

Parent Handbook



Kids First Learning Center Parent Handbook

Communication

Good communication is of the utmost importance. When a new family is accepted into our center, we like to be sure that we can share openly about any concerns or questions that may arise. It is important that there is a similar child care philosophy between the center and the parents. We welcome questions, feedback, or discussions of any kind that are oriented towards a positive outcome for the child(ren). Sensitive issues will be discussed in private at a mutually beneficial time.

Enrollment Policy

There are several forms that make up the Kids First Learning Center's enrollment packet. As soon as the Admission Form is turned in along with the Enrollment Fee your child's spot in a classroom will be secured. The full enrollment packet must be completed and in our possession before we can assume the responsibility of caring for your child. **NO EXCEPTIONS.** This is to ensure that your child will get the very best care possible and satisfies the record keeping requirement of state licensing guidelines. All forms will be reviewed annually. If there are changes to any of the forms in the enrollment packet, please notify your director to update your records. The forms that are required are as follows:

- Admission Information Form
- Financial Policy Agreement Form
- Child Assessment Form
- Authorized Pick-up and Emergency Contact Information
- Discipline Agreement
- Physician's Physical Examination Form and Immunization History
- Emergency Medical Authorization and Transportation Form
- Permission Slips
- Policy Agreement Form

If you have any questions regarding the completion of these forms, please feel free to ask the director.

Tuition and Fees

Your specific rates will be outlined in your Contract and Rate Agreement. Tuition MUST be paid each Monday when you drop your child off for that week's care. If payment is not made in advance your child will not be permitted to attend class and cannot return until all past and present tuition is paid in full. Payment may be made by check, money order or cash. There will be a late fee of \$10 for each day that payments are received late. Repeated late payments may be grounds for termination. We ask you to consider how you would feel if your employer came to you on your expected payday and told you that your paycheck would be delayed?

Bounced Checks

If a check is returned for non-sufficient funds, there will be a \$30 fee incurred as a result of the returned check. Childcare services may be halted until full payment of tuition and NSF charges has been made, in CASH. In addition, upon the second returned check within 6 months, only cash will be accepted for 3 months.

Hours of Operation

Kids First Learning Center operates Monday thru Friday, 12 months of the year. We open at 6:30 AM and close promptly at 6:00 PM. Please call if you know that you will not be here on time. A \$10 late fee will be assessed promptly at 6:05 and an additional \$1 will be added every 15 minutes thereafter. All late fees are per child and payment will be made, in CASH, at the time of pick up. This will be strictly enforced, and habitual tardiness may result in termination of services.

We maintain an open door policy for parents during daycare hours. This means that parents are always welcome to call or drop in to see their children. We would appreciate your taking into consideration our schedule when dropping in or calling.

Center Closings

We will be closed on the following holidays. *Please note that tuition is still due.*

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- 4th of July
- Labor Day
- Wednesday thru Friday Thanksgiving Week
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

If one of these holidays falls on a weekend, then we will be closed either Friday or Monday. We will give a 30-day notice for any additional days we may be closed.

Bad weather closings

In case of inclement weather, we will follow WFISD school closing and late opening schedule.

Arrivals and Departures

Children are to arrive clean and fed (unless arriving just before a meal time). We will try our best to send your child home with a clean diaper, and would appreciate the same consideration when you drop off.

It is normal for some children to have difficulty separating from parents, or cry when dropping off. Please make your drop off brief, the longer you prolong the departure, the harder it gets. A smile, cheerful good-bye kiss, and a reassuring word that you will be back is all that is needed. In my experience, children are nearly always quick to get involved in play or activities as soon as parents are gone.

Please be brief at pick-up times, as well. This is a time of testing, when two different authority figures are present (the parent and the provider). All children will test to see if the rules still apply. During arrival and departure, we expect parents to back up our rules. Please be in control of your child during pick up times.

Our normal procedure is to release the child only to his/her parents, or someone else the parents designate on the Authorized Pick up and Emergency Contact Form. If someone other than the parent is to pick up the child, please notify us ahead of time. A verbal notice is fine on that day, if this person is on the list of people who are authorized to pick up your child. If the person is NOT on that list, we **MUST** have written permission to release your child. Please inform emergency contacts, or people designated to pick up your child, that if we do not know them then we will need to ask for identification. This is not meant to offend them. This is simply a measure taken for the child's protection. Drop off and pick up are not good times to discuss serious problems. Little ears and minds hear and understand everything. Your director can set up a time where the issues can be discussed in private.

Sign In and Out

It is required by state law that all parents sign their child in and out each day. For your convenience, a sign in/out sheet, pen, and a clock are located by the door, this gives us a written record of the child's attendance, hours, and the person who brought/picked up the child each day.

Absentees

Childcare fees are based on enrollment (a reserved space), not on attendance. To maintain a reserved space, fees must be paid during the absence of a child due to illness, holidays, vacation, or for any other reason.

Clothing/Attire

Children should arrive dressed for play. We like to have fun! Having fun involves outdoor play and lots of messy activities, so make sure that your child is dressed appropriately. Feel free to supply an art smock to protect clothes from paint or other art materials, and bibs to keep food stains to a minimum. Please don't dress your child in nice clothing and expect them to be spotless when you arrive to pick them up. Clothing should be comfortable and seasonally appropriate for outdoor play. Make sure to include hats, mittens, boots and coats for cold weather.

Personal Belongings

We prefer that children do not bring toys from home unless it is something that can be shared with the entire group (i.e. books, videos, etc.). Little ones have a difficult time sharing with others, and it is even harder with their own special toys. If toys are brought, please note that they may be put away, if they are the cause of disagreements among the children. Exceptions to this policy will be that a child may bring a favorite sleepy toy for naptime only, and toys may be brought for show and tell activities. We are not responsible for any loss or breakage of personal items. All personal items must be clearly marked with the child's name.

Supplies

Parents must supply the following items to be kept in their child's cubby:

Infants: Diapers, wipes, powders/ointments, binkie (preferably on a binkie string), food, formula, bottles, bibs, saline drops/gel and nasal syringe, blanket for rest time, and a complete change of clothes (replace when soiled).

Toddlers/Preschool: Diapers, pull-ups, wipes, binkies, powders/ointments, bibs, mat, pillow and blanket for rest time, art smock, and complete change of clothes (replace when soiled) sunscreen, bug spray in summer.

All personal belongings should be marked with your child's name. Eating utensils, cups and dishes will be supplied. If any of these items are brought, they must be marked with your child's name, to avoid mix-ups with other children.

Donations help us keep costs down, so if you have any of the following items on hand and are willing to donate them, it would be greatly appreciated. This is not mandatory.

- Dress up clothing, costumes, jewelry, hats, etc.
- Paper of any kind, brown, white, colored, waxed, foil, etc.
- Crayons, water color paints, or any misc. art supplies, such as fabric scraps, glitter, pipe cleaners, paper plates, etc.
- IDEAS! We welcome any ideas that you may have for fun activities or crafts!!!

Infants and Toddlers

Infants and toddlers will not necessarily follow the same schedule as the preschoolers. They are not capable of sitting still for circle time, may need a morning nap, etc. Infants are always fed on demand. Breast feeding infants need to have an adequate supply stocked and properly labeled. Toddlers usually eat meals and snacks on a set meal schedule.

A report will be prepared for each infant/toddler each day. It will include things such as, time of feedings, what was eaten, amount eaten, time of diaper checks and results, times of naps, any medication given, and various comments about the child's day.

Preschool

Preschoolers enjoy a structured schedule that allows for flexibility. A schedule helps the day to flow more smoothly and allows the children to anticipate upcoming events. We will adhere to our written schedule to the best of our ability. There will be times when we have to make adjustments to the schedule. We appreciate families considering our schedule when picking up or dropping off children. It is better if arrivals and departures do not occur during quiet time, but when they do, please take note of the fact that children may be sleeping. Come and go as quietly and quickly as possible. Children who arrive during quiet time will be expected to rest or play quietly until the rest period is over. Please talk to your child's teacher to get a schedule for their classroom.

Nutrition

We will serve a variety of healthy and nutritious foods to your child. No child will be forced to eat anything; instead the child will be encouraged to try new and different items. The goal of our nutrition program is to provide food to meet each child's basic nutritional needs. In order for us to meet our goal and your child's nutritional requirements, we have scheduled meal times. Your child must be present at these times to benefit from our program. If you choose not to have your child present, it will be your responsibility to provide that meal before you bring your child for care. It is our policy that no food items be brought into the center by children except by special request for class projects. Please do not allow your child to bring candy, soda, chips, ect. into the center. Please notify us if your child has any allergies.

The following meals are provided by the center:

Breakfast until 8:30
A.M. Snack 10:00
Lunch 12:00
P.M. Snack 3:00

It is our belief that infants should be fed on demand. If parents have another feeding schedule in mind, we will need to discuss, so that the infant's needs will be adequately met. Parents are required to supply food and a feeding schedule for infants.

Potty Training

When you feel your child is ready for toilet teaching, we ask that you begin this teaching at home during a weekend or vacation. We will follow through and encourage your child while in our care. The child must be showing signs of readiness. When a child is ready, the process should go pretty quickly. The child must be kept in pull-ups at all times. Putting a child in diapers part time, and training pants part time, can be confusing and delay the training process. Please keep in mind that the activity level here can distract your child from responding to an urge to use the potty, more so than at your home. Therefore, we may continue to use diapers or pull-ups until your child can and will announce that he/she must use the bathroom (not just at home, but here, as well) and can control his/her bladder and bowels for a few minutes beyond that announcement.

Parents need to supply pull-ups, plus a couple of extra changes of clothing each day (don't forget the socks!).

During toilet training, we ask that the child be dressed in "user friendly" clothing, as much as possible. The best items are shorts and pants with elastic waists, or dresses. Try to avoid really tight clothing, pants with snaps and zippers, and overalls. These are difficult for children to remove "in a hurry".

Nap/Quiet Time

There will be a designated nap/rest time each day after lunch. Although your child may not sleep, he or she will have to be quiet while others are napping. In these instances, your child will be allowed to read a book or other quiet activity until nap time is over.

Infants nap at varying times and their schedules will be accommodated. Somewhere between 12 and 18 months, children usually drop down to one nap per day. At this time, we will attempt to put them on the scheduled nap/rest period.

Parental Involvement

Here at Kids First Learning Center we have an Open Door policy and encourage parental involvement. We simply ask that you consider the classroom schedule when visiting. Teachers can always use an extra set of hands. If you are staying for an extended period of time (30+ minutes) you must check in at the office. Parents are encouraged to participate in center activities and special occasions.

Teachers and the center director want to hear your concerns and work towards a positive solution for all parties involved. It will not be appropriate to discuss the children or incidences in the school with anyone other than your child's teacher or the director. The teachers are interested in answering your questions or discussing your concerns, but we will ask that this not be done in the presence of the children or other adults. Should any parent feel that his/her concerns are not being heard, that parent should contact the director. If a teacher/director is not immediately available please leave a message in the office and they will contact you as soon as possible to discuss the matter or set up a meeting.

Activities/Curriculum

Our main objective is to have fun, improve social skills, encourage creative expression, and develop the mind, body, and spirit all in a loving Christian environment. We will utilize a variety of activities to accomplish this goal, but it will mainly be done through play.

What your child will be learning through play---

- To work alone and together
- To explore and expand abilities and interest
- To express thoughts and ideas
- To listen to others
- To develop feelings of security and success
- To share and take turns

As your child plays they are--

- Building self esteem
- Developing vocabulary
- Recognizing differences in shape, size, color, sound, and texture
- Increasing interest in numbers and books
- Improving coordination
- Being introduced to new ideas

These are some of the activities that teach this--

- Music and listening
- Books
- Arts and crafts
- Science
- Housekeeping
- Blocks
- Puzzles
- Outdoor play
- Climbing
- Fieldtrips

Playing is very important to the growth and development of your child. Your child will be allowed to explore developmentally appropriate materials with children their own age. We will be playing outdoors every day that weather permits. Please make sure that your child is appropriately dressed for outdoor play at all times. Our activities will include walks, playground, water play (sprinkler in summer), and others. We are mandated by state law to take the children outside. Parents, who wish to excuse their children from outside play, must have a doctor's note.

Music helps to develop young brains and will play a strong role in day-to-day activities. We may have special music activities and may also play music during other activities, for example, during arts and crafts or meal times. Some of the music we will be using may include classical, children's songs (by a variety of artists), and Christian.

Television will be used as a tool to help children unwind and relax. We usually watch no more than one hour of television per day, and some days none at all. The exception may be on rainy days, or if we are having a particularly difficult day. Viewing will be limited to PBS child-friendly, educational-style videos, and Biblical videos. We carefully screen everything the children watch and watch along with the children. We avoid any type of graphic images, potentially frightening images, unpleasant language, or anything of that nature, as we believe that young children are extremely impressionable. We prefer to err on the conservative side when choosing appropriate viewing.

Children over the age of 2 years will participate in a year round, daily preschool curriculum. We have chosen to use the A Beka curriculum. This is a great program and is designed to prepare your child for school.

We believe that children should be taught the Word of God and encouraged to live a life of Godly character from a very young age. A Beka will also be used for our Christian education. Christian staff members will teach Christian principles to all children enrolled in our program. Children will pray before meals, sing bible songs, and participate in daily bible study.

Learning Center Rules

There are certain center rules that all children will be taught and expected to follow. This is for the safety and well being of everyone. In addition we realize that we must expect a certain amount of wear and tear where children are concerned, we do not want to have our center "demolished".

There will be no running permitted in the center. Hitting, pushing, biting, grabbing, kicking, spitting, or pinching other children/infants/adults will NOT be allowed. No standing or climbing on chairs or tables. There will be no use of obscene, derogatory or disrespectful language.

Children may not walk around the center with food, cups or bottles. Respectful treatment of other people and all property, toys, and furniture is expected. Willful destruction of property will be charged to the parent at the cost to replace the item. Please support us in the enforcement of these rules, in order to create a better environment for all.

No smoking is permitted on the premises; this included parents and staff.

Discipline

We believe that discipline must be consistent in order to be affective. It must also be individualized and based on each child's developmental needs. Our goal is to use, promote, and establish positive self image, self-control, motivation, and Christ-like behavior. We maintain a positive discipline policy, which focuses on prevention, redirection, love, consistency and firmness. We stress two main patterns of behavior: respect for other people and respect for property. The children are explained the rules of the center frequently, so they are all familiar with the guidelines. Please keep in mind that there WILL be disagreements between children. Young children have a hard time expressing their feelings. Sometimes they hit, throw toys, bite, etc. We will try to prevent problems, redirect when appropriate, discuss inappropriate behavior, encourage making amends when offense involves another person, and sometimes withdraw privileges based on the principle of "natural consequences". An example might be where a child is misusing a toy then he/she will not be allowed to play with the toy for a period of time. The use of time outs will be rare except when a brief cooling off period is needed. Sometimes when children are fighting or throwing toys, we will put the toy in a short time out, and then bring it back into circulation a little later. This seems to work better than giving the child a time out.

Under NO CIRCUMSTANCES will there be any spanking, physical abuse, verbal abuse, name calling or isolation used. Neither food nor sleep will ever be withheld from children as a means of punishment.

If a discipline problem arises that does not respond to the above mentioned techniques, we will hold a conference with the parents. Together, we will try to find a solution. You may be called to remove your child if his/her behavior prevents us from being able to properly care for the other children. If the problem continues, other arrangements for the care of the child will have to be made, for the safety and well being of all.

Illness

The following is our policy concerning the exclusion from attendance due to illness or injury:

- When a child has diarrhea or vomits two (2) or more times in four hours
- When a child has a temperature of 100.4 when checked in the ear.
 - i. **Before returning to the Center, the child must be free of fever for 24 hours prior, without the use of fever reducing medicines.**
 - ii. **If a child is sent home with fever, he/she must be excluded from attendance the next day, without exception.**
 - iii. **The child may return 24 - 48 hours (depending upon the illness) after they have received the first dose of an antibiotic. If a child receives an antibiotic for an ear infection, he/she may return to day care immediately if he/she has been free of other symptoms mentioned for at least 24 hours.**
- When a child has a green discharge from the nose, eyes, or ears whether or not accompanied by other symptoms such as a cough
- When we **suspect** pinkeye (*Symptoms: Inside lower lid is tomato red in color. The white of the eye is pink and cloudy, and/or there is discharge and matting.*) When a child has chicken pox, measles, ringworm, etc.

Your child may return to the Center when he/she has written consent from a physician, stating that the child may return to school.
- When a child feels bad enough that he/she is unable to participate in the daily activities, whether or not the child has an elevated temperature or symptoms
- Kids First Learning Center has a **No Nit Policy**. This means that a child with head lice or nits shall be excluded from the center and shall not be re-admitted while **any nits whatsoever** remain on the head. Before being re-admitted to the classroom, the child and his parent must go to the office to be checked.

If it becomes necessary for the Center to call and ask that your child be picked up due to illness, injury or inability to participate, arrangements need to be made for your child to be picked up **within 30 minutes of the call**. In case of sickness or emergency, it is crucial that **all** phone numbers be kept current in your child's file and on their identification sheet.

Medication

Parents will provide any medications needed by the child, including over-the-counter and prescription medicine. Written authorization is needed for us to administer ANY medication, prescription or over-the-counter. **NOTE: All medicines must be in their original container with pharmacist's or manufacturer's label, child's name, dosage instructions, current date, name of medication, and times to be administered clearly written.**

Medical Emergencies

Minor bumps and scratches are inevitable, but we make every effort to keep the children safe through supervision and childproofing. All teachers are First Aid and CPR certified and minor injuries receive appropriate first aid. If an emergency injury or illness occurs, you will be contacted as soon as possible. If necessary, your child will be taken, via ambulance, to the nearest hospital where you will be asked to meet us. Under No circumstances will your child be transported to a medical facility by an employee of Kids First Learning Center.

Parents are responsible for all costs involved in emergency medical treatment, including emergency transportation, if required.

Termination

We reserve the right to terminate a child for the following reasons (but not limited to):

- Failure to pay
- Routinely late picking up your child
- Failure to complete the required forms
- Lack of parental cooperation
- Failure of child to adjust to the center after a reasonable amount of time
- Physical or verbal abuse of any person or property
- Our inability to meet the child's needs
- Lack of compliance with handbook regulations
- Serious illness of child

We appreciate as much advance notice as possible when terminating, and will give the same courtesy in return. Parents are required to give two weeks written notice when they decide to terminate child care. The two weeks will be paid in full, regardless of whether or not the child is in attendance.

We will give two weeks notice of termination for which full tuition is due, whether or not the child is in attendance. The provider reserves the right to give written notice of immediate termination where there are extreme circumstances that affect the well-being of the provider or other children in attendance.

Transportation and Water Activities

We do provide transportation to and from school and field trips, maintaining minimum standards. In the summer we will also engage in sprinkler play and use wading pools. All minimum standards will be maintained while using these items.

Contact Info

If you wish to review or discuss any questions or concerns about the policy and procedures of our Center please contact Alisa Gardner, Director at (940) 264-3007. If you wish to contact the local Child Care Licensing office call (940)249-0172.

Postings

Information on Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers is located in the office. Parents are welcome to review it at any time during operating hours.

You can also find our most recent Licensing, Fire, Health, and Gas Inspections posted in the office.

Abuse

Every child in our care will be observed for signs of abuse. In accordance with the laws of this state, if any child shows signs or symptoms of abuse the Department of Human Services will be contacted. If you suspect any child is being abused call the Child Abuse Hotline at (800) 252-5400 and notify the direct.

Revisions

We reserve the right to make changes in rates and policies as we deem necessary. You will be notified, in writing, of any changes that may occur. Every attempt will be made to give at least two weeks notice of changes. Parents will be required to sign a new contract anytime revisions are made.

I have received a handbook form Kids First Learning Center outlining policy and procedures. I agree to keep this hand book and abide by all policy and procedures therein; including any addendums/additions I may receive in the future. I understand that tuition must be paid in advance along with any other fees and forms before my child is admitted to the center.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____