask for clarification, if time.

BOMB THREAT OR OTHER THREAT

- Write down everything the person says.
- Ask where the bomb is.
- Ask when the bomb (or other threat) will "go off" or "happen".
- Write that down, too.
- Notify Director, or person in charge, to call 911 immediately.

OFF-SITE EVACUATION AND RELOCATION

- Your primary responsibility is to keep the children safe.
- Keep your sign-in/out sheet and transition sheet in your hands or emergency backpacks.
- If time allows, gather children's diaper bags, bottles, baby formula/food, and coats.
- Children will be evacuated from oldest to youngest so that older children can assist with keeping children seated at the evacuation site. Depending on the situation, the city may also send transportation vehicles.
- The Director is responsible for keeping a charged cell phone with her and overseeing and directing the evacuation process. She is the last person to leave the building.
- The Assistant Director is responsible for taking the emergency binder (of permission slips and parent contact information), the first aid kit, emergency medication (i.e. insulin, EPI pens, asthma medications), and a charged cell phone and accompany the first vehicle to the evacuation site so that she can be in charge of the evacuation site.
- The Director and Assistant Directors are aware of each cell phone number.
- Evacuation and relocation site for Bright Beginners Preschool is The Church of Christ in Champions. 13902 Cutten Rd. Houston, Tx 77069.
- After all children and staff have been relocated to the evacuation site and are safe and have had all needs taken care of, the Director and Assistant Director will designate staff to contact parents and notify them of the situation.
- Staff members will continue to supervise and take care of the children including entertaining them with songs, stories, games, etc. at the evacuation site. Watch the kids, not the situation.
- The Assistant Director will continue to supervise and take care of the needs of the staff.
- The Director will be the contact person for emergency personnel and parents.
- The center's usual verification process for allowing adults to pick up children from the center will be used at the evacuation site. (i.e. only persons listed on the child's enrollment form as authorized to pick up will be allowed to do so after showing photo ID.)

FIRE

- When aware of fire or when alarm sounds, quietly say, "Fire drill boys and girls; line up at the door, please." This should be familiar to them since you say it every month when you practice monthly fire drills. Your primary responsibility is to get the children safely out of the building. Do not attempt to put out the fire unless it is between you and a child or preventing exit.
- Get your sign-in/out sheet and keep it with you.

- Make a quick head count.
- Make sure you have everyone.
- Infants: Place all of the children into the evacuation cribs. Infant rooms 1, 2, 3, and 11 all have evacuation cribs.
- Proceed to the proper fire exit and exterior meeting place as designated on the floor plan in the classroom. This is the same spot you take the children each month during your fire drill.
- Do a name/face check once you are outside and check it against your sign-in/out sheet and transition sheet. If anyone is missing, tell the Director, or person in charge, or a fire fighter immediately, but never leave the children unsupervised.
- The children must be safe (out of way of emergency vehicles and the fire) and supervised at all times. Watch out for anthills, broken glass and other hazards.
- Watch the kids, not the situation.
- The fire department, Director, or person in charge will tell you when you and the children can re-enter the building or begin off-site evacuation procedures.

FLOOD PLAN

When Flash Flood conditions are forecast, the following guidelines shall be used:

- Check the Cy-Fair School District for closings.
- If flooding begins to occur while children are in care parents will be contacted to safely pick up their children.
- The Director will monitor television, radio, and/or NOAA Weather Radio for forecast updates.
- Make transportation preparations to move children and staff members in the event that an evacuation is needed.
 - Safe Area to be evacuated to is Church of Christ in Campions
- Evacuation:
 - Evacuation is to follow the safest route possible (Listen to weather and news reports for routes) Maintain voice contact among staff members and ensure all children and staff members are accounted for.
 - If time and conditions permit, unplug all electrical appliances.
 - All loose outdoor articles are to be brought in or tied down.
 - Lock all doors.

(The full detailed Emergency Preparedness plan can also be found at the front of the Preschool Building)

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 cupcakes for a birthday treat. These treats may be given out during regular scheduled lunch or snack time. Please provide everything that is needed to serve the snack.

B. Special Activities

There will be class parties to help celebrate the holidays in the classroom. All parents are invited and welcomed to attend. Teachers will also ask for your assistance by bringing items to the party. Volunteer sign-up sheets will be posted on the individual class Shutterfly page.

When attending special events on campus please sign in at the front office before going to your child's classroom.

We do not take fields trips or have any form of transportation as a school.

C. Water Play

During the summertime the children will get to participate in splash days. These days will be scheduled in advance and on the school calendar. They will get to play in sprinklers and water tables. There will not be any pools of water.

VIII. PARENT-CENTER PARTNERSHIP

A. Communication

1. Communication with and About the School:

Parents are free to set up a time to discuss the school's policies, procedures, questions or concerns anytime with the director. You can call, email or stop by the office anytime.

- Preschool Office Number 281-469-2913
- Directors Email: Kim@stlhouston.org
- After Hours Emergencies: Kim's Cell Phone 832-326-5483
- Facebook Page: Bright Beginners Preschool and Infant Care
- Website: <http://www.stlhouston.org/bright-beginners/>

2. Newsletter

- A Center newsletter is distributed to all parents by means of your child's mailbox. The newsletter highlights current events along with other miscellaneous information. You can also find the newsletter on our website.
- Children in the preschool building will receive weekly lesson plans informing you of their activities for the week.

3. Child Mailbox

Each child has a folder used to receive Center mail and notes. Your child's mailbox will contain information from the Director, your child's teacher and their classroom work.
PLEASE CHECK YOUR CHILD'S MAILBOX DAILY.

4. "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.

5. 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 office assistant or the Assistant Director are also available to help answer any questions you have. The Center number is 281-469-2913.

B. Fundraisers

Several fundraisers are held during the year. Proceeds are used to purchase items that benefit the children that are over and above regular classroom purchases. 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. With everyone's help it can really make a difference. Collection boxes and product lists for Box Tops are at the sign in desks.

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.

3. Art Auction

This Fundraiser is typically held at the beginning of March and consist of a live and silent auction. The children will help create individual and group projects to be auctioned off. This event is combined with a Spaghetti dinner.

Child Abuse Reporting Law Requirements:

Bright Beginners Staff are REQUIRED by Texas State law and licensing requirements to report immediately to the police or Child Protective Services (CPS) any instance when there is reason to suspect the occurrence of physical, sexual, or emotional child abuse, child neglect, or exploitation. Our staff receive annual training on recognizing and preventing abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse.

Bright Beginners Preschool has made a commitment to help increase awareness and prevention techniques to employees and parents through trainings, memos and monthly newsletters. Bright Beginners Preschool will also coordinate with community organizations on strategies to prevent abuse and neglect. All staff are required to take annual training on prevention and awareness of abuse and neglect.

The staff may not notify parents when the police or CPS is called about possible child abuse, neglect, or exploitation, except on the recommendation of CPS or the police when they are called.

Some examples of abuse and neglect are: leaving a child in a vehicle unattended, not securing a child in a seat belt or booster seat, unexplained marks or bruises on opposite sides of the body, and child hygiene issues.

If parents feel they need assistance with possible child abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse, we encourage you to get help. Please call the National Parent Hotline at 1-855-427-2736 or visit www.helpandhope.org/find-help.html

The statewide Abuse & Neglect phone number is 1-800-252-5400, if you would like to report any suspected abuse or neglect.

Child Abuse Hotline: 1.800.252.5400

Feel free to review the Centers most recent inspection anytime. If is listed in the front of the school by the mailbox area. You can also contact the local licensing office by using the contact information below.

Texas Health and Human Services:

Child Care Licensing

1330 East 40th Street

Hhs.texas.gov

713.696.7147

1.800.252.5400

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

Bright Beginners Parent / Child Handbook Acknowledgment

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

Name(s) of Parent(s), first and last: _____

Tuition (page 6)

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 3rd day of the month. A \$25 late fee will be charged on the 4th day. An additional \$25 late fee will be charged on the 5th 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.

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 8)

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 8)

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 _____

Withdrawal from Program (page 9)

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

Parent Initial _____

Vacation Credit (page 8)

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 10)

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 _____

continued on the back side of this page

Child Release (page 16)

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 16)

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 16)

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 18)

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 18-19)

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