

Christ Lutheran Preschool Parent Handbook

Serving Children and Families in a Community of Faith

A ministry of Christ Lutheran Church
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
A Community of Faith, Reaching Out to Change Lives

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www.clpreschool.org

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Please note: The policies and procedures mentioned in this handbook may be adapted in the case of a public health or other local emergency. Parents will be notified of any changes to the policies and procedures herein via email communications and/or notifications by phone or posted on our website.

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Dear Families of Christ Lutheran Preschool,

Welcome to our preschool family! I so enjoy being with the children at our weekly Wednesday morning chapel as they sing, pray and hear Bible stories.

The preschool is a longstanding and valued ministry of our congregation, and we are pleased that you have chosen to send your child here. An important goal to me, our Church Council and the Preschool Ministry Team is to ensure that Christ Lutheran Preschool (CLP) remains a nurturing, faith-based environment that enriches your child's early development.

Please feel free to contact me with any positive and/or constructive feedback so that CLP can remain an excellent preschool for your family. The children and families of the preschool are an important part of our faith community, so please feel welcome to call on me or any ministry of the church if we can be of any help or support. I can be reached at the church office or via email for your feedback, to schedule a time to visit or for any pastoral need.

Thank you for entrusting us with the care of your child.

Christ's Blessings,

Pastor Benjamin Dueholm
pastorben@clcdallas.org

Christ Lutheran Church 3001 Lovers Lane • Dallas, Texas 75225 • 214-363-4355 www.clcdallas.org

“A Community of Faith, Reaching Out to Change Lives”

Dear Christ Lutheran Preschool Families,

Welcome to Christ Lutheran Preschool! On behalf of the administration and teachers, we are so glad you are here!

At Christ Lutheran Preschool, we offer a faith-filled environment where children can learn through a variety of age-appropriate activities. Your children will learn to be mobile by sitting, crawling, standing, walking, skipping, and running. They will learn to be verbal by cooing, babbling, forming words, talking in full sentences, reading, and writing. They will learn about friendships. They will love and be loved. They will learn to trust, have hopes and dreams, and have faith. They will learn to explore, to experiment and to take risks. They will have opportunities to appreciate art, dramatic play, music and nature. They will respect themselves and others. At Christ Lutheran, we will provide each child with an age-appropriate learning environment and help them to respect themselves and others through redirection, praise, encouragement and positive guidance. Most important of all, we share the love of God with them, and help them to share that love with others, and care for God's world.

The Preschool is accredited by the Evangelical Lutheran Education Association (ELEA) and is licensed by TX Health and Human Services Child Care Regulation. We follow all regulations mandated through and by Child Care Regulation, and we work to continue to meet the higher standards of the ELEA, providing a quality early learning program for all children enrolled. In addition, we are staffed with experienced, educated Christian teachers and assistants dedicated to Early Childhood Development.

We are looking forward to a rewarding year with your child! We want your child's early experiences to be happy ones that will grow into cherished memories.

Please feel that you can speak with me at any time. Through the collaboration and cooperation of parents and staff, we can develop a community dedicated to providing a rich and thoughtful school for young children.

We are honored that you have chosen us to care for and nurture your children and look forward to working together with you! May God be with us on this journey together!

Angela Camp, Director of Operations

Acamp@clcdallas.org

MISSION

Serving Children and Families in a Community of Faith

VISION

Families and their children are prepared to enter the next phase of their education.

VALUES

In all that we do, the Christ Lutheran Preschool will:

- provide a safe and caring environment
- teach the importance of God's love and Christian values
- promote the Preschool as a ministry of Christ Lutheran Church
- follow a professional and structured approach to stimulate young children
- encourage learning at the child's individual level of development
- foster a partnership between families, staff, and the church
- nurture the social, emotional, cognitive, physical and spiritual development of children

THE PHILOSOPHY OF CHRIST LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL

As a ministry of Christ Lutheran Church, we integrate faith throughout a child's day. Prayer, worship, and exposure to religious stories, songs, Bible verses, and symbols are an inherent aspect of our programming as well as Lutheran liturgy. Our ministry focuses on God's love and grace and a calling to share Christ's love and care with others. Classroom prayer during "Jesus Time" as well as daily Chapel time offer the children and their teachers the opportunity to pray together each day. All teachers, staff and children attend daily Chapel led by our school and church staff members. Parents are encouraged to join us to start their day with prayer!

At Christ Lutheran Preschool, we believe that children learn best through play experiences. Our use of the Frog Street Curriculum, combined with *O Come Let Us Worship* provides intentional learning experiences to encourage physical, social-emotional, aesthetic, cognitive, language and spiritual development within a loving and nurturing environment. Outdoor play is also an important part of our daily routine, and children are encouraged to observe, discover, initiate activity, and engage in hands on experiences in nature that sometimes results in getting messy!

We understand that all children come to our program with a unique set of skills they are trying to master. Our activities are presented in an open-ended, age-appropriate way to meet children at different skill levels. Our teachers are knowledgeable about developmental milestones and pay close attention to children's acquisition of new skills.

We balance our classroom schedules thoughtfully in order to offer age-appropriate group time, individual time with teachers, active play and quiet learning experiences. We are committed to offering children interesting activities throughout the day.

Parents are recognized and respected as the first and lifelong teachers of their children. We strive to work as partners with the parents who have entrusted their children to us and to support them in their efforts to provide an appropriate and spiritual educational foundation for their children.

To contact Christ Lutheran Church and the Preschool Ministry Team you may call 214-363-4355.

LICENSURE

Christ Lutheran Preschool is licensed by the state of Texas and complies with all Minimum Standards of the Texas Health and Human Services Child Care Regulation Division. You may view a copy of the minimum standards by accessing the Child Care Regulation website or upon request to administrative staff. Our most recent licensing report is available online and is also posted on the bulletin board in the hallway just past the front desk. You may contact the local licensing office at:

HHSC CCL Division-Dallas Office

8700 North Stemmons Freeway Suite 104

Dallas, Texas 75247

(214) 583-4253

(800) 582-6036

Texas Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline - 1-800-252-5400

website - <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/providers/protective-services/providers/child-care-regulation>

ACCREDITATION

Christ Lutheran Preschool is currently accredited by the Evangelical Lutheran Education Association (ELEA). To earn this distinction, the school completed a comprehensive self-study of the entire program and was inspected by a team of early educators. A requirement of maintaining accreditation is the submission of annual reports to the ELEA to demonstrate ongoing adherence to the high-quality standards expected of an accredited school.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Christ Lutheran Preschool does not discriminate based on gender, race, color, religion, or other national or ethnic origin in admittance, education, or other administrative policies and extends to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally made available to students at the school.

GANG FREE ZONE

Christ Lutheran Preschool is a "Gang Free" Zone. Please see the posting in the hallway leading to the gym stating that this campus is a Gang Free Zone.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Christ Lutheran Preschool is currently open from 7:30am until 5:30 pm, Monday-Friday, year-round. We will close for Holidays, Staff Professional Development Days, inclement weather and public emergencies. Please see the yearly calendar for details.

ENROLLMENT

ENROLLMENT ELIGIBILITY

We serve infants 2 months and up through Pre-K children. Our children are placed in classrooms based on their age/birthday, developmental needs, and the current spaces available in each classroom. Our program is inclusive and children with modification requirements will be served after the families have met with administration prior to enrollment and agreed upon those modifications which are in the best interest of the child. Modifications that may be needed after enrollment occurs will be reviewed by the family and administration to determine if CLP can meet the needs of the child. An accommodation plan will document any modifications agreed upon that will be implemented to meet the child's needs.

In our high-quality developmental program, a child will find challenges and an engaging curriculum in any classroom. Licensing regulations limit the number of children we put in a classroom, as does our commitment to providing high quality care with low teacher/child ratios that exceed minimum standards.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

Christ Lutheran Preschool admits students of any race, color, sex and national or ethnic origin who meet the school's criteria for admission. It applies its school-administered programs equally to all students. The school does reserve the right to first admit children

of CLP and CLC employees, siblings of currently enrolled students, and children from the CLC congregation, in line with our normal admission policies.

Registration is accepted in the following order:

1. Employees
2. Current families
3. Church members
4. Waiting list
5. Open

Members of Christ Lutheran Church

All members of Christ Lutheran Church have precedence when seeking enrollment if they are active in CLC activities, maintain regular worship attendance and tithing. A 10% discount is given to these families. A bi-yearly evaluation will be made by the Senior Pastor to make this determination.

Waiting List Application

Information regarding our wait list is available online on our website at www.clpreschool.org. Prospective families may submit an application online. The application is considered complete and the child is placed on the waiting list as of the date we receive the Waiting List Application and Fee of \$75 per child. We cannot guarantee if or when your child will be placed in our program. Classroom placement is based on birth dates, development, and space available. When open spots become available, priority is given to children of CLC/CLP employees, siblings of currently enrolled children and CLC members who are on the waiting list. While our waiting lists are in numerical order, we may call families out of order based on the birth dates of the children on the list in reference to slots available for the upcoming school year.

Enrollment to the School

Once you have been offered placement in the program, you must complete enrollment paperwork that includes a series of forms concerning health requirements, emergency information, and biographical information about your child. Appropriate non-refundable fees must be paid at the time of enrollment. **These forms and fees are required for enrollment.** If you are offered enrollment and fulfill the required enrollment process, your child will be placed on the enrollment list and also placed on a classroom roster. At that time, you will be taken off of the waiting list as that process has ended. If at any time before your child's first scheduled start date you should find that you no longer are in need of child care, we ask that you notify us as soon as possible. If you wish to go back on the Waiting List for possible future enrollment consideration, you must fill out another Waiting List Application and pay the application fee. You will be placed on the list according to the most current application date.

Our school operates year-round. The school year begins in late August each year. Enrollment for currently enrolled children, CLC/CLP employees, and congregation members for the upcoming year takes place in January. This is referred to as "Current Family Enrollment." Enrollment for new children for the upcoming year begins in February. This is referred to as "Open Enrollment." Please plan accordingly for annual fees to be due at this time. There will be no extensions given.

Each enrollment period, you will be required to update our current enrollment packet, as this information frequently can change. Your child will not be able to attend school if his or her enrollment packet is not fully complete. You can find a link to the enrollment packet on our website at www.clpreschool.org under the Parent Resources section.

Immunizations/Health Statement/Allergy Plans

The Department of State Health Services requires that your child has all of his or her recommended immunizations prior to the first day of attending class. Each time your child receives new immunizations, please provide an updated copy to the front desk staff. If our records indicate that your child is not current on their immunizations, your child will not be permitted to attend school until we have received appropriate documentation. As a condition of continued enrollment, it is expected that your child will remain current on the immunizations required for school attendance, as determined by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

A child may be exempt from immunization requirements for a medical reason or reason of conscience, including a religious belief. To claim an exemption, the parent applying for the child's admission must meet criteria specified by the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) rule at 25 TAC §97.62. Children who have an approved exemption from immunizations but cannot meet health and safety requirements required to attend during an outbreak will be excluded from care until they meet the requirements or the outbreak has ended.

An annual statement of health, signed by your child's health care provider, is also required. Any allergies or medical needs must be reported on the enrollment form, (or as they are diagnosed) and an allergy plan completed and signed by the child's health care provider. This allergy plan is to be updated at least annually, or immediately if any changes occur.

TUITION AND FEES

Tuition and fees are paid through Vanco bank drafts which may be set up online. Visit our website under Parent Resources to locate the "Pay Tuition and Fees" button.

Enrollment Fee: \$100

This non-refundable fee is payable when you first enroll your child in our Center. This fee will be charged again if your child drops from the program and returns at a later date.

Registration fee: \$400

This non-refundable fee is paid annually in January or when enrollment is first accepted, for the upcoming school year, August to August. This fee covers the cost of art and learning materials, special activities, furniture, food and other supplies.

Tuition

Tuition is due the first of each month from August-July, in advance of services rendered and is non-refundable.

Please refer to our Tuition and Fees List on our Parent Resources page of our website for current tuition charges.

We make every effort to provide a program that is of great value for our children and families, while making improvements to the environment and program, and meeting increases in operating costs and teacher wages. We strive to keep our tuition as low as possible for the families we serve.

Tuition rates are subject to change at any time in order to keep a safe and sustainable environment for Christ Lutheran Preschool children, teachers, and staff.

Early Withdrawal:

If for some reason you must withdraw your child prior to the end of the school year, we ask that you provide us with a 30-day notice, if possible.

Late Fees:

You will be charged a late fee of \$100 if your account has a balance of any amount as of the 2nd of each month, regardless of child absence, family vacations, holidays, or notification of late payment. Late fees will continue to accrue monthly if there is a balance on the account.

The following steps will be taken to address families who have not adhered to their payment plan:

- At 3 working days, families will receive an invoice reflecting the amount delinquent.
- At 10 working days, families will receive a letter from the Director with a current invoice reflecting the amount past due including late fees accrued.
- At 3 weeks, families will be contacted by the Preschool Ministry Team and will be informed that enrollment will be terminated at a specified date if payment arrangements satisfactory to the Preschool Ministry Team have not been made.

Bank Fees:

A fee for returned Vanco payments in the amount of \$25 may be charged in addition to the fee for late tuition. In the event that a family has a returned payment more than once due to insufficient funds, all subsequent payments must be made by money order in advance of services.

Tuition Discount:

Families with more than one child enrolled full-time receive a 5% tuition discount. Discounts do not apply to fees. CLC/CLP employees receive a discount according to established policies in the employee handbook. Members of Christ Lutheran Church in good standing, which includes regular worship, tithing by financially contributing to the Church, and active engagement in the life of the Church ministry, receive a 10% tuition discount. Sibling discounts will not be added in addition to employee or Church Member discounts.

COMING TO SCHOOL

ARRIVAL

Our school is currently open from 7:30 am-5:30 pm Monday through Friday with the exception of scheduled days closed or other emergency situations. Early morning care may take place in a limited number of classrooms from 7:30 am to 8:00 am. Beginning at 8:00 am, children will move to their regular classrooms.

Parents will have access to the building using a door code between 7:30-9 am. Parents may not share their door code with others. Do not allow anyone that you do not know into the building. There are security cameras in place throughout the building that are monitored during preschool operating hours.

Parents must sign their child into the classroom on the iPad provided using their ProCare PIN.

In accordance with Texas Health and Human Services Child Care Licensing Division, if your child is too sick to participate in regular school activities, including coming to school on time and outdoor play, he or she is too sick to come to school. Upon arrival, a brief *Wellness Check* will be made by the greeting teacher. If your child is showing signs of any type of illness, a member of administration will be asked to determine if the child can remain at school, in accordance with requirements through the Texas Health and Human Services Child Care Licensing Division. Please see the section on Health later in this handbook for details on this subject.

We ask that your child arrives ready to begin school activities. Please be sure that your child has breakfast and is finished eating before arriving. Outside food and beverages are not permitted in the classrooms. Morning snack is served in each classroom. Please check your child's classroom schedule regarding morning snack time so you can plan accordingly.

Our structured learning activities begin at 8:30 AM. All children are expected to arrive by this time. Giving your child a few moments in the classroom before regular instruction has begun helps them adjust to the environment, greet their peers and be welcomed by their teachers. When children come late, the entire classroom's learning can be disrupted, and late-arriving children may miss out on important information that prepares them for their day of learning as well as the week and months to come.

All classes will attend Chapel at 9 am. If for some reason your child must arrive late, between 9am-9:15, during Chapel, staff will not be available to come to the door. Children who arrive after 9 am will be accepted inside at 9:15.

Please avoid drop off and pick up during naptime between 12:30 and 2:30. We encourage appointments, such as doctor visits, to be made in the afternoon so as to be less disruptive to your child and their classroom. If your child will arrive after 11:30, you must feed them lunch prior to arrival.

Infants in the Chicklet, Sparrow and Bluebird rooms who arrive before 8 am should arrive fed, with a clean diaper and dressed for the day.

DISMISSAL

Christ Lutheran Preschool offers great flexibility in the length of your child's day. We ask that children be picked up at transition times during the day to avoid interruptions to the class. Please refer to your child's classroom schedule, which will be sent in your welcome packet.

Our structured activities in all classrooms end at 4:30, when lead teachers leave. Evening care begins with informal activities as children and staff prepare to go home. Evening care may take place from 4:30 pm to 5:30 pm in designated classrooms.

Because dismissal is a critical time, we will need a means of identifying the pick-up person. Children will be released only to the authorized adults, 18 years or older, listed on your child's enrollment forms. It is your responsibility to notify the center and complete new forms if there are any changes to your authorized pick-up list. Please alert relatives and friends who are picking up your children about our arrival and dismissal policy and that we will ask for proper photo identification.

In order to maintain the safety of our children, you must notify the office if your child is to be picked up by someone other than yourself even if they are on your pick up list. You will need the person's driver's license number for identification. If notification is made by phone, and we do not recognize your voice and/or caller ID, we may ask you to provide your driver's license number.

We will not release a child unless we have your permission. The person picking up your child will be asked for proper identification in the form of government-issued picture ID. The name must match the name on the child's emergency form or alternate pick-up form.

In the case of separated or divorced parents, the law stipulates that we cannot prevent either parent from picking up the child. We must release a child to either parent regardless of which parent has enrolled the child. If there is a court order, we must retain a copy in our files.

Pick Up Procedures

Parents will park and pick children up at the classroom door. Access codes will permit entry into the building between 3-5:30 pm.

Please use the marked entrance and exit driveways in the parking lot. Be aware of others who may be entering, exiting, or walking to their cars. Do not leave purses or other valuables in your car.

When at the classroom door, please keep greetings to the classroom teacher brief to allow the teacher to supervise all of the children in the classroom appropriately. Parents must sign their children out on the iPad provided using their ProCare PIN.

Please refrain from allowing children to play in the courtyard and front grass areas as there are no fenced barriers to the parking lot and street.

Please make every effort to arrive at the school no later than 5:20 pm. This will allow for time for you to be at the classroom door, get your child's things, and have a brief conversation with staff before 5:30 when we close. If you arrive after 5:20 please refrain from conversations that will delay our teachers from completing closing tasks. You are welcome to schedule a conference at any time to discuss your child's progress.

In the event of an emergency, we ask that you contact the school as soon as possible. Proper arrangements will need to be made for staff to remain after their required shift is over.

If a child still remains at the school at 5:30 pm closing and there has been no contact from a family member, the staff will take the following measures:

1. Try to contact you by phone.
2. If there is no answer, we will call your emergency contacts until someone is reached
3. If unsuccessful after 30 minutes, we are mandated by law to contact Child Protective Services and local law enforcement authorities.

Additionally, there will be a late charge should you leave your child at the school past 5:30 pm. Charges of \$10 per minute, per child, will be accrued until the child has been picked up. If late pick-up occurs three times in thirty days, all late pick-up charges will be doubled for the next thirty days.

Payment for late pick up charges will be added to your account and are to be paid separately through a one-time Vanco payment within one week in order to avoid a late fee to your account.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Our Preschool is licensed and staffed for Well Children only. Staff will monitor the health of the children upon arrival and throughout the day. Children who are mildly ill (e.g., minor cold symptoms) may remain at the center only with an Administrator's approval. Children should be fully able to participate in all activities of the day, including prompt arrival and outdoor play. If your child is too ill to go outside to play, eat, or participate normally in all activities, then your child is too sick to attend school.

We do not serve children who have:

- An oral temperature at or above 101 degrees, or a forehead, tympanic or axillary temperature at or above 100 degrees during the previous 24 hours
- A skin rash that has not been identified by a phone call or in writing from a physician who has seen the rash
- Diarrhea and/or vomiting two or more times in 24 hours
- Evidence of head lice or other parasites
- Severe coughing
- Rapid or difficult breathing
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Conjunctivitis
- Sore throat or difficulty swallowing
- Stiff neck
- Infected skin patches
- Pain or other condition of which the child complains and interferes with normal activity
- Evidence of infection
- Excessive fatigue
- A moist or open cold sore

Parents will be notified if your child develops symptoms listed above. We make every effort to reach the parents when a child is ill, but if we are unable to do so after 30 minutes, we will contact the emergency contacts indicated by the parents.

If you are notified that your child is ill, we ask that you come to pick your child up as soon as possible, as children with symptoms of a communicable disease must be isolated from the group with a staff member until the parent or designated representative arrives for the child.

Children may be readmitted:

- A. With a physician's statement that the child is free from communicable disease and that returning poses no risk to the child or others, as well as the diagnosis in order for us to communicate with other parents in the classroom as mandated by the Health Department and Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.
- B. If visibly free from communicable disease, fever free without use of fever-reducing medications for 1 full day following the dismissal for illness, and free of vomiting/diarrhea for 1 full day following the dismissal for illness and on a normal diet.

Please notify the school at once if your child *does* have a communicable disease (i.e. Covid-19, flu, strep throat, chicken pox, fifth's disease, head lice, hand, foot and mouth disease, measles, etc.). We are required by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services to report certain communicable diseases to the Department of Health as well as the staff and other families who have been exposed. The identity of the infected person is kept confidential.

All staff are trained in CPR and First Aid procedures. Minor injuries will be dealt with according to first aid training and a written report will be available for your review and signature. In case of injuries/illnesses that require medical attention, we will make an immediate attempt to contact a parent. An Incident/Illness report will be filled out. If we can't reach you or your emergency person, we will call the child's physician. If necessary, we will call an ambulance. Until the arrival of a parent, physician, or ambulance, the Director or the designated person in charge will make all decisions about the care of the child.

If your child arrives with scrapes, bruises, or bumps which have occurred while not in our care, you are asked to bring this to our attention so that we can provide appropriate care if needed and note this in our daily wellness check.

We want to provide the best care possible for your child. If your child has a diagnosed special need or illness requiring accommodations, please inform the Preschool Administration Team prior to enrollment or upon learning of the condition so that we may discuss the capability of our staff to care for your child appropriately.

Medication

Please inform your physician that your child is in full-day preschool and that you prefer to give medications at home, morning and evening. Knowing this many doctors will order longer acting medications. Limiting medications dispensed away from home prevents medication errors. Please remember CLP is designed for **well** children.

Medication is given only if parents fill out and sign a permission form that is provided by the front desk. We will not dispense fever-reducing medications.

Prescription and non-prescription medication must be in the original container labeled with:

- child's name
- date it was brought into the center
- dosing amount and directions
- physician's name (prescription medication)

We will document each dose of medication administered. We must follow the instructions given on the labels for both prescription and non-prescription medications. Any variance in the label (prescription or over the counter) must be approved in writing by a doctor. If label requirements do not meet the age and weight of the intended child, written instructions from the child's doctor must accompany the medication. This includes oral and topical medications.

Due to possible allergic reactions: we do not dispense first doses of medications that a child has not previously taken.

Christ Lutheran Preschool reserves the right not to be responsible for dispensing medication.

Sunscreen

We provide DEET free, non-aerosol sunscreen and insect repellent. Parents are asked to apply sunscreen/insect repellent in the morning before coming to school and we apply it in the afternoon before going outdoors. Parents sign giving their permission for this and may provide an alternate product if desired by contacting administration.

Infant Safe Sleep

All parents of infants are provided information regarding safe sleep. This information is provided in the Appendix at the end of this handbook.

Hearing and Vision Screening

Hearing and Vision screening results must be on file for all children who turn 4 by September 1. Parents must submit documentation from their own provider.

Water Activities

Water activities, including ~~Splash Day~~, indoor and outdoor water table activities and Mud Kitchen play, are provided regularly. None of these water activities require children to swim.

Outdoor Play/Physical Activity

Outdoor play provides for greater freedom and flexibility, fuller expression through loud talk, and a greater range of active movement. Outdoor play also extends opportunities for large muscle development, social-emotional development, and small muscle development by offering variety, challenge, and complexity in ways that are not attainable in a confined indoor space.

We offer a minimum of two daily opportunities for outdoor play, weather permitting, in which a child makes use of both small and large muscles. If extreme weather conditions prohibit or limit outdoor play, children will use the gym area for physical activity. Extreme weather is recognized as any weather event that requires shelter from elements recommend by the local weather service or any weather event administration deems unsafe for regular participation of outdoor play.

Infants up to 12 months of age may engage in outdoor play for an amount of time as tolerated by the children.

Infants 13 months through 17 months, toddlers, preschool and pre-kindergarten age children engage in outdoor play for a minimum of 60 total minutes daily.

We provide a balance of active and quiet play that incorporates group and individual activities, both indoors and outdoors, which includes a minimum of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play for toddlers and a minimum of 90 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play for preschool and pre-kindergarten age children.

Physical activities take place mainly in the outdoor classroom or gym areas but may also be provided in the classroom or narthex area of the church.

We offer Stretch and Grow Music and Fitness programs that provide teacher led physical activities that develop and enhance fine and gross motor and school readiness skills in young children. Each class is offered once per week for 30 minutes for our preschool and pre-kindergarten classrooms.

Children should wear comfortable clothing that allows for easy movement and closed toe shoes for safety every day. Tennis shoes are recommended.

Outdoor play activities occur daily for all classrooms, except during storms or dangerous conditions. This includes periods of light rain, cold, wind, and heat. Teachers monitor children's comfort levels and adjust time spent outdoors accordingly. Please be sure that your child has clothing, such as a raincoat, warm coats or jackets, mittens, and galoshes appropriate for outdoor play in various weather conditions to allow for their comfort outdoors. **Children's comfort level is always a guide in determining the amount of time spent outdoors if weather conditions require a change of schedule.**

PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING EMERGENCIES

In case of minor injury or accident, the staff will administer basic first aid and refer to the Emergency Preparedness Guide. In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation or other response, staff will follow the procedures detailed in the Emergency Preparedness Guide.

If we should have to relocate for any reason, such as a gas leak, we will transport the children to St. Christopher's Montessori School at 7900 Lovers Lane on the corner of Central Expressway (US 75) and Lovers Lane. Their phone number is 214-363-9391. If for any reason we are not able to relocate to St. Christopher's, a location will be posted on the door of the school and parents will be notified of the children's whereabouts through the One Call System as soon as possible.

All staff/employees will remain with their assigned children during an emergency while family/guardian/emergency contacts are notified, and arrangements are made for their pickup. Staff will provide activities (such as games, songs or stories) to keep the children calm and busy. We will have a supply of diapers, formula, water and food to provide the children as needed.

Parents will be notified of the children's whereabouts and will be updated as feasible through the One Call System. Parents will be encouraged to pick up their child, either at the evacuation site or at the Preschool as soon as safely possible. Parents must sign their children out as usual when picking them up. In the event parents are unable to pick up their children, CLP will remain open, and the children will be cared for until picked up by their parent/legal guardian or designated person (with proper identification).

All personnel will receive orientation and training in his or her responsibilities within the plan annually.

Each child will receive training concerning emergency evacuation procedures and will participate in monthly drills.

SCHOOL CLOSING

If weather or other conditions cause school to be cancelled or open late, you will be notified by email. We will also use our mass call system, One Call Now. Parents are automatically added to the One Call Now system upon enrollment. If contacted through this system, which shows as a call from the preschool on caller ID, please listen to the message before calling the school back, so lines may remain open in the event of an emergency. We carefully consider the conditions around us and use the closings of the Dallas Independent School District and/or the Highland Park School District as a guide for our decision. Please understand that decisions to close the school for the day due to weather are made very thoughtfully, keeping in mind the safety of families and staff as well as parents' need to go to work. If you do not feel it is safe to bring your child to school, please stay at home.

PANDEMIC OR OTHER DISASTROUS EVENTS

During an outbreak of contagious illness or other unexpected disastrous event, CLP will follow the recommendations and requirements of federal, state, county and local authorities and may close, reopen, and resume closure for varying periods of time in consideration for the health and safety of our preschool community. Tuition may continue to be charged in full or may be discounted during periods of closure. Special policies and procedures and adjustment of operating hours may be implemented for the health and safety of all and to allow for program continuity. Parents will be notified of temporary or long-term changes to policies and procedures due to pandemic or other disastrous events as they occur via email updates.

DAILY PROCEDURES

FOOD

WE ARE A PEANUT FREE FACILITY

Mid-morning snack, afternoon snack and a well-balanced noon meal, along with the daily recommended servings of water and milk, are offered to all of the children daily. Menus are posted on our website.

Please be sure that your child has breakfast and is finished eating before arriving. Morning snack is served in each classroom. Please check your child's classroom schedule regarding morning snack time so you can plan accordingly.

Snacks brought from home for the children to share are not permitted.

Infants

Because very young children require individualized meals, parents in the Chicklet, Sparrow and Bluebird room should bring snacks, meals and liquids for our staff to serve until the child is eating table food. All bottles (and lids) and food must be labeled with the child's first and last name and sent to school in disposable Ziploc bags also labeled with the child's first and last name. Please do not send diaper bags. Parents must provide written feeding instructions that are signed and dated by the parent or health care professional. Feeding instructions must be reviewed and updated by the teachers and parents every 30 days until the infant is able to eat table food. Strong communication between the Sparrow and Bluebird room teachers and the parents will determine the start time of table food provided from our menu.

Family-Style Meals

All children in our Duckling through Cardinal classes eat the family-style meal provided by our caterer, unless arrangements have been made through the CLP administration.

Substitutions

If a substitution is required, it must be due to a medical or religious requirement. Appropriate documentation must be provided explaining the required substitution. If a substitution of food is approved, The Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers has a specific requirement regarding substitution of food for meals and snacks. In signing the Parent Handbook Compliance form, you are acknowledging the following rule:

If the parent is choosing to provide the child's meals and/or snacks from home, the parent understands the school is not responsible for its nutritional value or for meeting the child's daily food needs.

Should your child require a replacement for any food item, please bring the item in a regular lunch box with an appropriate ice pack and place it in your child's cubby. We are not able to store alternate food items in our school refrigerator, and teachers are not able to leave the room to heat food. Food items made with peanut products are not allowed.

BIRTHDAYS

Children's birthdays are special days. Each class will acknowledge a child's birthday by encouraging the birthday child to make a special crown or badge. Please do not send birthday treats, or bring gifts, balloons or treat bags. Due to the fact that we are a peanut free facility and want to promote healthy snacks, we will celebrate the child's birthday by singing "Happy Birthday" during our regular afternoon snack time, while enjoying the regular afternoon snack together.

Birthdays may also be celebrated by donating a book to our library. Your child's teacher may provide ideas for books that support our curriculum and pique the interest of our children. We encourage a family member to come and read the book to your child's class for the first time; this may be done during our afternoon birthday celebration.

SCHOOL PARTIES

We may plan parties for certain holidays such as Christmas, and Valentine's Day as well as special events to coincide with our curriculum. These parties will be held during school hours and will be kept simple. The Preschool will provide all snacks for these events. Parents may be asked to provide special cups, plates, napkins or other items and will be notified in advance if there is a need.

TEACHER GIFTS

Our teachers and staff are very appreciative of the special treats that families bring for them. Please check with administration before making plans to bring gifts or treats for staff. Outside food and beverages are not permitted in the classrooms and must be left at the front desk.

Gift giving to CLP staff, for occasions such as birthdays and Christmas, is at the sole discretion of the contributor. CLP has the right to limit gifts if issues arise.

DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE

Teachers may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control and self-direction as well as constructive relationships with others.

One of the goals of Christ Lutheran Preschool is to help children gain Christian attitudes. They are taught that happy Christian living requires them to love one another, serve one another, and respect the rights and privileges of one another. These concepts are taught within the *O Come Let Us Worship* curriculum and through [Conscious Discipline](#).

When children act in opposition to these ideals, current research and NAEYC standards on young children will be our guide in evaluating their actions and in determining appropriate discipline. In the classroom, the teacher is the sole disciplinarian. Teachers will permit actions acceptable for certain levels of growth, redirect actions whenever necessary, facilitate identifying emotions and finding alternatives and, finally, stop any behavior that interferes with learning activities, actions or well-being of other children or safety. The following steps are to be followed when trying to help a child handle a difficult situation:

- Children will be encouraged to resolve their own conflicts. Support is provided to help them identify their feelings (e.g., "I'm angry") and work together to develop and try a variety of solutions.
- Children will be reminded of the center's rules/classroom commitments in a positive manner ("You can walk inside and run outside").
- Children will have the situation explained ("After you pick up the blocks you may play with the puzzle").
- Children will be given a choice ("Keep the water in the water table or you will have to pick a different area").
- If a child becomes upset, he or she will be invited to visit the Safe Place in the classroom, with an adult if needed, in order to gain composure.
- If a child is endangering the safety of another child, he or she will have the situation explained with emotions expressed ("He really was scared--that hurt him") and will be invited to visit the Safe Place in the classroom, with an adult if needed, in order to gain composure.
- Disciplinary guidelines are administered consistently with each individual, appropriate to the child's level of understanding and directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control. CLP Staff will never use physical punishment and do not engage in psychological abuse or coercion.
- If inappropriate behavior continues, which presents a danger to classmates, teachers or self, (biting, hitting, etc.), the Director will be notified, and certain actions may be taken.
- Teachers will document occurrences of the behavior in order to assess the function of the behavior and determine appropriate modifications.
- The child may lose privileges by being temporarily removed from the group and activity. The child may be placed in a designated area under the supervision of a staff member.
- The parents will be notified by a phone call or an incident report if there are serious or persistent behavior problems, uncontrollable behaviors, or dangerous behaviors that present harm to the children or staff.
- Parents may be asked to conference with the Director and teacher about the child's behaviors and work together with an individualized plan to find a solution. Positive behavior strategies will be identified for use at home and school. Teachers will communicate regularly with parents regarding the outcome of strategies that are implemented.
- The Director may ask a child to be temporarily removed from the school for a specific period of time if the child commits a serious offense.
- A child may be removed permanently from the school if serious behavior problems persist. Removal is at the discretion of the Director.

Exclusionary measures are not considered until all possible interventions have been exhausted. CLP will assist the family in accessing services and identifying an alternative placement.

CLOTHING

Our children are very active learners and require appropriate clothing that encourages their exploration and activity. Washable play clothes with no difficult fasteners are the most suitable for daily wear. **For safety and comfort when in the outdoor classroom, we do not allow cowboy boots, sandals, or flip flops. "Croc"-style shoes have also been found to be very dangerous in the woodchip area of the outdoor classroom and should only be worn for summer water play.** A change of clothes, underwear and socks must be kept in a large Ziploc bag with the child's name clearly marked. Children who are toilet training will need multiple pairs of clothing and shoes. Please dress your child to suit our weather, including layers that can be removed as necessary. We go outside daily in all sorts of weather, with the exception of storms or dangerous conditions. Be sure that all belongings are labeled with your child's full name.

ACCESSORIES

Jewelry, bracelets, necklaces, and dangled earrings are not allowed. These items could be broken during activities. The pieces would then pose a choking hazard for our younger children. Hats, gloves, galoshes and winter scarves may be worn only outside during cold weather. These items may not be worn in the classrooms.

DIAPERS

Parents provide all diapers, wipes and ointments needed for diapering your child. Please label each of your child's diapers with their initials prior to bringing them to school. You will be notified through your child's daily report if the teachers are low on any of these items. Please replenish the item quickly. In the event your child is completely out of supplies, a \$25 fee will be charged for each day the school is required to furnish those supplies.

PACIFIERS

In order to encourage language development, children in classes above the Duckling room should not come to school with pacifiers in their mouths. If the child is still using these items, they should be labeled with the child's first and last name and placed in a Ziploc bag labeled with the child's first and last name before entering the school. If the child needs the item at naptime, they may be retrieved by the teacher and then put away after nap.

TOYS

Our classroom learning materials and books have been chosen with great care to provide the highest quality learning environment. Our school does not use toys that promote aggressive play or that are intended to market television or movies to children. Toys from home are not allowed as they deter from academic programming and create unnecessary conflicts between children.

TOILET TRAINING

We look forward to assisting your child in learning to use the toilet. At our program we see toilet training as a skill your child will learn gradually. Children need lots of help at first and then gradually are able to do more and more themselves. This is our goal: your child will be able to handle toileting all by himself. This means that your child will be actively participating in toilet training; we will not be doing everything for him. This is usually a good fit for toddlers because they want to be independent and are trying to do more and more for themselves.

Please use the following information as a guide to determine your child's readiness for toilet training. When you are considering taking this step, please notify CLP Administration to arrange for a meeting with your child's teacher to ensure that practices align and that this will be a smooth process for you and your child.

Readiness for toilet training

Children develop muscles and bladder capacity to begin the toilet training process between the ages of 18 and 24 months. The following signs indicate that a child may be ready to begin toilet training:

- Your child's diapers are dry for at least two hours at a time.
- Your child knows and can let an adult know when he is wet or has a bowel movement.
- Your child tells you or indicates that he is uncomfortable in wet or soiled diapers.
- Your child can sit upright for five minutes.
- Your child can undress enough to sit on the toilet.
- Your child is able to get himself to the toilet.
- Your child follows simple directions.

- Your child answers simple yes-and-no questions.
- Your child imitates others – parents, caregivers, or other children.
- Your child trusts and feels comfortable with the adults who care for him.
- Your child shows pride, joy or excitement when he learns new skills.

At times there are special circumstances that can affect your child's readiness, such as recent changes in the household (serious illness, new baby, moving, parental separation) or a change in school. In these cases, you may decide to wait for a time or proceed carefully. Your child will be more successful if you as parents know what to expect during the toilet training process. And communication with your child's teachers is crucial. You must be willing and able to devote time and attention to helping the child learn to use the toilet.

Clothing for toilet training

When your child is ready to begin toilet training, you will want to make sure that they have clothes that make this process as easy as possible for them. Especially at the beginning, the time between when your child realizes that they need to use the toilet and when they do will be very, very short. They will not have time to struggle with their clothes. Being able to take their own clothes off and to go when they need to without assistance is very important. Toilet training cannot become a self-help skill if the child can only accomplish it when an adult is available to undo buttons, snaps, and buckles.

We have included a list of clothes to help your child during toilet training. We have also included a list of clothes that could make things very difficult. As your child begins learning to use the toilet, we recommend thickly padded training pants. As they experience success, you can switch to thinner underwear with plastic pants and then to thinner underwear by itself.

We will change your child whenever he is wet or has a bowel movement. We will never allow him to remain in wet or soiled clothes. This means we will be doing a lot of changing and will need a lot of extra clothes! We will need at least five pairs of training pants, three pairs of socks, three pairs of pants, and extra shoes available at all times.

Clothing that will help children master toilet training

- **Elastic-waist, loose-fitting pants**

We recommend these pants over those with buttons or snaps because they are easy for children to pull up and down by themselves.

- **Waist-length undershirts**

Longer undershirts interfere with the toileting process.

- **Thickly padded cotton training pants**

Use thickly padded training pants when toilet training starts. They absorb better when children have accidents, and children can pull them up and down themselves.

- **Regular underwear**

As children experience success, allow them to wear underwear. Children can easily pull the underwear up and down themselves; they also give immediate feedback when children have accidents. Underwear is not a reward for learning to use the toilet; it should be considered one of the tools.

- **Lots of extra clothes including training pants, extra pants, socks, and shoes**

We want to be able to clean children up as quickly as possible and with as little fuss as possible. Children must never be forced to stay in clothes that are wet or have a bowel movement in them.

Clothing that makes toilet training difficult for children

- **Bib overalls or pants with belts, buckles, snaps, or buttons**

Many toddlers may not have the fine-motor skills or the finger strength to unfasten these on their own.

- **Tight-fitting pants**

Many toddlers may not have the strength, patience, or coordination to pull them down. If they get wet, many adults may not have the strength, patience or coordination to pull them off.

- **One-piece outfits and jumpsuits**

One-piece outfits require a lot of time to get off. Some of the jumpsuits that snap in the crotch, but not all the way down the legs, are especially difficult to get out of.

- **Onesie-type undershirts or bodysuits**

Many toddlers cannot unsnap these shirts. In addition, the long backs frequently fall in the toilet and get wet. Children may feel that they have failed because their clothes got wet.

- **Dresses, skirts, and tights**

Toileting can be difficult when little girls try to use one hand to hold the dress or skirt up and have only one hand available to pull down underwear. Tights are usually difficult to pull down and seem especially difficult to pull back up. Skirts can work if they can be pulled down easily like slacks.

- **Pull-up type disposable diapers**

Disposable, pull-up type diapers are marketed as a type of underwear that is especially good for toilet training. They may be designed to look like underwear but they function like a diaper, making it very hard for toddlers to feel when they are wet. Toddlers then have a difficult time making the connection between the feeling of a full bladder and the need to use the toilet.

PARENT AND SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

VISITING OUR SCHOOL

You may visit our center at any time during the hours of operation to see your child, our school's operation, and program activities without having to secure prior approval. As a courtesy, you may notify the child's classroom teacher or Director for the most suitable observation time.

NURSING MOTHERS

With an open-door policy, we at Christ Lutheran encourage visits at any time, especially those mothers who are breast feeding. We have made special provisions for you to have that special time in our Church Parlor located at the top of the stairs in the Dublin Road hallway located directly through the gymnasium.

PARENT VOLUNTEERING

We welcome and encourage volunteer help from our parents. We believe that you will better understand both your child and the school's educational program when you are actively involved in the life of the school. From time to time we may have special needs that we will let you know about. We encourage parents to visit one or more classrooms to share professions, hobbies or talents, or to read to the children. Please let us know if you are interested in participating and enriching our program in this way.

COMMUNICATION

Our school communicates important information to you in various ways throughout the year:

- **Daily reports** – Parents of all children in the Chicklet, Sparrow, Bluebird and Duckling classrooms receive daily information regarding feeding, sleeping, diapering, temperament and activities through Pro Care.
- **Pro Care communications from all classrooms:** Photos of children's activities, messages pertaining to classroom activities, and classroom reminders will be sent regularly through Pro Care.
- **Weekly Newsletter**– All families receive school updates including information regarding policy changes and upcoming events through our newsletter delivered by email at least once per week. Additional updates will be sent as needed, so please check your email regularly.
- **Reminders and Surveys** via email
- **Policy Updates**—If updates are made to this Handbook, you will be notified through our weekly newsletter delivered through email. The current handbook will also be posted on our website at www.clpreschool.org.
- **Website**—General information, parent handbook, calendar, menu, payment information and more may be found at www.clpreschool.org.
- **Emergency Notifications** will be sent via One Call Now (phone/voicemail) and the newsletter via email.

Our primary method of communication is through email and by phone. If your email address or your phone number changes during the school year, it is your responsibility to notify the school office immediately. Our dedicated email address, which is checked throughout the day, is cdcstaff@clcdallas.org.

MEDIA

CLP may use classroom and individual images for use in the school, the Web and Facebook, as well as other appropriate media. Each child must have a permission letter on file to be included or not included in the publications.

CLP reserves the right to use camera and video equipment throughout the building.

Families may photograph or film during special school events. Please keep this in mind when choosing to let your child participate. CLP is not responsible for monitoring photos and filming at special events.

CONFERENCES

Communication between parent and teacher is essential in caring for your child. Parent conferences are scheduled twice a year, in Fall and in Spring. You will be notified of your opportunity to schedule a conference in advance through a SignUP Genius link published in the newsletter. Your child's assessment will be emailed to you prior to the conference.

Should your child have concerning or disruptive behavior in the classroom, you may be required to attend an additional conference. If there is a need for a conference with your child's teacher at any time, please notify the front desk to set up an appointment.

Parent Code of Conduct

It is the mission of our school to keep all of our students safe and secure. As young children are present in our building, some adult language is not appropriate. Swearing or cursing is prohibited.

Threatening staff, children, or other parents will not be tolerated per the Texas Health and Human Services Child Care Regulation. Christ Lutheran Preschool has the right to terminate care in the event of disruptive behavior from a parent or guardian. CLP must follow particular rules on discipline and guidance as outlined in the Texas Minimum Standard for Child Care Centers. All adults including parents must follow these rules while on the Church/School campus.

Custodial Situations

CLP will not be involved in custody disputes. CLP will follow a court order exactly as it is written. If your family has a court order on file, please provide us with the most recent copy. PLEASE NOTE: PER STATE LAW, IN THE ABSENCE OF A COURT ORDER, BOTH PARENTS HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS. If a custody issue creates a risk for our faculty or staff, CLP has the right to terminate care.

Parent Responsibilities

- Children must be signed in and out by the custodial parent or adult person approved by the parent(s).
- In order not to confuse school toys with personal property, we ask that children do not bring playthings from home. This includes necklaces, bracelets and watches. CLP cannot be responsible for lost or broken personal items. The exception to this is that children who are sleeping on cots may bring a small, stuffed animal to be used during nap time.

Christ Lutheran Church /School is not responsible for any valuables left in vehicles or any damage to vehicles parked on the campus property. HIDE your things, LOCK your car, and TAKE your keys.

PARENT EDUCATION

From time to time, parents may be offered information on topics of interest regarding their children's development and educational activities. If you have a suggestion for a topic, please contact the school director.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

CLP Staff members are not permitted to work for families of the school or church outside of the CLP, as it is considered a conflict of interest. This includes, but is not limited to, babysitting services. Violation of this policy would be cause for disciplinary action of the staff member as well as the family involved, including possible termination of employment and child care services.

PREVENTING AND REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

All CLP staff are required to receive annual training on the prevention and reporting of child abuse and neglect. We have attached additional information on this topic for your reference. The preschool will cooperate with and coordinate with CPS and other community organizations as needed to increase employee and parent awareness of issues regarding child abuse and neglect as well as prevention techniques. Please refer to the attached information for recommended actions if you are in need of assistance or intervention.

TEACHER/STAFF VACCINES

CLP staff are required to receive the flu vaccine annually and the Tdap vaccine every 5 years in order to protect against vaccine-preventable diseases. The COVID-19 booster is recommended for all staff.

ADDRESSING CONCERNS

In order to provide the highest quality care for your child, clear communication between parents and staff must be in place. Should you ever have a concern or question about your child's experience, please speak with your child's teacher first. Your teacher may request to set up a meeting with you if he or she is not able to answer your question while maintaining effective supervision of children.

We take all concerns seriously and will work hard to rectify any situation presented. However, we also value our dedicated teachers, staff and clients and must ensure that we provide a safe and nurturing environment for them at all times just as we do for our children. We thank you for your understanding and support.

Teachers and staff will not discuss other families or children, due to confidentiality requirements. Parents approaching other families regarding another child's behavior is considered inappropriate and will not be supported.

Questions regarding billing or enrollment may be addressed with the Administration. Parents may review and discuss with the Director the policies and procedures of Christ Lutheran Preschool by scheduling an appointment. Decisions may be appealed in writing to the Preschool Ministry Team, followed by the Senior Pastor/Church Council if necessary.

TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT

Your child may be terminated from the program for abuse and neglect of the parent guidelines or disruptive behavior. Major reasons for termination include, but are not limited to:

- Unpaid fees
- Medical records not up-to-date after numerous requests
- Disruptive or abnormal behavior of the children/child or family members—please refer to the Discipline and Guidance policy and Parent Code of Conduct as stated earlier in this handbook
- Disregard to policies
- Conflict of interest

REVISIONS TO HANDBOOK AND AGREEMENT

You will be notified of any policy changes throughout the year by email in the weekly newsletter. Current copies of this handbook may be found on our website at www.clpreschool.org.

INFORMATION ON REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse and neglect are against the law in Texas, and so is failure to report it. Failure to report is a Class B criminal offense, punishable by a \$2,000 fine and/or imprisonment for up to 180 days. Failure to report also could subject you to considerable monetary liability in a civil rights action.

If you suspect a child has been abused or mistreated, you are required to report it to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or to a law enforcement agency. You are required to make a report within 48 hours of the time you suspected the child has been or may be abused or neglected.

What is Abuse? Abuse is mental, emotional, physical, or sexual injury to a child or failure to prevent such injury to a child.

What is Neglect? Neglect includes (1) failure to provide a child with food, clothing, shelter and/or medical care and/or (2) leaving a child in a situation where the child is at risk of harm.

How do I make a report?

1. Call the abuse and neglect hotline at **1-800-252-5400**.
2. When you make a report, be specific. Tell exactly what happened and when. Be sure to record all injuries or incidents you have observed, including date(s) and time(s) of day and keep this information secured.
3. Reports should be made as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before bruises and marks start to fade. It is important for the investigators to be able to see the physical signs.
4. Give the agency person any information you have about the relationship between the child and the suspected abuser.
5. Provide at least the following information in your report:
 - Name, age, and address of the child
 - Brief description of the child
 - Current injuries, medical problems, or behavioral problems
 - Parents names and names of siblings in the home

Will the person know I have reported him or her? Your report is confidential and is not subject to public release under the Open Records Act. The law provides for immunity from civil or criminal liability for innocent persons who report even unfounded suspicions, as long as your report is made in good faith. *Your identity is kept confidential.*

Finally, err on the side of caution. If you have reason to suspect child abuse, but are not positive, *make the report*. If you have doubts about whether or not it is abuse, call the hotline. They can advise you if the sign you have observed are abuse.

The first step in helping abused or neglected children is learning to recognize the signs of child abuse and neglect. The presence of a single sign does not prove child abuse is occurring in a family; however, when these signs appear repeatedly or in combination, you should take a closer look at the situation and consider the possibility of child abuse.

SIGNS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE

Consider the possibility of physical abuse when the **child**:

- Has unexplained burns, bites, bruises, broken bones, or black eyes
- Has fading bruises or other marks noticeable after an absence from school
- Seems frightened of the parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home
- Shrinks at the approach of adults
- Reports injury by a parent or another adult caregiver.

Consider the possibility of physical abuse when the **parent or other adult caregiver**:

- Offers conflicting, unconvincing, or no explanation for the child's injury
- Describes the child as "evil," or in some other very negative way
- Uses harsh physical discipline with the child
- Has a history of abuse as a child

SIGNS OF NEGLECT

Consider the possibility of neglect when the **child**:

- Is frequently absent from school;
- Begs or steals food;
- Lacks needed medical or dental care, immunizations, or glasses;
- Is consistently dirty and has severe body odor;
- Lacks sufficient clothing for the weather;
- States that there is no one at home to provide care.

Consider the possibility of neglect when the **parent or other adult caregiver**:

- Appears to be indifferent to the child;
- Seems apathetic or depressed;
- Behaves irrationally or in a bizarre manner;
- Is abusing alcohol or other drugs.

SIGNS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when the **child**:

- Has difficulty walking or sitting;
- Experiences a sudden change in appetite;
- Demonstrates bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual knowledge or behavior.

Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when the **parent or other adult caregiver**:

- Is unduly protective of the child or severely limits the child's contact with other children, especially of the opposite sex;
- Is secretive and isolated.

SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL MALTREATMENT

Consider the possibility of emotional maltreatment when the **child**:

- Shows extremes in behavior, such as overly compliant or demanding behavior, extreme passivity, or aggression;
- Is either inappropriately adult (parenting other children, for example) or inappropriately infantile (frequently rocking or head-banging, for example);
- Is delayed in physical or emotional development;
- Reports a lack of attachment to the parent.

Consider the possibility of emotional maltreatment when the **parent or other adult caregiver**:

- Constantly blames, belittles, or berates the child;
- Is unconcerned about the child and refuses to consider offers of help for the child's problems;
- Overtly rejects the child.



Why is Safe Sleep Important?

- Placing babies in a safe sleep position is very important to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) or "crib death." When a baby, usually between the ages of 1-12 months old dies suddenly without a clear cause, the death is often referred to as SIDS.
- More babies between 1-12 months of age die from SIDS than any other cause. SIDS has also been called "crib death" but cribs do not cause SIDS.

What is the Safest Way for Babies to Sleep to Reduce the Risk of SIDS?

- Babies that are put to sleep and to nap on their backs are much less likely to die from SIDS.
- The safest place for babies to sleep or nap is in a crib or on a firm sleeping surface with a fitted sheet. The place where the baby sleeps or naps should not have toys, pillows or other soft items that could get near the baby's face.
- Everyone who takes care of babies like grandparents, friends, and baby-sitters, should know about safe sleep. Parents should share this information with anyone who will be taking care of their baby.
- Babies can get hot while they are sleeping, which can make them more at-risk for SIDS. It is safest to put babies to sleep with light clothing and the temperature of the room should feel comfortable to you.
- Babies do best when they are not exposed to tobacco smoke. Babies that are around people who are smoking are more at-risk for SIDS. It is safest to make sure babies are in a "smoke-free" zone at home, away from home, and in cars.

If you would like to learn more about Safe Sleep you may contact:

Texas Department of State Health Services
<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/mch>

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
<http://www.dfps.state.tx.us>

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
<http://www.nichd.nih.gov/sids/>

Sources:

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.
 Back to Sleep Campaign 2005.

Available from: <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/SIDS>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome 2007.

Available from: <http://www.cdc.gov/SIDS/index.htm>



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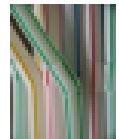


Restrictive Infant Equipment

March 2015

Infants in child care should be placed on their backs to sleep, in furniture manufactured for sale in the United States as *infant sleep equipment*. Studies show that infants sleeping in a semi-seated position, such as in a car seat, swing, bouncy seat, etc., can have their blood oxygen level drop to such a low level that brain cell damage occurs. Positional asphyxia is a type of suffocation that occurs when the body is put in a position that restricts airflow. In infants, positional asphyxia can occur when they are placed in a semi-seated position. Positional asphyxia can occur due to the prominence of the occiput (back of the head), as well as the overall lack of neck muscle strength, which forces the head to slouch forward pushing the infant's chin down against his/her chest. This body position causes the windpipe to narrow or close.

Imagine a drinking straw and then bend that straw over. This is the picture that we need staff to have in order to understand what could occur to an infants windpipe when their head flops over in restrictive infant equipment while sleeping.



The invention of the infant car seat carrier changed the care methods for infants in the United States. Parents and caregivers have adapted this vehicle passenger restraint device into restrictive devices for feeding, sleeping, play and as an infant holding device. In addition, manufacturers have created and adapted other equipment such as restaurant high chairs, shopping carts, stroller bases or "travel systems" to accommodate and further propagate the use of infant car seats for purposes other than protecting the infant during a motor vehicle crash. However, the fact remains that infant car seats are passenger restraint devices designed and intended to absorb and distribute crash impact forces over the infant's body while keeping the infant secure in the vehicle during a motor vehicle crash. Passenger restraint devices are essential protection for infants traveling in motor vehicles. Reviews of infant deaths in passenger restraint devices, however, show that the majority of infant deaths in car seats are not occurring when the infant is being transported in a vehicle, but rather when the infant is being cared for indoors.

The bottom line is that restrictive infant equipment may not be used as sleep equipment in regulated child care. Parents and child care providers should transfer infants who fall asleep in one of these devices to a crib, except when the infant is being transported in a vehicle. Infants can suffer serious harm from sleeping in equipment not designed for sleeping. Direct supervision is always required for infants using restrictive infant equipment while awake.

Please see page 2 for a few examples of Restrictive Infant Equipment .

Infant Products NOT for Sleeping

March 2015

The items shown are just a few examples of Restrictive Infant Equipment that are **not** safe for **infant sleep**. Please speak to your Licensing Representative if you have questions regarding a specific piece of equipment for waking infants.



If an infant falls asleep while in Restrictive Infant Equipment, transfer the infant to a crib ASAP. Infants should always be placed on their back to sleep.



Christ Lutheran Preschool Infant Safe Sleep in Child Care Policy



Infant Sleep Agreement

Infant Safe Sleep in Child Care Policy

All staff, substitute staff, and volunteers at: _____ follow the safe sleep recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC) for infants to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death (SIDS). SIDS/ SUIDS is the sudden death of an infant under 1 year of age, which remains unexplained after a thorough investigation.

- ☐ Infants will always be put to sleep on their backs.
- ☐ Infants will be placed on a firm mattress, with a tight fitted sheet, in a crib that meets the CPSC federal requirements for full-size cribs and for non-full size cribs.
- ☐ No toys, soft objects, stuffed animals, pillows, bumper pads, blankets, quilts, sheepskins or loose bedding will be in the crib or draped over the crib.
- ☐ Devices such as wedges or infant positioners will not be used. The AAP has found no evidence that these devices are safe and their use may increase the risk of suffocation.
- ☐ Sleeping areas will be ventilated and at a temperature that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult.
- ☐ If extra warmth is needed, sleep clothing _____ (insert type of sleep clothing that will be used i.e.: sleepers, footed pajamas) will be used as an alternative to blankets.
- ☐ Only one infant will be placed in a crib to sleep.
- ☐ No crib toys, mobiles, or musical/night light crib attachments will be used in the crib.
- ☐ Infants may use a pacifier during sleep. It may not be attached to the infant's clothing by a string, cord, or other attaching mechanism that might be a strangulation risk.
- ☐ If the infant falls asleep anywhere other than a crib (i.e.: bouncy chair, while being held, or arrives to care asleep in a car seat) the infant will be moved to a crib immediately.
- ☐ Our child care program is smoke free and smoking is not allowed in Texas child care operations.
- ☐ Sleeping infants will be actively observed by sight and sound.
- ☐ When infants are able to roll back and forth from front to back, the infant will be placed on their back for sleep and allowed to assume a preferred sleep position.
- ☐ Awake infants will have supervised "tummy time" several times daily. This will help strengthen their muscles and develop normally.

Parents will review this policy upon enrolling their infant at: _____ and a copy is provided in the parent handbook. Parent may review safe sleep and reducing the risk of SIDS/ SUID's at: <http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/sleep/Pages/A-Parents-Guide-to-Safe-Sleep.aspx>

Keeping Infants Comfortable While Sleeping

March 2015



*Appropriate sleep sack for infants

1. Arm and neck openings sized appropriately for a safer fit.
2. Select a material that will not be too warm. Infants overheating is a SIDS risk.
3. Sleeveless to reduce the risk of overheating. (Room temperature should be comfortable for an adult clothed with lightweight material.)
4. Inverted zipper for easy changing.
5. Roomy sack promotes healthy hip development.
6. Sleepwear may never restrict an infants natural movements.

*Never "modify" a sleep sack. All sleepwear must be used in accordance with manufactures instructions.

Examples that are NOT appropriate for Licensed/Registered Child Care:



↑ This is considered Swaddling and is prohibited in Texas Child Care.



TEXAS

Department of Family and Protective Services

Sec. 42.04271. RIGHTS OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN WITH CHILD IN CERTAIN CHILD-CARE FACILITIES.

a) This section applies only to a day-care center, group day-care home, before-school program, after-school program, school-age program, or registered family home.

(b) A parent or guardian of a child at a child-care facility has the right to:

(1) enter and examine the child-care facility during the facility's hours of operation without advance notice;

(2) file a complaint against the child-care facility;

(3) review the child-care facility's publicly accessible records;

(4) review the child-care facility's written records concerning the parent's or guardian's child;

(5) receive from the child-care facility the commission's inspection reports for the child-care facility and information about how to access the child-care facility's compliance history online;

(6) have the child-care facility comply with a court order preventing another parent or guardian from visiting or removing the parent's or guardian's child;

(7) be provided the contact information for the division responsible for regulating the child-care facility, including the division's name, address, and phone number;

(8) inspect any video recordings of an alleged incident of abuse or neglect involving the parent's or guardian's child, provided that:

(A) video recordings of the alleged incident are available;

(B) the parent or guardian of the child is not allowed to retain any part of the video recording depicting a child who is not the parent's or guardian's child; and

(C) the parent or guardian of any other child captured in the video recording receives notice from the facility under Subsection (c);

(9) obtain a copy of the child-care facility's policies and procedures;

(10) review, on the request of the parent or guardian, the facility's:

(A) staff training records; and

(B) any in-house staff training curriculum used by the facility; and

(11) be free from any retaliatory action by the child-care facility for exercising any of the parent's or guardian's rights.

(c) Before allowing a parent or guardian to inspect a video recording under Subsection (b)(8), a child-care facility must provide written notice to the parent or guardian of any other child captured in the video recording.

(d) This section does not affect the ability of a law enforcement agency or the department to access a video recording as part of an investigation of an incident depicted in the video recording.

(e) A child-care facility shall provide the parent or guardian of the child with a written copy of the rights listed in Subsection (b) not later than the child's first day at the facility.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1158 (S.B. [1098](#)), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2023.