

NEIGHB♥RHOOD
Preschools



Policies & Procedures
for Parents

Table of Contents

- 01. Mission & Goals
- 02. Hours of Operation
- 03. Release of Children
- 04. Illness & Exclusion
- 05. Discipline & Guidance
- 06. Suspension & Expulsion
- 07. Safe Sleep Policy
- 08. Child Care Licensing
- 09. Meals
- 10. Immunizations
- 11. Admission & Enrollment Fee
 - Payment Policy- EXAMPLE PAGE -
- 12. Children's Daily Supplies
- 13. Policies & procedures
- 14. Curriculum
- 15. Recreation
- 16. Parental Involvement
- 17. Reporting Child Abuse & Neglect
- 18. Sign of Abuse & Neglect
- 19. Breastfeeding
- 20. Emergency Policy & Procedures
- 21. Visiting Your Children
- 22. Gang Free Zone
- 23. Civil Rights Policy

1. Mission & Goals

MISSION

Neighborhood Schools' mission is to guide children from under-served communities to love learning and develop the academic skills and virtues to succeed in life and transform their communities.

Each child care center will be a safe place to learn, grow and try new things. Additionally, our goal is to strengthen the family safety net by ensuring each family feels connected to and supported by our school community.

GOALS

Our goal is to ensure that all children complete their PreK-12 education ready for success in college and/or careers, with the freedom to choose the most fulfilling life path. As adults, they will be empowered by gratitude to help the next generation of learners.

Neighborhood Schools, Inc believes that all children deserve an education that allows them the freedom to choose their success story. Our students fall in love with learning, and they have the tools and skills needed to find their passion and path in life. We accomplish this by providing our autonomous campuses with safety net resources so they can focus on academics with a whole-child, blended learning model.

We constantly innovate to increase the number of high-quality child care seats for families in high need areas. Philanthropic funding and resources from our partner organizations add the innovative pieces of our approach.

2. Hours of Operations

ADMINISTRATION: Dulce Salinas
DIRECTOR: Cynthia Valencia
BUSINESS PHONE: 956-474-3242

MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY: 7 AM-6 PM

OBSERVED HOLIDAYS & CLOSURES

Please see the Calendar in Appendix A (note this calendar is subject to change). We will be closed for the following Holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Presidents' Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Thanksgiving Day (and the Wednesday before & the Friday after Thanksgiving)
- Christmas Day through New Year's Eve

INCLEMENT WEATHER, FIRE OR OTHER EMERGENCIES

Neighborhood Schools will make every effort to remain open during inclement weather. Our goal is to make sound decisions based on the safety of families and staff, while still meeting families' needs for childcare. Neighborhood Schools may close or delay opening at its discretion. In the case of closure or a delay we will notify you as soon as possible by phone (text), by posting the notice on social media channels, and through Procure.

3. Release of Children

DROP-OFF & DISMISSAL

Our priority is always your child's safety. Neighborhood Schools will only release children to the parent or guardian and any additional approved persons designated at the time of enrollment.

It is important that your child is here for the full day and dropped off and picked up at the same time each day. This will help your child be kindergarten ready and create a consistent schedule that is important for their development. Please keep in mind that the academic portion of the day begins at 8:00 am, so please have your child here by then.

Only the parent and approved pick up can leave with your child. This will be filled out during enrollment and will be verified with their legal ID at pickup. When you drop off your child you must sign your child into our care using Procure and ensure that they are left with a Neighborhood Schools employee.

All pickup and drop-off communications and information is inputted via Procure - or via direct communication with the center director.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

In the case that the parent needs someone outside of the approved pick-up list to pick up his/her child, they must do the following: Emergency Pick Up contact must notify the office manager at least an hour before pick up whenever possible via our Procure with the full name of the person picking up and the date and time. The person picking up must have a valid ID. Once the person's identification is validated by staff, the child will be released.

If we pick up your child from elementary school for after-school care, please call Neighborhood Schools, by 2 pm if your child is not at school that day or we are not picking up your child for any reason. We greatly appreciate your help to plan ahead.

4. Illness & Exclusion

Children who exhibit any sign of illness, as defined by Texas State Licensing will not be accepted into the childcare center. (Please note that during a pandemic some of these rules, symptoms, or time until your child is allowed back may change. We will always follow the guidelines of the local health department in these matters and notify you via email of these changes.) These include, but may not be limited to: fever, vomiting, chicken pox, diarrhea, lice, persistent coughing, or viral infections such as flu, strep throat or Covid-19.

The child may return to daycare once the contagious symptoms have subsided for 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medication) or with a doctor/clinic release. If your child is still exhibiting flu-like symptoms after 24 hrs. they may return to daycare after 7 days or prior with a doctor/clinic release.

If your child becomes ill while at the center, you may be notified while in class or work to come for your child. If you are notified that your child is ill and needs to be excluded from the program, then you must arrange for someone to pick up your child within the hour.

If we are unable to contact you, we will try to reach the emergency contact that you listed on your child's admissions form. Please note that once we contact you for pick up, then you have one hour to pick up your child.

MEDICATIONS:

The Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services mandates that medication is to be administered by us only upon written authorization by you. Following state standards, we will administer medicine only as follows:

Prescription medications must be in the original container labeled with the child's name, a date, directions, and the physician's name. The center must administer the medication as stated on the label directions. The center will not administer medication after the expiration date.

Neighborhood Schools must ensure that non-prescription medication is labeled with the child's name and the date the medication was brought to the center. The center must administer it according to label directions unless otherwise specified by a healthcare professional in writing. Over the counter medication must be age appropriate.

If your child is seriously ill or injured, 911 will be called immediately, and CPR or appropriate first aid will be administered until emergency services arrive— your child will be taken to either your choice of hospital or the nearest emergency room.

5. Discipline & Guidance

Self-regulation and self-discipline are qualities we hope to foster in each child who attends our center. We know that children develop these traits on a continuum. There are certain aggressive behaviors such as: physical aggression, hitting, pulling hair, biting, spitting, pushing, or anything that will endanger the other children are not acceptable. Verbal aggression such as insults, sarcasm, calling names etc. are not permitted either. If a child is found practicing any of the actions mentioned above, they will be supported in the classroom, and we will practice different regulating techniques to better understand their emotions and why their behavior was inappropriate. This is child-specific and includes use of the Calming Corner approach and redirection techniques.

If a child cannot regulate their emotions and continues to behave aggressively and/or disruptively then their parent/legal guardian will be notified. Our goal is to work together, for the benefit of the child and the center. If the offense of the child continues, we will reserve him/her the right of attending the center. Neighborhood Preschools staff is trained in appropriate discipline practices and will follow the guidelines below:

GUIDELINES:

The discipline and guidance of the children will be consistent, relevant to the behavior, and based on an understanding of individual needs and development. Positive methods of discipline, such as Conscious Discipline are always to be used.

<https://consciousdiscipline.com/methodology/>

Removal of a child from the group, discussion, and redirection are used, such as visiting the Calming Corner to de-escalate. At no time are children unattended by an adult.

The purpose and goals of discipline are to teach the children appropriate ways to regulate their emotions and live in harmony with their peers.

The aim of all disciplinary action is the development of self-control and to develop the de- sire

within each child to do what is expected and to encourage acceptable behavior.

We do not employ cruel, harsh, or unusual treatment. Corporal punishment or the threat of corporal punishment and abusive or profane language are prohibited.

6. Suspension & Expulsion

Unfortunately, there are sometimes reasons we must expel a child from our program either on a short term or permanent basis. We will do everything possible to work with the family of the child(ren) in order to prevent this policy from being enforced. The following are some of the reasons we may have to expel or suspend a child from this center:

IMMEDIATE CAUSES FOR EXPULSION

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or him/herself
- Parent threatens physical or intimidating actions towards staff members, students, or other parents.
- Parents exhibits verbal abuse to staff in front of enrolled

PARENTAL ACTIONS FOR CHILD'S EXPULSION

- Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payments.
- Failure to complete required forms including the child's immunization records.
- Habitual tardiness when picking up your child.
- Verbal abuse to staff.

CHILD'S ACTIONS FOR EXPULSION

- Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time.
- Uncontrollable tantrums/ angry outbursts.
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children.
- Excessive biting.

Prior to expulsion, a parent will be called, and correspondence will be sent home identifying the issue. We will ensure that every effort will be made by us to correct the problem and will require that parents support our efforts. If, after one or two weeks, depending on the risk to other children's welfare or safety, the behavior does not improve, parents will be asked to remove him/her.

7. Safe Sleep Policy

- All childcare staff working in the infant room, or child care staff who may potentially work in this room, will receive training on our infant safe sleep policy.
- Infants will always be placed on their backs to sleep, unless there is a signed sleep position medical waiver on file. In that case, a waiver notice will be posted at the infant's crib and the waiver filed in the infant's file.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that babies be placed on their back to sleep. When babies can easily turn over from the back to the stomach, they are allowed to adopt whatever position they prefer for sleep.
- We will follow this recommendation by the AAP. However, child care staff can further discuss with parents how to address circumstances when the baby turns onto their stomach or side.
- Sleeping infants will be checked daily, every 15 - 20 minutes, by assigned staff. We will be especially alert to monitoring a sleeping infant during the first weeks the infant is in child care.
- Steps will be taken to keep babies from getting too warm or overheating by regulating the room temperature, avoiding any bedding and not overdressing or overwrapping the baby.

SAFE SLEEP ENVIRONMENT

- Room temperature will be kept between 68 to 75°F and a thermometer kept in the infant room.
- Infants' heads will not be covered with blankets or bedding. Infants' cribs will not be covered with blankets or bedding. We may use a sleep sack instead of a blanket.
- No loose items such as bedding, blankets, pillows, bumper pads, stuffed animals, etc. will be
- used in cribs. Pacifiers will be allowed in infants' cribs while they sleep.
- A safety-approved crib with a firm mattress and tight fitting sheet will be used.
- Only one infant will be in a crib at a time unless we are evacuating infants in an emergency. No smoking is permitted in the infant room or on the premises.
- All parents/guardians of infants cared for in the infant room will receive a written copy of our Infant/ Toddler Safe Sleep Policy before enrollment.
- To promote healthy development, awake infants will be given supervised "tummy time" for exercise.

8. Child Care Licensing

Neighborhood Schools is a licensed childcare center. We receive regular inspections from child care licensing, which is a part of the Texas Health and Human Services (THHS). THHS protects children by regulating and educating childcare providers. Child Care Licensing responsibilities include:

- Regulating all child care operations and child placing agencies to protect the health, safety, and well-being of children in care.
- Permitting and monitoring operations and agencies for compliance with state licensing standards, rules and laws.
- Investigating complaints alleging violations of minimum standards in child care and residential child care operations.
- Informing parents and the public about child care, including how specific child care and residential childcare operations are complying with minimum standards of care.
- Giving child-care providers technical assistance on meeting licensing minimum standards, rules, and laws.

You are entitled to contact our local office to file a report. The directly licensing contact can be found at the center information board.

Child Care Licensing Local Office:

1330 E 40th St, Houston, TX 77022 (713) 287-3238

PAST INSPECTION HISTORY

To visit the child care licensing website please visit below:

<https://hhs.texas.gov/doing-business-hhs/provider-portals/protective-services-providers/child-carelicensing>

9. Meals

At Neighborhood Schools we believe that healthy bodies support healthy minds! To ensure that our children are receiving healthy meals we prepare everything fresh daily. Parents can have the peace of mind that their children will receive a delicious and nutritious meal every day. Neighborhood Schools possibly will be a part of the Child and Adult Food Program (CACFP) which ensures that the food we serve is prepared according to the standards established by the USDA.

MEAL SCHEDULE

8:00 AM Breakfast,

9:30 AM Snack,

11:30 AM Lunch

3:30 PM Snack

4:40 PM Light Supper

ALLERGY & SPECIAL DIETARY RESTRICTIONS

During the enrollment process, parents are responsible for listing out any allergies on the Admissions form.

Parents are required to present doctor documentation listing the allergy/allergies as well as a plan of action in the case that the child has a reaction.

There will be a posting in the classroom of food allergies for staff to review as well as the individual plan for each child with an allergy.

All special dietary requirements must be documented and deemed necessary by a physician and communicated with the center director.

Neighborhood Schools serve 1% milk to children older than two years of age. Liquids and food hotter than 110 degrees Fahrenheit are kept out of reach of children.

All staff are educated on food allergies, and they take precautions to ensure children are protected.

10. Immunizations

As Required by the Department of Family and Protective Services: Child Welfare and Protective Services:

A complete Hib series is two doses plus a booster dose on or after 12 months of age (three doses total). If a child receives the first dose of Hib vaccine at 12 - 14 months of age, only one additional dose is required (two doses total). Any child who has received a single dose of Hib vaccine on or after 15 - 59 months of age is in compliance with these specified vaccine requirements. Children 60 months of age and older are not required to receive Hib vaccine. If the PCV series is started when a child is seven months of age or older or the child is delinquent in the series, then all four doses may not be required. Please reference the information below to assist with compliance:

For children seven through 11 months of age, two doses are required. For children 12 - 23 months of age: if three doses have been received prior to 12 months of age, then an additional dose is required (total of four doses) on or after 12 months of age. If one or two doses were received prior to 12 months of age, then a total of three doses are required with at least one dose on or after 12 months of age. If zero doses have been received, then two doses are required with both doses on or after 12 months of age.

Children 24 months through 59 months meet the requirement if they have at least three doses with one dose on or after 12 months of age, or two doses with both doses on or after 12 months of age, or one dose on or after 24 months of age. Otherwise, one additional dose is required.

Children 60 months of age and older are not required to receive PCV vaccine.³ For MMR, Varicella, and Hepatitis A vaccines, the first dose must be given on or after the First birthday.

11. Admissions & Enrollment

FORMS:

For your child's safety and to comply with the state regulations, all enrollment papers and health records must be completed before your child attends this center. These records and forms are kept in the office will be updated annually at the time of re-registration.

IMMUNIZATION RECORDS:

A complete up-to-date immunization record must be provided for children not attending public school within five days of enrollment. Immunizations must be kept current while your child is attending the Center.

PHYSICIAN'S EXAMINATION STATEMENT:

A physician's examination statement must be provided within two weeks of enrollment. Both the Immunization Record and the Physician's Examination Statement are requirements of the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services. The center is unable to waive either document.

ABSENCE AND WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURE

Withdrawal from the childcare is to be completed directly with the center director. Under usual circumstances, the center would give the parent/guardian two week notice, except in incidences that violate school safety rules. If a family incurs excessive absences, the center reserves the right to give a two-week notice and then release the seat to another family.

Excessive absence is defined by 3 or more days without notification, or attending less than 50% of operational days in a month.

Admission & Enrollment



2023-2024 SPECIAL COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND RATES*:

Full Time

Infants (6 weeks- 11 months).....	\$260/wk
Older Infants (12 months – 23 months).....	\$260/wk
Toddlers (Two Years).....	\$250/wk

Pre K 3	\$225/wk
Pre K 4	\$225/wk

Before School.....	\$100/wk
After School.....	\$123/wk
Before & After School Combination.....	\$200/wk

Other Seasonal Breaks/ Camps.....	\$220/wk
Registration Fee/Deposit (NR).....	\$200

Discounts may be given to families with multiple children, as well as active Military & Law Enforcement personnel, Neighborhood School or Gallery Furniture Employees who qualify.

*Fees are updated each July 1st. Please check with your local school on the current rates.

PAYMENTS, REFUNDS AND LATE FEES

Fees are collected via Procare with some rare exceptions when cash payments are necessary. The late payment policy can be found on the next page and refunds are permitted in rare cases and will be completed via Procare. Notification of withdrawal or extended absence is required 7 days prior to avoid charges.

Tuition is charged weekly on Friday and due by Monday.

NEIGHBORHOOD Preschools

Important Information for Westchase Neighborhood Preschool Families | 2023-2024 Late Fee Structure

Dear Neighborhood Parents,

This letter explains the late fee structure which applies when a parent or guardian does not pick up their child on time.

While we teach and educate your child, we do not have the resources to provide baby-sitting. Below please find our late fee structure. Late fees will begin on Monday, January 8, 2024.

Late Fee Structure

Monday-Friday

Parents are required to pick up their child no later than 6:00 PM (dismissal begins at 3:45 PM). If a parent is late, Westchase Neighborhood School will charge \$5 in late fees for every 15 minutes beyond 6:00 PM.

6:00 PM - 6:15 PM \$5 fee
6:15 PM - 6:30 PM \$10 fee
6:30 PM - 6:45 PM \$15 fee
ETC.

Early Release Days

Early release days for daycare are at 4pm on the following days: February 9, April 19, May 23. On early release days, parents are required to pick up their child no later than 4pm (dismissal begins at 3:30pm). If a parent is late, Neighborhood Preschool will charge \$5 in late fees for every 15 minutes beyond 4pm.

4:00 PM - 4:15 PM \$5 fee
4:15 PM - 4:30 PM \$10 fee
4:30 PM - 4:45 PM \$15 fee
ETC.

The safety of your child is the utmost concern for us. By picking up your child at the appropriate time, we can ensure

that all students are safe at all times. Thank you for your support!

I have received and acknowledged the late pickup fee structure for Westchase Neighborhood School. I will ensure that my child is picked up from school on time each day.

Student Name: _____ Parent Name: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

12. Children's Daily Supplies



Parents are required to bring a labeled backpack containing daily supplies:

- A change of clothing for emergencies (please have the clothes labeled) A plastic napping mat for children staying full day
- A SMALL, labeled blanket for naptime
- Other items such as toys, and supplies will be supplied by the Childcare Center. Please do not send any money, toys, or personal items with your child.
- All toys, equipment, materials, and furniture are placed in the proper age-appropriate class and are safe for use of the children in each class.
- There are no unsafe or recalled products used at Neighborhood Schools.

13. Policies & Procedures

REST PERIOD:

The Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services, requires that all children have a rest period after the noon meal. No child is required to sleep; however, we do turn out the lights to make the environment more conducive for resting. A plastic mat that can be disinfected daily, is required for each child older than 1 year. A SMALL blanket may be brought from home for this time. These items must fit into a backpack or small cubicle. Please do not bring full sized pillows or blankets; we do not have the storage room. Neighborhood Preschools will be responsible for sanitizing mats but parents must ensure that pillows, pillowcases and blankets are taken on a regular basis to wash.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:

At Neighborhood Schools each child is encouraged to participate in physical activity for a minimum of 120 minutes/day for preschool aged children. On severe weather days physical activity will be indoors. for toddler aged children they will have a minimum of 90 minutes of outdoor play. Proper attire will be required for your child to participate in outdoor play. This includes proper coat or jacket and close-toed shoes.

SCREEN TIME:

Children may have a maximum of 15 minutes of screen time a day. This may be through supplemental videos or technological center time. For the safety of your child, our staff are not permitted to use their personal technological devices while supervising your child.

TOILET TRAINING:

When your child is ready to learn to use the toilet, close and frequent communication between the parent and our team is necessary. This should be a positive experience with a lot of encouragement for doing well. We are aware of and look for indicators that a child is ready to learn to use the toilet. Learning to use the toilet requires consistency and patience.

HOME LUNCH POLICY:

We provide breakfast, AM snack, lunch, PM snack, and dinner. We welcome commercially prepared snacks brought by families to share for special occasions only. If you plan to bring a lunch for your child then please keep in mind that we are a nut-free campus. Also be sure to follow the guidelines in Appendix B.

CLOTHING GUIDELINES:

Neighborhood Schools will not require children to wear uniforms. These are recommendations: For bottoms, your child may wear shorts, leggings, or pants. Children must wear closed toe shoes for their safety. Girls will need to wear shorts under skirts or leggings.

BIRTHDAYS & SPECIAL OCCASIONS:

Birthdays are always a special time for the children. If it is your child's birthday, you may bring special treats to share with his/her classmates. The treats should always be made as simple as possible and commercially prepared. Please check with your teacher or the director to ensure that what you are bringing is not a hazard to other children due to allergies. We will be happy to distribute party invitations to classmates.

VIDEO MONITORING POLICY:

For safety purposes, including maintaining order and discipline, surveillance cameras will be used to monitor students in classrooms and common areas. Video recordings will be reviewed routinely to document student and teacher conduct. Camera footage may be made available to childcare licensing if required for investigating an incident.

14. Curriculum

During the childcare program, children will participate in individual and group activities that will encourage them to grow in their cognitive, social/emotional, speech & language, and fine & gross motor skill development by engaging in:

- Music Academic Time Arts & Crafts
- Circle time
- Nap
- Movement Outdoor Play
- Social and Emotional Development
- Breakfast/Snacks/Lunch/Dinner
- Center Play

At Neighborhood Schools we will be utilizing Frog Street to supplement learning in our classrooms. As a research-based resource that demonstrates the importance of teacher-student interactions, immediate and regular access to the best literature available, and the need for social-emotional development instruction, Frog Street offers teachers a thematic and integrated approach to guiding our youngest learners. Organized around themes that grow in scope as children become more aware of their surroundings, the program introduces children to mathematics, literacy, science, and the arts in a way that feels like play and inspires joyful engagement.

For more information please visit: <http://www.frogstreet.com/curriculum/pre-k/>

Screen Time Policy

We occasionally utilize screen time to help our students with meeting educational goals. All programs are age-appropriate for your child and are free from advertisement and violence. Screen time takes place during educational times (cannot be used during mealtimes, snack times, or rest times). During an 8-hour school day, each student is only allowed 60 minutes of total screen time. Screen time is wholly avoided for children 18 months and younger.

15. Recreation

WATER PLAY:

At Neighborhood Schools we will not be offering water play activities.

FIELD TRIPS:

Neighborhood Schools also will host off-site field trips at this time.

Application of Sunscreen & Insect Repellent:

Neighborhood Schools will only apply sunscreen or insect repellent if parents provide them and signs a consent form for Neighborhood Schools to apply the sunscreen and/or insect repellent.

Transportation Policy:

At Neighborhood Schools the safety of our students and employees is of outmost importance. We will therefore transport children only if we have a signed permission slip on file. All staff members and families will use Procure to sign children in and out and children will never be released to someone that does not have photo identification. Staff-members are all trained in CPR/First Aid/AED for adults and pediatrics receive extra training for transportation safety.

16. Parental Involvement

Your role as parents is the most critical and foundational in your child's development. They will largely learn their habits, cultural norms, and beliefs from you. Below are ways that you can best help your child.

- Drop your child off at the same time each day. Our scholastic portion of the day begins at 8:00 am, so please have your child dropped off by then. By arriving by this time each day you also minimize distractions that other students may have and help the children with the consistency of schedule that they will need to have for kindergarten
- Limit screen time for your child. Limit your own screen time when you are with your child as they learn their habits from you. This is especially important when you are at Neighborhood Schools as this facilitates better communication between you and Neighborhood Schools staff.
- Encourage lots of physical activity.
- Read to your child for a minimum of 20 minutes/day in your primary language. Contribute to annual surveys and questionnaires so that we may better serve you and your family.

Communication with the Neighborhood Schools Team:

While we try to interact daily with every parent, when possible, we understand more serious issues may arise that you wish to discuss with staff. The best practice for resolving any issues starts with going to the person who has the most knowledge of the interaction or concern, your child's teacher. Appointments can be made most quickly through Procure, and can be made during arrival or dismissal. Please do not try to have an unplanned meeting with a staff member during arrival or dismissal as this threatens the safety of the other children.

If you do not get a satisfactory solution, you can request a meeting with the child care director through Procure or through calling any of the numbers provided on the notification board.

IMPORTANT: While we very rarely experience interactions with a parent who does not control their temper and creates a threatening situation, the policy for such interaction is:

FIRST INCIDENT: The parent is sent a written warning via email and is handed a printed version of that written warning.

SECOND INCIDENT*: Authorities are notified and the parent is sent a written notification that they are no longer allowed on the campus.

*Any interaction which requires the authorities to respond, the individual is automatically banned from entering campus. ,

General Daily Communications

- Changes in the center's policies and procedures may be sent by email or home in your child's bag.
- Daily communication such as daily logs of meals, diaper changes, needs, notifications/alerts will be sent through Procure directly to your phone. In addition to providing flyers and other written communication, we will also use Procure to communicate upcoming events and volunteer opportunities.
- If there are any concerns or complaints the parents may request a conference with the Director of Neighborhood Schools in person, by phone or by email.
- Parents may obtain additional information about this center including our last inspection report by contacting the local Child Care Licensing office. The telephone number for the local office is 713-940- 5200.
- Families on subsidy, please be sure to update your information as needed.

NOTE: Translation by another staff member is available daily for English, Spanish and Arabic speaking families.

17. Reporting Child Abuse & Neglect

Child abuse and neglect are against the law in Texas, and so is failure to report it. 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 to 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 dates and time 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. Please 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

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

18. Signs of Abuse and Neglect

Suspect Physical Abuse when you see:

- Frequent injuries, such as bruises, cuts, black eyes, or burns without adequate explanations. Frequent complaints of pain without obvious injury.
- Burns or bruises in unusual patterns that may indicate the use of an instrument or human bite, or cigarette burns on any part of the body.
- Lack of reaction to pain.
- Aggressive, disruptive, and destructive behavior. Passive, withdrawn, and emotionless behavior.
- Fear of going home or seeing parents; injuries that appear after a child has not been seen for several days.
- Unreasonable clothing that may hide injuries to arms and legs.

Suspect neglect when you see:

- Obvious malnourishment. Lack of personal cleanliness. Torn or dirty clothing.
- Stealing or begging for food.
- Child unattended for long periods of time.
- Need for glasses, dental care, or other medical attention. Frequent tardiness or absence from school.

Suspect neglect when you see:

- Physical signs of sexually transmitted disease. Evidence of injury to the genital area.
- Pregnancy in a young girl.
- Difficulty in sitting or walking.
- Frequent expressions of sexual activity between adult and child. Extreme fear of being alone with adults of a certain sex.
- Sexually suggestive, inappropriate, or promiscuous behavior. Knowledge of sexual relations beyond what is expected for a child's age. Sexual victimization of other children.

All the childcare teachers and administrative staff working at Neighborhood Schools are annually trained on how to recognize, respond, and report signs of abuse and neglect. The teaching and administrative staff of Neighborhood Schools are trained and required by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services to follow all the guidelines and procedures stated above as mandatory reporters. If abuse or neglect are suspected, they are bound by law and policy to contact the hotline.

19. Breast-Feeding

Neighborhood Schools supports breastfeeding. We will accept, store, and serve expressed human milk for feedings in ready to feed sanitary infant bottles. Upon entering the center, the teacher will make sure that the bottles are labeled with the infant's name and date. Teachers will make sure that the bottles are immediately stored in the classroom's refrigerator. The ready-to-feed bottles brought by the parents into the center will be kept in the refrigerator only and for no longer than 48 hours. When feeding the infants expressed human milk, teachers will gently mix, not shake the milk before feeding to diminish the amount of air consumed by your child and to ensure that the rich proteins and carbohydrates are intact.



Teachers will ensure that mothers wishing to breastfeed their infants will be given the opportunity to take their infants to a comfortable place in the school. Teachers will collaborate with breastfeeding mothers by coordinating feedings and making necessary arrangements for the feedings to take place.

Additional Feeding Requirements:

In addition to breast milk, teachers serve the formula that is approved by parents. Parents are welcome to bring additional supplemental foods for their infants. The staff will prepare it according to the manufacturer's instructions. When feeding infants, bottle feedings do not contain solid foods unless the child's health care provider supplies written instructions and a medical reason for this practice. Teachers will make sure to discard after one hour any formula or human milk that is served but not completely consumed or is not refrigerated. Human milk and formula is warmed in water at no more than 120 degrees Fahrenheit for no more than five minutes. Microwave ovens are never used to warm human milk, formula, or any other infant foods. Additionally, liquids hotter than 110 degrees Fahrenheit are kept out of reach of children.

Teachers do not offer solid foods to infants less than six months of age, unless recommended by the infant's health care provider and approved by families. Fruit juices are not offered to infants less than 12 months. Teachers avoid offering infants sweetened beverages. If teachers do serve the children (older than 12 months of age) juice (only 100% fruit juice is recommended), then the amount is limited to no more than four ounces per day.

20. Emergency Policies & Procedures

The Center's Staff follows the below guidelines during emergencies:

The staff knows all the children under their care, counts, and conducts a name to face check on the children prior to exiting the classroom. Upon evacuation, the staff takes the attendance sheet and the Evacuation Emergency Kit with them and exit the building according to the evacuation chart posted in the classroom by the back door. Once evacuated to a safe place, the staff counts the children again. After all the children, infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children have been evacuated from their respective classrooms, they are taken to one of the designated safe zones depending on the severity of the situation and supervised there until further instructions are given to them by the administration.

**THE RELOCATION SITE FOR THIS SCHOOL IS:
Rod Paige Elementary, 7501 Curry Rd., Houston TX 77093**

Emergency Exit Doors:

Other than the center's main front doors, all other doors are considered emergency exit doors and will remain accessible at all times. There should not be anything that blocks those doors including furniture of any kind, mats during nap time or anything else.

Fire extinguishers: There is a fire extinguisher in the main hallway and in every other preschool room. The fire extinguishers are checked every month, upon return from the monthly Fire Drill. The Center's staff is familiar with the proper use and maintenance of fire extinguishers.

Children are not released to anyone until the emergency is over and the children can be properly accounted for and signed-out on the daily rosters. The children are the center's responsibility until they are properly signed-out by the parent and/or the authorized guardian.

The center's staff conducts monthly fire drills, shelter in place drills and quarterly severe weather drills as required by Child Care Licensing.

21. Visiting Your Children

You are always welcomed!

Parents may visit their children in our facilities any time they wish. Parents who plan to visit their children frequently need to undergo a background check. In addition, it is important that you follow the classroom routine to avoid disturbing classroom schedules and activities. If you wish to meet with the Director or a staff member, please make an appointment so that arrangements can be made.

At Neighborhood Schools we appreciate parents' valuable input on the care of their children and encourage parent participation. Parents can visit as much or as little as their schedules (and children) will allow. We also invite grandparents to come and visit and read a story to the class. If you are going to have a grandparent visit us, please let your child's teacher know so that we can expect them.

Family Engagement

Neighborhood Schools believes that research tells us that the most successful children have lots of family engagement in their learning and development. We send home regular developmental updates and provide several opportunities for parents to join in on the fun.

What parents can do at the center: (a few suggestions)

- Share your skills—play an instrument, tell a story, share your cultural traditions.
- Make an appointment to discuss your child. Child-care staff are happy to discuss your child. Keep in mind that pick-up & drop-off times are the busiest times for staff.
- Communicate with staff about any big changes in your child's life; changes in family circumstances, moving to a new house, death of grandparent etc. Donate and recycle materials for arts and crafts.
- Help with outings if you can—this is a good way to share experiences with your child.
- Attend celebrations: open-evenings, fundraisers etc. that are organized throughout the year. (e.g. Mother's Day Out, Father's Day Out, Thanksgiving Dinner, Christmas Dinner, and much more!)
- Participate in parent trainings.

22. Gang Free Zone

As a result of House Bill 2086 that passed during the 81st Legislature, Regular Session, Chapter 42 of the Human Resource Code includes section 42.064, effective September 1, 2009. The new statute requires that information about gang-free zones be distributed to parents and guardians of children in care at licensed child care centers. The following is a tip sheet to assist the center in complying with the new law. This information will be posted at the center and copies will be provided to parents.

What is a gang-free zone?

A gang-free zone is a designated area around a specific location where prohibited gang-related activity is subject to increased penalties under Texas law. The specific locations include day care centers. The gang-free zone is within 1000 feet of your child care center. For more information about what constitutes a gang-free zone please consult sections 71.028 and 71.029 of the Texas Penal Code.

How do parents know where a gang-free zone ends?

The area that falls within a gang-free zone can vary depending on the type of location. The local municipal or county engineer may produce and update maps for the purposes of prosecution. Parents may contact their local municipality or court house for information about obtaining a copy of a map if they choose to do so.

What is the purpose for gang-free zones?

Similar to the motivation behind establishing drug-free zones, the purpose of gang-free zones is to determine certain types of criminal activity in areas where children gather by enforcing tougher penalties.

What does it mean for our center?

A child care center must inform parents or guardians of children attending the center about the new gang-free zone designation. This means parents or guardians need to be informed that certain gang related criminal activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of your center is a violation of this law and is therefore subject to increased penalty under state law.

What can we do?

As parents, we need to be aware of our surroundings and if we suspect a gang or drug related activity is occurring, please call 911.

23. Civil Rights Policy

In some circumstances, Neighborhood Schools may receive a reimbursement for the purchase of ingredients in order to serve healthy meals to your children. Neighborhood Schools is responsible for ensuring that all eligible children have equal access to the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program. Per this program, and Neighborhood Schools Policy, we cannot discriminate in employment or program participation based on:

- Race
- Color
- National Origin
- Sex
- Age
- Disability

We strictly adhere to and enforce the provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), both within our administrative office and our center of operations.

Public Notification

The Center notifies the public as follows:

- Display the official USDA nondiscrimination poster ("...And Justice For All") in a prominent place. Make program information available to the public upon request.
- Provide information materials related to the CACFP-CCC in languages other than English, if the need exists.
- Provide the following nondiscrimination statement and complaint-filing procedures in all applications and program-related information intended for the parents of current and potential participants:

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington D.C. 20250-9410 or call toll free (866) 632-9992 (Voice). Individuals who are hearing impaired or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Civil Rights Policy

The non-discrimination statement is printed in its entirety on all program documents that are intended for the public. However, civil rights laws allow the Center to restrict program participation based on age or sex commensurate with the objectives of the CACFP program recipient, for example, childcare centers can deny the participation of elderly persons, shelters for battered women can deny the participation of men.

Program-related written materials are provided to all current and potential program participants with the nondiscrimination statement and complaint-filing procedures included.

NOTE: When human likenesses are used in program materials, reasonable efforts are made to depict an ethnic balance.