

Bright Beginnings – Operational Policies and Parent Handbook

Early Learning Program of Friendswood United Methodist Church

Introduction

The Early Learning Program is part of the Christian Education Division of Friendswood United Methodist Church. The Early Learning Program Board of Directors, which is responsible to the Leadership Council of the Church, establishes the policies of the program. Parents will be notified of changes in policies and procedures in writing. Any questions and/or concerns by parents should be made directly to the Early Learning Program Director. Any event or occurrence not addressed in the handbook will be resolved by the Early Learning Program Board of Directors.

Early Learning Program Board of Directors

The Early Learning Program Board of Directors oversees the operation of the program, under the sponsorship and direction of the church. The chairman of the board can be reached through the church office or program director.

Philosophy of the Early Learning Program

The Friendswood United Methodist Church Early Learning Program is dedicated to providing a safe, nurturing and spiritual Christian environment that responds to the individual needs of children and families. Using a developmentally appropriate curriculum, we enhance children's development while creating a love for learning.

Educational Goals

This program encourages exploration and discovery through learning centers. Research shows that children learn best through an interactive play environment. Children will be given opportunities to enhance their understanding and learning through play. We will:

- Promote Christian values through faith-based learning.
- Develop the whole child spiritually, physically, socially, emotionally, and cognitively.
- Provide an assortment of developmentally appropriate learning opportunities that will stimulate curiosity and creativity.
- Enhance discovery and learning from the environment.
- Implement a learning environment in which children learn skills to prepare them for kindergarten and beyond.

Christian Education/Chapel

In accordance with the Early Learning Program's philosophy and mission, the Early Learning Program embraces, encourages, and provides experiences so that Christian values and teachings are honored and incorporated in the classroom on a daily basis. Our Christian beliefs and values are being implemented in a developmentally appropriate manner through stories, art, songs, and props for dramatic play in classrooms and chapel. Participation in this portion of the program is required.

Enrollment

Children who have reached the age of 17 months by September 1st of the year of enrollment are eligible to begin (***enroll in***) our program. They may continue in the program until they begin kindergarten.

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Tuition and Fees

Tuition Deposit

In addition to the registration and supply fees, a tuition deposit will be collected at the time of registration. This will then be applied to May tuition (or your last month's tuition if you withdraw early).

The supply and registration fee and tuition deposit are paid at the time of registration.

The supply and registration fee for 2021-2022:

Registration and Supply Fees	
Two Day Classes	\$155
Three Day Classes	\$195
Four Day Classes	\$225
Bridge/Transition	\$225

Tuition Deposit and Supply and Registration Fees are NON-REFUNDABLE

Tuition for 2021– 2022:

Age	2 Day Class Mon/Wed	2 Day Class Tues/Thurs	3 Day Class (monthly)	4 Day Class (monthly)
1 year old	\$195	\$210	NA	NA
2 year old	\$185	\$200	NA	\$385**
3 year old	NA	NA	\$290	\$350
4 year old (Pre-K)	NA	NA	\$290	\$350
Bridge/Transition	NA	NA	NA	\$370

**Must be 2 years on or before 4/1/2021 to enroll

School is in session from September through May with the first tuition payment due on the first day of school for that school year. Tuition is due on or before the first-class day of each month and is considered late after the 10th of the month. A late charge of \$20.00 will be assessed after the deadline on any unpaid balance, unless prior arrangements have been made with the Early Learning Program's office. If not paid by the end of the month, an additional \$20.00 late fee will be assessed for a total of \$40.00. Full payment is due each month regardless of the number of days your child is expected to be in attendance. No adjustments are made for illness, vacation, or board and church mandated closings. Please put your tuition check in the designated box on the desk in the Education Building hallway or in the basket on the reception desk in the Nursery Wing of the Worship Center.

There will be a \$10.00 service fee on all returned checks and returned bank drafts.

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Family Discount

Families with more than one child in the program receive a \$10.00 monthly discount on tuition with each additional child.

Withdrawal

If for any reason you decide to withdraw your child, you must give one month's written notice to the Director or you will be responsible for the next month's tuition. Please notify the Early Learning Program office as soon as possible. If your child's name remains on the roll, you will be billed by mail for the tuition.

Days and Times

One Year Olds	2 Days
Two Year Olds	2 Day and 4 Day Option
Three Year Olds and Pre-K (4 Year Olds)	3 and 4 Day Options
Bridge (5 Year Olds)	4 Days Only

School Days

- Two Day Classes – Monday and Wednesday **OR** Tuesday and Thursday
- Three Day Classes – Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
- Four Day Classes – Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

Hours

- 9:00-1:30 – All Classes except Bridge
- 8:30-1:30 - Bridge

In all of our classes, we find that your child benefits most from the program if arrival and departure adhere closely to our hours of 9:00 a.m. arrival to 1:30 p.m. pick up. Tardiness results in your child missing an important part of the day's instruction. Please be on time. If you would like to conference with your child's teacher, please schedule an appointment.

Required Enrollment Paperwork:

The following items are required to be on file with Bright Beginnings before your child is allowed to attend school:

- Student Information Card
- Student Enrollment Information
- Emergency/Medical Information
- Photo, Class Roster, and Handbook Acknowledgement Form
- Health Statement Signed by Doctor (Hearing and Vision if applicable)
- Updated Immunizations - ***Based on recommendations from the CDC and Childcare Licensing, Bright Beginnings will not allow immunization exemptions.***
- Allergy Emergency Plan (if applicable)

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These records must be kept current as children receive additional immunizations and remain current for the remainder for the entire school year. Please submit copies of immunization records that reflect all updates and changes.

If the program makes a change to the operational policies at any time, you will be notified in writing of the policy changes and a signature will be required that you have reviewed these changes.

Allergy Emergency Plan

If your child has an identified and diagnosed food allergy, we must have a food allergy emergency plan on file prepared by the child's health care professional. This plan must include:

- A list of each food the child is allergic to
- Possible symptoms if exposed to a food on the list
- The steps to take if the child has an allergic reaction
- Signature and date of both the parent and health care professional
- Signed permission (or denial) to post child's allergy in rooms where the child spends time

Hearing and Vision Screening

All children **4 years old by September 1st** of the current school year are required by the State Minimum Standards to have Vision and Hearing Screening. Your doctor can complete this screening and then report the results on the Physician's Statement.

File Updates

It is important to update your child's records in writing with the FRIENDSWOOD UMC Early Learning Program office should there be a change in address, telephone numbers, immunizations, etc.

Administering Medication

FRIENDSWOOD UMC Early Learning Program will not administer medication including sunscreen and bug spray. The only exceptions are in emergency situations where the use of Epi Pens, Benadryl, or inhalers are required due to allergies or asthma. If these medications are required, the appropriate Medication Authorization Forms must be on file before the medication can be accepted and dispensed.

Drop Off

- Upon arrival, the parents or adult dropping off or picking up the child must sign the child in/out via the ChildWatch app from their personal phone.
- A health check will be completed on the child upon arrival.
 - If the child presents with a temperature above normal, but below 100.0, administrative staff will determine if the child is admitted into care based on if the child is exhibiting possible signs of illness and additional health questions asked to the parent.
 - If a temperature is above 100.0, the child will be excluded from care.
 - Administrative staff reserves the right to exclude a child from care if they are showing any signs of illness, but do not present with an above normal temperature.

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- Children will be dropped off in a car rider line at a designated location outside of the child's building and will be escorted from that location by a designated staff member.
- All children should be dropped off outside, and parents may only enter the facility when necessary.
- Physical Distancing will be practiced between staff and parents as much as possible during arrival and dismissal.
- All non-vaccinated adults are required to wear masks during arrival.

Pick up/Release of Children

When picking up children, be sure to sign them out through the Child Watch app. It is very important that responsible adults accompany each child from his/her classroom every class day.

- Bright Beginnings Staff will release students only to authorized persons listed on the registration form and student information card. They will ask individuals for proof of proper identification (i.e., driver's license). A copy of the driver's license will be made by the front office staff to keep record of the individual picking up the child (if different from the typical pick-up person).
- If someone different is picking up, Please text the child's full name, class name and the full name of the person that will be picking up to the Alternate Pick Up Text Number 281-607-7180.
- If a person arrives to pick up your child and we were not expecting her/him, we will not release your child until we have spoken with a parent to verify.
- The Early Learning Program will not accept children from or release children to underage siblings, relatives, or friends not listed on the registration form and student information card.
- Please remember to keep children with you in the hallways at pick up times. The halls are very busy at this time of day and children can become confused if they are separated from their parents. Do not allow your child to leave the building without you. The parking lot is also very busy. Keeping your children with you will ensure their safety.

Late Pick up

If your child is not picked up by 1:40 they will be taken to the office or front desk of their building for you to pick up and sign out. Consistent late pick up (3 or more times per semester) will result in a late pick up fee of \$15.00 per late pick up. The clock in the office is the standard time in such cases. **Please call the Director if you are delayed so that your child can be assured that you have contacted the office and will pick him/her up shortly.** Call 281-482-7535 ext. 501.

Separation Anxiety

Anxiety about separation is a natural part of life. We are committed to working together with families to manage this important transition for young children. It is essential that parents and teachers work together to ease children into the program and to minimize stress. Trust and good communication between teachers and parents will build a partnership that can support children. How we help children through these first goodbyes creates a framework for their lifetimes, and we acknowledge the significance of the event. In keeping with developmentally appropriate practices, we will respond to each child and family's needs around separation on an individual basis. The teachers and administrative staff are available to discuss your family's needs.

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Field Trips

Field trips are only for our Pre-K and Bridge students. In the event a field trip is scheduled, you will be notified in writing of the location, time, and date of the field trip at least 4 days in advance. A permission slip must be signed from the parent in order for the child to attend.

Nap Time

The one-year-old classes will take a nap from approximately 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. In the toddler class, the children are allowed to fall asleep for a nap if needed. There is no scheduled nap time for threes or fours.

Safe Sleep Policy

All parents of children enrolled in our one-year-old program must read and sign the provided “Operational Policy on Infant Safe Sleep”.

Toilet Training

We understand that children often start the toilet training process during their two year old year and we want to do everything we can to support your efforts. However, we do ask that you wait to send your child to school in regular underwear until they are fully trained (successfully using the toilet with minimal accidents for three or more consecutive days), and are able to communicate with the teacher that they need to use the “potty”. We **strongly** recommend that all children entering the 3 year old classes are toilet trained. We understand that this is a developmental skill and some children may not be ready to be fully trained. However, in those cases we do ask that your child is working on this skill at home. We require that your child wear a pull up (not diapers) so that they may be more easily assisted when an accident occurs.

**All children in the Pre-K and Bridge program must be fully toilet trained.
(Including being able to perform self- hygiene).**

Discipline/Guidance

Discipline is handled using positive guidance techniques including redirection, anticipation of and elimination of potential problems, and encouragement of appropriate behavior.

Discipline will be:

- Individualized and consistent for each child
- Appropriate to the child’s level of understanding
- Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control

Within the Early Learning Program’s philosophy of positive guidance, children are given the opportunity to develop self-control, self-esteem, and self-direction. Our goal is to provide clear, simple, and consistent limits for children designed to maintain their physical and emotional safety, and to create an atmosphere of respect for oneself, for others, and for the environment. We recognize that conflict is an ongoing part of functioning as social beings. When difficult situations present themselves, they will be looked upon as opportunities to grow and learn. Problematic situations will be regarded as opportunities to develop conflict resolution and negotiation skills.

- Children will be treated with respect and care
- Children will be encouraged to participate in solving problems

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- Children will be guided to make pro-social choices
- Appropriate behavior will be modeled, acknowledged, encouraged, and reinforced;

If you have a specific question or concern regarding discipline, please schedule a conference with your child's teacher.

Dismissal from Program

This program will make every effort and use any available resources to ensure that your child has a successful experience. If a concern arises with your child, the program director will meet with you to put a plan of action into place. Both parties will need to work together on this plan of action to ensure the best possible experience for your child. Suspension or expulsion from the program is possible after all other avenues have been exhausted. We work hard to build strong relationships with our families. However, in the event that a family's dynamics or behavior creates an unsafe or disruptive school environment we reserve the right to suspend or expel the family from the program.

Illness/Exclusion

Bright Beginnings is designed to care for well children. Your cooperation is needed to maintain a healthy and safe environment for our school. Please keep your child home if, within the last 72 hours, he or she has:

- Illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in child-care center activities including outdoor play.
- An oral temperature above 101 degrees that is accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness.
- A tympanic (ear) temperature above 100 degrees that is accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness. Tympanic thermometers are not recommended for children under six months old.
- An axillary (armpit) temperature above 100 degrees that is accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness.
- Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, two or more vomiting episodes in 24 hours, rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, behavior changes, or other signs that the child may be severely ill.
- Been diagnosed by a health-care professional with a communicable disease, and the child does not have medical documentation to indicate that the child is no longer contagious.
- Loss of taste or smell.
- Demonstrated a general sense of not feeling well.
- Been too ill to play outside.
- Head Lice –If your child is found to have head lice at school, they will be sent home. They will be allowed to return to school after one medicated treatment has been given or they bring a note from the physician saying they are cleared to return to school. We also require that your child is free from all nits before they can return to the classroom.

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If a child becomes ill while in the facility, the following plan is in place:

- The child will be isolated from the other children in a designated, supervised isolation room.
- The child's parent/guardian will be notified immediately to pick up the child.
- All CDC disinfection protocols and guidelines will be followed in all affected areas.

When children are ill, they must not return to the facility until they are symptom free without medication for 72 hours.

Emergency Procedures

Parents will be contacted immediately if your child:

- Is injured and the injury requires medical attention by a health care professional
- Has a sign or symptom requiring exclusion from the Early Learning Program as specified above
- Has been involved in any situation that might place the child at risk
- Has been involved in any situation that renders the Early Learning Program unsafe, such as but not limited to a fire, flood, or damage to the facility as a result of severe weather.
- Has been evacuated from the building due to an emergency. In this type of event New Hope Church has been designated our emergency relocation site.
- Emergency Drills are conducted frequently throughout the school year.
- The complete Emergency Preparedness Plan can be found at the end of the handbook.

Parents will be notified of less serious injuries when the parent picks the child up from the Early Learning Program.

- Less serious injuries include, but are not limited to minor cuts, scratches, and bites from other children requiring first-aid treatment by FRIENDSWOOD UMC Early Learning Program staff. An accident report form will be completed for the parent to acknowledge being told of the incident.

If a child requires immediate medical attention the following procedure will be followed:

- Bright Beginnings staff will call 911 immediately. (Director or designee will ensure that all other children in the group are properly supervised).
- Give the child first aid treatment or CPR if needed.
- Office staff will contact the parent.
- Office staff will contact the physician identified in the child's record.
- If the parent has not arrived at the school, two staff persons will accompany the child to the hospital.

It is extremely important that parents provide accurate and complete information as to how or where they can be reached by phone each day. The information given to us on the attendance record is used to locate you in case of an emergency. In addition, the FRIENDSWOOD UMC Early Learning Program maintains an informational card on each child and the numbers listed on that record will be used to contact you in an emergency.

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Incllement Weather

In the event that the Friendswood Independent School District schools are cancelled because of weather related conditions or other emergencies affecting the community, we will not be open. Please listen for local radio or television announcements.

Photographs/Videos

FRIENDSWOOD UMC Early Learning Program staff takes photos of the children during their daily preschool activities. These photos are used for student portfolios and in displays in the classroom, or other areas within our facility. No outside publication or display of these photos is permitted without the written consent of the parents. If you do not wish your child to be photographed, please inform the director on the photograph permission form.

Promotion of Indoor and Outdoor Physical Activity

FRIENDSWOOD UMC Early Learning Program strongly believes and supports the need for physical activity each day.

When children participate in physical activity every day, multiple health benefits accrue. Regular physical activity builds healthy bones and muscles, improves muscular strength and endurance, reduces the risk for developing chronic disease risk factors, improves self-esteem, and reduces stress and anxiety. Beyond these known health effects, physical activity may also have beneficial influences on academic performance. In addition, cognitive skills and motor skills appear to develop through a dynamic interaction. Research has shown that physical movement can affect the brain's physiology.

All children will participate a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.

Opportunities for active play may overlap with outdoor play when weather permits.

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

All children will participate each day in:

- At least one occasion of active play outdoors when weather permits.
- One or more structured or teacher-led activity or game that promote movement during the course of the day.
- Continuous opportunities to develop and practice age-appropriate gross motor and movement skills.

Physical activity may take place in the classroom, in the gym, or on the playground, when weather permits.

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

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Clothing

Dress your child in comfortable, washable, play clothes in which they can move easily and freely. Indoor art activities and outside play activities which may involve dirt, water, paint, etc., provide children with creative avenues in which they may experience social, emotional, and cognitive growth. Therefore, dressy outfits are not encouraged as they may be difficult to clean and may dissuade children from participating in the many activities offered inside and outside.

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

Examples of appropriate clothing/footwear include:

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

Examples of inappropriate clothing/footwear include:

- Footwear that can come off while running or that provide insufficient support for climbing.
 - **Boots, sandals, and crocs are dangerous for the children to manage on the playground equipment and are not allowed on the playground equipment.**
- Clothing that can catch on playground equipment, such as those with drawstrings or loops.

Appropriately sized TENNIS SHOES are the best choice for school!

Every child should have two changes of clothing available in their backpack or diaper bag. Please be sure each item is labeled with your child's name. As the weather changes, check the clothes in the backpack to ensure that they are weather appropriate and still fit. Always remember to replace the clothes if your child uses them while at the Early Learning Program.

We play outside each day, unless there is severe weather. Make sure that your child is dressed appropriately for the weather, including mittens, coats, sweaters, or a hat on cold days.

What to Bring

PLEASE BE SURE TO LABEL EVERY ITEM YOUR CHILD BRINGS TO SCHOOL WITH THEIR FIRST AND LAST NAME.

- 2 changes of clothes (**all children**)
- Napping Rooms
 - Special toy (lovey) and blanket (**No Nap Mat Needed**)
- Diaper bag filled with diapers and wipes (**one and two year old classes**). If your child wears cloth diapers, we require that you provide disposable diapers for them while they are in our care.
- A non-spill cup filled with water (**one and two year old classes**)
- Water bottle (**three and four year old classes**)
- Nutritious lunch with water, juice, or milk (should include items the child can eat independently)

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Prohibited Items

For the safety of our children, the following items are not permitted:

- Balloons
- Weapons, including toy weapons
- Live animals
- Personal electronic devices, including smart watches

Snacks and Lunch

A variety of simple nutritional snacks are provided for your child each day. Please be sure to notify staff of any food allergies. (Please see allergy guidelines below)

Your child is to bring a nutritious, balanced lunch from home each day. Pack lunches with items that do not require refrigeration/heating or which can be kept cool/warm with a thermos or ice pack brought from home. Use containers in your child's lunch box that can be easily opened by your child. This fosters independence and pride. For example, thermoses with flip-top lids and sandwich bags for finger foods are usually easy for a child to handle. Lunch boxes, thermoses, and containers must be labeled.

Please be sure to feed your child a nutritional breakfast at home before coming to the Early Learning Program.

Allergen Friendly Classrooms

Due to the severity of some children's allergies, it may be necessary for some classrooms to be designated **Nut Free** or free from other harmful allergens. In the event that your child is in such a classroom, we respectfully ask that you adhere to this request. If your child brings an item in their lunch that contains the named allergen, they will not be allowed to eat it and it will be sent back home. For classroom parties, special events, birthday treats, etc. please send only store-bought items where the ingredients are clearly listed.

Birthday Treats

At Bright Beginnings, we know how important and special your child's birthday is! We love to celebrate your child's birthday in school, and do allow birthday treats to be brought into the classroom to share. The following are guidelines that we ask you to follow when choosing your child's birthday treat:

- Due to the increasing number of peanut/nut allergies we ask that your child's birthday treat be nut free. This includes all nuts, nut products and products manufactured in facilities where nut products are packaged.
- If you are in a classroom where there is a severe allergy, please only send in store bought items where the ingredients are clearly labeled. (Check with the classroom teacher to get a list of student allergies in the class and plan your treat accordingly.)
- Please do NOT send in cake or cupcakes. This type of snack is very often wasted and is enormously messy to clean up.
- Please do not send in any type of treat or candy which may be a choking hazard to our students.
- If your treat requires utensils, please provide those for the class.
- To keep our birthday celebrations as equal as possible for everyone, we ask that balloons, favors or goodie bags be reserved for "home" parties.

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- If your child wishes to pass out invitations for their home party, please be sure all children in the class are invited. Otherwise, please deliver the invitations outside of school.
- Some great birthday treat suggestions are fruit salad, apple slices, cookies, brownies, chocolate pretzels or Rice Krispie treats. The treat should be something that your child will enjoy. Teachers will determine the best time during the day to serve birthday treats.
- We do encourage nutritious snacks. Your questions or suggestions can be directed to your child's teacher, or administration.

Parent Involvement

Orientation Meeting and Meet and Greet

A Parent/Student Orientation and Meet and Greet will be held in the fall. The purpose of the Meet and Greet is to provide you and your child the opportunity for you to meet your child's teachers and become acquainted with your child's classmates and their parents. The Orientation Meeting will discuss school and classroom policies, procedures, curriculum plans, and schedules.

Parent Communication

Monthly newsletters are provided with important information for each age group as well as the calendar of events. Other information will be sent home by letter with your child. If you have a question or concern regarding your child, policies, or procedures please contact the program director.

Call 281-482-7535 ext. 501.

Parent Visitation

All parents are welcome to visit the program at any time during our hours of operation. For security reasons, please check in with the office upon arrival. For the comfort and safety of all of our children we do not allow lunch visitors. If you would like to bring lunch to your child, please drop it off at the office and we will get it to them. In the event of special custody arrangements, we require the primary guardian to give written permission for any visitors. This is for the safety of the children and staff.

Parent Teacher Organization

The purpose of the PTO is to enhance and support the educational experience at Bright Beginnings by developing a closer connection between school and home. Through your involvement we will be able to better serve each of your children. A membership drive will be held each year and information regarding events will be sent home through notes and newsletters.

Breastfeeding Mothers

You have a right to nurse your child or provide breast milk while they are in our care. We have adult sized chairs available in the nursery wing for breastfeeding mothers.

Information on vaccine-preventable diseases for staff

All staff are recommend to stay up to date on their tetanus vaccine and get yearly Flu shots.

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Important Contact Information and Phone Numbers

To reach the Early Learning Program during school hours, the phone number is 281-482-7535, ext. 501. For non-school days or after hours, leave a voice mail message. The message will be returned to you on the next school day.

Gang Free Zone

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.

TDPRS

Bright Beginnings is a state licensed facility. Your child is of great importance to us. We adhere to strict guidelines to provide your child with the best environment possible. A copy of the minimum standards and licensing inspection report is available in the Bright Beginnings office for review.

You may also access the minimum standards online at www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/

You may contact the local licensing office at 713-287-3238 (1330 E 40th St. Houston, TX 77022).

The number for the Texas Abuse and Neglect Hotline is 800-252-5400.

Policy Notifications: Abuse and Emergency Preparedness Plan

Bright Beginnings Abuse Policy Prevention, Recognition and Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect

- All staff will be required to receive at least one hour of annual training in prevention techniques for and the recognition of symptoms of abuse and neglect. This training will be in addition to the annual overview of abuse recognition given in orientation.
- Be aware of the factors that indicate a child could be at risk of abuse or neglect. These include but are not limited to:
 - Special needs that may increase caregiver burden
 - Substance abuse and/or mental health issues including depression in the family
 - Parental characteristics such as young age, low education, single parenthood, large number of dependent children, and low income
 - Non-biological, transient caregivers in the home (e.g., mother's male partner)
 - Parental thoughts and emotions that tend to support or justify maltreatment behaviors
 - Family disorganization, dissolution, and violence, including intimate partner violence
 - Parenting stress, poor parent-child relationships, and negative interactions
- Warning signs that a child may be a victim of abuse or neglect include but are not limited to:
 - Attachment issues, such as discomfort with physical contact or difficulty connecting with others
 - Behavior extremes, such as appearing overly compliant and passive or very demanding and aggressive.
 - Increased fear or avoidance of a specific person and/or situation
 - Anxiety and/or excessive worrying
 - Bruises, welts or swelling, sprains or fractures, burns, lacerations or abrasions
 - Difficulty in walking or sitting
 - Torn, stained or bloody clothing
 - Pain or itching in the genital area; bruises or bleeding in the external genital area
 - Knowledge of or interest in sexual behaviors that are not age appropriate

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- Low self-esteem
- Uncharacteristic obedience or perfectionism
- Strong feelings of shame or guilt
- Programmed statements or behaviors
- In the event any staff member suspects abuse (sexual, physical, emotional) and/or neglect the staff member will notify the director of the suspicion. The staff member will make the call directly to child care licensing and child protective services with the director or the director's designee in the room while the call is being made.
- We will maintain employee and parent awareness of both prevention techniques and warning signs of abuse and neglect through various methods including, but not limited to, segments in newsletters and brochures and informational handouts.
- Bright Beginnings will maintain open lines of communication with Child Care Licensing and other local abuse organizations so that assistance may be provided with families if needed.
- In the event a parent of a child who is a victim of abuse or neglect needs assistance or intervention, the Bright Beginnings Director or her designee will meet with the parent to discuss and help attain resources available to them in the community

Local Resources

Texas Abuse and Neglect Hotline

1-800-252-5400 www.txabusehotline.org

Call our Abuse Hotline toll-free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

The ABC Center (for the Medical Evaluation of Child Victims of Abuse and Neglect)

Division of General Pediatrics

University of Texas Medical Branch

301 University Boulevard

Galveston, TX 77555-1119

(409) 747-9298

Children's Assessment Center

2500 Bolsover

Houston, Texas 77005

(713) 986-3369

Medical Director: Michelle Lyn, MD, FAAP

Community Organization Training Resources

Collaborative for Children [<http://collabforchildren.org/>]

Texas Association of Parent Education (TAPE) [www.coe.unt.edu/cpe/tape/]

ESCAPE Family Resource Center [www.learntoparent.org]

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Emergency Preparedness Plan

During an emergency, emotions tend to run high, and chaos can quickly ensue. It is imperative that you attempt to remain as calm as possible and listen to your Director/Coordinator and emergency response officials very carefully. The following are procedures adopted by Bright Beginnings Early Learning Program (a ministry of Friendswood United Methodist Church) stating what must be done in responding to and preparing for emergency situations. If parents are in the building when a drill occurs the parent should participate in the drill, it is not recommended that the parent leave during the drill.

Fire Safety and Emergency Practices

- **Evacuation Procedures – Fire or Other Emergencies (ex.gas leak)**
 - The sound of the alarm is the signal to evacuate the building.
 - Evacuate the building per proper escape routes posted in each room. Be sure to account for all the children in your room as they make their single file line. Take ONLY your attendance record, water bottle carrier, and First Aid Bag -leave ALL personal effects behind-including shoes if the children happen to have them off or even coats if it is cold outside. The number one concern is to exit the building as quickly as possible to ensure safety!
 - Director/Coordinator or designated person will make an interior sweep of each room to ensure everyone has exited the building.
 - Children will be led to the designated safe location determined by their exit route.
 - Children should remain quiet in a straight line at the designated location. A show of attendance records from the teachers overhead will verify that all children are accounted for and out of the building.
 - Remain at the location until emergency personnel gives an ALL CLEAR signal. At this time children and staff may return to the building, or move to the area designated by the Bright Beginnings Director/Coordinator or by emergency personnel. No running or talking is permitted.

Evacuation- Relocation to Alternate Shelter

- In the event of an emergency (such as flood, medical emergency, or communicable disease outbreak) the director, asst. director, or designated staff will call the local authorities to notify them of the situation (911). (In the case of a hurricane the program will be closed and no emergency procedures are required)
- In an emergency requiring relocation, upon the director's or her designee's direction, all staff will account for the children in their care and move them in a single file line to the sidewalk in the rear of the education building. The teachers must take their First Aid Bag, water bottle carrier, and attendance record with them.
- All children that are under the age of 18 months will be evacuated in the designated evacuation cribs and/or strollers. Children that are over 18 months of age and have limited mobility or special needs will be evacuated using strollers.

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- Once in place the teacher will raise her attendance record in the air to mark that all children are accounted for.
- Upon the director’s orders the teachers will lead the children in a line to the main entrance of New Hope Church, where they will be housed until they may return to the church or their parents are able to pick them up. During transit one teacher will walk at the front of the line, another at the back, and all other staff will walk along side of the line.
- Once the children arrive at New Hope Church, the teacher will again raise her attendance record in the air to mark that all children are accounted for.
- Emergency Telephone Numbers
 - 713-826-9769 (Director’s Cell Number)
 - 832-545-4546 (Assistant Director’s Cell Number)
- Each teacher will be responsible for calling the parents in her class. All contact and emergency information is located inside their emergency card binder which is in the First Aid Bag.
- Director and/or Designee will contact licensing once all children are secure.

Relocation Site

New Hope Church
108 West Edgewood Drive
Friendswood, TX 77546

- **Sheltering Procedures**

- **Tornado or Severe Weather**

- During severe weather conditions, the Director/designee will monitor weather reports.
- Children and staff will remain in their classroom INSIDE THE BUILDING until advised to move to emergency sheltering locations by the Director/designee.
- If sheltering needs to occur, the staff will be notified by walkie talkie – “Severe Weather”.
- For tornado warnings – Staff and children will move to their designated sheltering location with knees and heads against the walls.
- The Director will monitor the weather until threatening conditions pass.
- School Closing – when severe conditions are present prior to arrival at school teachers/parents will be notified by phone IF the decision has been made to close the program on that day.

- **Lock Down Procedures**

- Danger inside and outside the operation
 - If a stranger is in the building or there is an immediate danger outside of the facility, the staff will be notified by walkie talkie– “Lock Down”.
 - The director or designee will call 911.
 - All employees and children move to the nearest safe room and lock down.
 - Teachers take attendance and account for all children in their care.
 - All doors should be closed and locked.

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- **Dangerous Situation in Area - Shelter in Place**
 - In the event of an emergency outside of our campus, all teachers are instructed to remain in their classrooms with their students with doors and windows closed until instructed to leave by the director or their designee. If classes are outside, teachers will take their students inside, close all doors and remain inside with doors and windows closed until instructed to leave by the director or their designee. The director or designee will make sure that all HVAC units have been turned off (if needed) and that emergency personnel have been notified.

EVACUATION DRILL

- **Procedures:**
 - Evacuation drills will be performed without prior notice on a monthly basis. The director, in consultation with the Friendswood UMC business office will determine the time and date of the drill. The alarm company must be notified that this is a drill by the business office or by the Bright Beginnings Director.
 - The director or designee will initiate the drill from the pull station or alarm box.
 - Teachers will begin evacuating as outlined in the Fire Evacuation Procedures.
 - Director or designee will make a thorough sweep of the facility.
 - Upon arrival at the designated safe location, teachers will account for their students and hold a clipboard overhead when all are accounted for.
 - Director or designee will check off each group as they wave to ensure that all groups are accounted for.
 - Director or designee will give the ALL CLEAR signal from the walkie talkie once everyone is accounted for, and teachers and students may return to their classrooms.

SHELTERING/LOCK DOWN DRILLS

- **Procedures:**
 - Severe weather sheltering drills and lock-down drills will each be conducted at least four times in a calendar year.
 - The director or designee will initiate the drill by using the walkie talkie.
 - Teachers will begin the drill following the guidelines outlined in the Sheltering Procedures.
 - Administrative staff will make a thorough sweep of the facility to ensure that everyone is in their assigned locations and have followed proper procedure.
 - Director or designee will give the ALL CLEAR signal once everyone is accounted for, and teachers and students may return to their classrooms.

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In the event that any emergency procedure must be activated (evacuation, relocation sheltering or lock down), the following procedures will be followed:

- All children will be moved from their current location in a single file line with one teacher at the front and the other at the back.
- All children that are under the age of 18 months will be evacuated in the designated evacuation cribs and/or strollers. Children that are over 18 months of age and have limited mobility or special needs will be evacuated using strollers.
- All children must be counted prior to leaving the original location, again while in transit, and finally once destination is reached.
- The teachers will bring their attendance record, First Aid Bag, Emergency Card Notebook, and Water Bottle Carrier from one location to the next. The First Aid Bag is stocked with first aid supplies as well as any necessary medication. The Emergency Card Notebook is stored within the First Aid Bag and includes each child's contact and emergency information. The First Aid Bag is also stocked with activities and food that might be necessary when a prolonged evacuation, relocation or sheltering occurs.
- All children will remain with their class in their new location under the direct supervision of their teachers. Teachers are to remain with their children until each child has been released from either the new location or the regular classroom.
- In the event of an emergency, the designated parent and/or guardians identified on the child's emergency cards will be notified via email, text message, or phone call of the type of emergency, sheltering location and any additional details specific to the emergency as soon as all children are safely sheltered. Additional notification will be sent when the emergency is remedied, sheltering precautions are lifted, and children have returned to their original location. For lock-downs, children will not be released until the area is deemed safe by local law enforcement.
- In the event of an emergency where the children could **NOT** safely return to their original location, each teacher will be responsible for calling and/or texting the parents/guardians in her class to notify them of the type of emergency. This will be done as soon as the children are safely sheltered. Additional notifications will be sent when the emergency has been remedied and sheltering precautions have been lifted. To reunify the child with his/her parent, the teacher will inform the parent of the child's new location. Once the parent arrives at this location normal check out procedures will be followed. The director and/or her designees will be available to monitor and direct parents to the appropriate location.
- During any emergency procedure support staff fulfills the following roles:
 - All emergency procedures are initiated by the director/assistant director. In their absence this role will move to their designee.
 - Front Desk- In a lock down situation, as the lock down is initiated, call 911. This person should take cover and remain on the phone with authorities.
 - Remaining Support Staff – Ensure that all students are secure and/or in their designated locations, then seek shelter or relocate according to procedure that is in place.