

Program Orientation

Vision and Mission

Our vision of a Child's Haven is a Christian environment where the uniqueness of all children is celebrated and all individuals are encouraged to explore, to learn and to grow to their potential.

The mission of A Child's Haven is to provide an educational environment in which the Christian faith will be reflected. We will provide learning opportunities for children, which are developmentally appropriate, intellectually stimulating, and spiritually nurturing in a safe, loving environment.

The Importance of Play

Our program philosophy is based on the premise that children learn about the world around them through play (active involvement with other children, adults, and materials). Learning takes place as young children touch, manipulate, and experiment with things and interact with people. The emphasis is on the experiences of the children rather than the results of those experiences. For examples, painting is more important than what has been painted; building with blocks is more important than what is built. Days are filled with planned and spontaneous moments of learning. There's time for active outdoor play, imaginative games, independent discovery and group time experiences.

Program Objectives

1. Assist children in learning to live comfortably in a social environment in addition to the family.
2. Develop toleration and respect for individual and cultural differences through discussion, literature, and role modeling.
3. Provide opportunities for the children to interact, guided by models of socially acceptable behavior.
4. Enhance the child's self-esteem, self-awareness, and self-confidence by offering many opportunities for a child to succeed, express ideas, and understand his/her emotions and to attain skills to control them (using peaceful conflict resolution).
5. Provide opportunities for math, science, reading, memory skills, language development, and social science.
6. Increase attention span and follow simple directions.
7. Foster creativity and self-expression through art, music, and dramatic play.
8. Develop small muscles by using scissors, paste, clay, blocks, puzzles, beads, pegs, etc.
9. Develop large muscles through outdoor activities such as climbing, riding a tricycle, running, etc.
10. Stimulate and encourage curiosity and provide opportunities for problem solving.
11. Encourage children to take care of their own needs with support from the adults in their environment.
12. Foster a belief in God and to know that God loves them and cares for them.

Christian Education

A Child's Haven provides a Christian environment where God's love is celebrated. Each week the teachers present a Bible story and/or a Bible verse to the children in a developmentally appropriate way. Prayer is used appropriately throughout the day. Songs with A Christian message are used in the classroom on a regular basis. The ministers of the church make visits to the classrooms, getting to know the children and telling stories.

Days and Hours of Operation

A Child's Haven is in operation August to July, Tuesday and Thursday, 9:00 – 1:00. Children are placed in the appropriate class based their age September 1st of the current year. We operate on the LISD school calendar.

Enrollment and Fee Policies

Registration Fee: \$65.00 per year per child. This fee covers administrative costs.

Supply Fee: \$15.00 per semester per child. This fee covers art supplies.

Tuition per month:

One Year olds: \$170.00

Two – Four Year olds: \$155.00

Sibling discount: Full tuition for the first child and 10% reduction in tuition for each additional child.

Tuition is due on the first of each month and is considered last past the 10th. A late charge of \$15.00 will be charged after the 10th of each month.

Tuition will be raised every other year by 6.5%. (rates will change in 2011-2012)

Admission Procedures

Registration for the following year is held in March. Church members and currently enrolled children have first priority. A waiting list is maintained according to date the form was received.

Enrollment

All children must be enrolled before attending the center. The following must be completed and submitted to the center:

*Application and enrollment packet

*Immunization record (up to date and current, needs child's name, birth date, number of doses and type of vaccine, and date the child received each immunization, stamp, or signature from physician or health department).

*Signed parent permission for emergency medical attention.

*Written document indicating the child is able to take part in the program from licensed health personnel.

Children are enrolled in a class based on their age September 1, 2010.

Notification of Absence

Please call the school by 9:00 a.m. if your child is going to be absent. If your child is sick, please keep us informed so we can alert other parents to possible communicable diseases. Extended absence: Our expenses do not vary if a child does not attend for a period of time. It is our policy that to hold a class position, tuition must be paid. Exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Late Departure

Children who are picked up after 1:10 p.m. will be escorted to the office. After 1:10 there is a late charge of \$1.00 per minute.

Financial Assistance

Parents needing financial assistance should talk to the director about available funding and eligibility requirements.

Health and Safety

Arrival and Departure

Children must be brought into their classroom and released to the assigned staff. Parents/guardians should **sign their child in and out each day**. Children will be released only to individuals other than their parents if the following procedures are followed.

Persons listed on your child's release form may pick your child up with proper identification. Please notify the teacher/director in advance if you know of a change in arrangements.

Any person picking up a child in an impaired condition will be encouraged to allow us to find alternative transportation.

Inclement Weather

A Child's Haven will follow the same conditions that are advised for the LISD. If school is cancelled for LISD, the same applies to A Child's Haven. If you are uncertain please call the school and listen to the prerecorded message about weather conditions and delays. Due to our unvarying expenses, **tuition will not be refunded** for inclement weather days.

Illness

One of the most serious challenges facing group care situations for young children is preventing illness. The staff will strive to maintain the highest standards of cleanliness. Proper hand washing procedures will be followed and taught to the children. The toys, eating surfaces and toileting and diaper equipment will be sanitized between children's use. One of the best ways to prevent the spread of disease is to have strictly enforced standards regarding the exclusion of ill children. **We need your help for this.** Do not bring ill children to school and if your child becomes ill at school, please pick the child up immediately. According to the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services, children cannot attend school if one or more of the following conditions exist:

1. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in facility activities.
2. The illness results in a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children.
3. The child has any one of the following:

- a. armpit temperature of 99.4 degrees or greater, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness.
- b. Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, uncontrolled breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, vomiting illness (two or more episodes in 24 hours), rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, wheezing, behavior change, or other unusual signs.
- c. The child has been diagnosed with a contagious disease, until medical evaluation determines that the child is no longer communicable and is able to participate in the facility's activities.

Medications

Under no circumstances will A Child's Haven staff administer medication to children. Do not send medication with your child, including in their lunch box or diaper bag. Parents are WELCOME to come during school hours to administer medication to their child.

Accidental Injuries

In the case of a serious accidental injury to your child, we will make an immediate attempt to contact a parent. If necessary, we will call 911 and an ambulance will take your child to Round Rock Hospital. Because of this, it is essential for parent(s) to let us know the following information:

1. Where you can be reached while your child is in attendance at the center.
2. Physician's name and phone number.
3. Emergency contacts and phone numbers.

If injuries are not of a serious nature, we will apply first-aid and notify parents(s) at the end of the day in an accident report.

Emergency Procedures

Fire and evacuation drills are held each month to acquaint your child with evacuation procedures. In case of a toxic fume release or if the building must be evacuated, the children will be taken to St. John the Forerunner Orthodox Church (800 W. Park St.)

Teacher Qualifications

All teachers for this program will have to be CPR trained and first-aid trained and have a criminal background check before they are employed. All volunteers for the program must also have a background check before they may work with the children.

Child Abuse and Neglect

In an effort to protect the well-being and safety of children, the state of Texas requires anyone who suspects child abuse and neglect to report it to the proper authorities. The staff has been trained to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect. All suspect indicators will be documented and reported. The school is required by law to cooperate with any investigation of child abuse and neglect.

Child Custody Issues

It is the school's intent to meet the needs of children especially when the parents may be experiencing difficult situations such as divorce, separation, or remarriage. Sharing information about such situations may be helpful to school staff and will be held in the strictest confidentiality. The school cannot legally restrict the non-custodial parents from visiting the child, reviewing the child's records, or picking the child up unless the school has been furnished with legally filed, executed and current documents. Copies of all court documents must be submitted to the school. In case of conflicts, the proper authorities will be contacted.

General Policies and Procedures

Parental Grievance Policy

If there is a particular issue or grievance by a parent/guardian concerning our program, please feel free to contact the director at any time (335-9540 or jodi_blount@hotmail.com) and this issue will be put into writing and resolved at once. If the issue is not resolved to your liking the matter may be brought in writing to the Board of this program, which will resolve the program fairly for all parties involved.

Separation

Separation can be stressful for parents as well as children. We are here to help in this sometimes difficult, but very common, developmental process. When you leave your child, please don't "sneak out". Make the good-bye and hug something he/she can count on, even if it brings some tears at first. Sometimes children don't express anxiety until a few weeks later, when they feel comfortable enough here to do so. In either case, please be assured, we will comfort and reassure your child; we'll talk about his/her feelings. We will need you to do the same. And when it's time for you to leave the classroom, after you say your good-byes, make the departure definite. **Lingering** can make a child unsure of what is expected of him/her. Although parents are welcome to visit the center at any time, keep in mind that it may be difficult for a very young child to cope with separating from a parent for a second time during the day.

Guidance Techniques

We believe that discipline and guidance should be consistent and based on an understanding of individual needs and development. Please remember that young children need the experience of interacting with other children on a consistent basis. Learning how to take turns and cooperate with others is an ongoing process for young children and consequently, aggressive behavior will occur (i.e. hitting, yelling, name calling, biting, pinching, kicking, etc.) Although we do not allow this behavior to persist, it does take time for a child to learn a more acceptable way of dealing with his/her anger and frustration (i.e. – using appropriate words to express feelings). The staff will not use abusive, neglectful, corporal, humiliating, or frightening punishment under any circumstances. No child will be physically restrained unless it is necessary to protect the safety and health of the child or others. Changes at home do affect a child's behavior at school. The staff is willing to work with you regarding behavior challenges at school or home.

Policies and Procedures

A Child's Haven policies are developed from guidelines set by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. The State Agency may be contacted at 512-388-6215. The Child Abuse hotline is posted in our main hallway and may be reached at 1-800-252-5400. The website for the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services is www.tdprs.state.tx.us.

Parents will be notified in writing of any changes in school policies and will be asked to sign a statement that they have received the changes.

Questions or concerns of the policies and procedures of A Child's Haven should be addressed by calling the office at 335-9540 or by meeting with the director.

Visitors

Parents and visitors are welcome at A Child's Haven but must sign in and sign out at the school office and wear a visitor tag while on campus. A member of the school staff will accompany visitors while on campus. Parents are welcome at any time but asked to observe from outside the classroom door so as not to disturb the classes. All parents who volunteer with the children or interact with them in any manner are required to have a background check first.

Anyone visiting the school during school hours must enter and exit from the main doors of the Multi-Ministry Building. Other doors to the school remain locked from the outside.

Field Trips

Some of our classes may take field trips throughout the year with parent volunteers or staff members providing the transportation. Permission slips for field trips with transportation permission included will be sent home before each trip. Parent volunteers that drive and supervise other children than their own will need to have a background check. In order to ensure proper supervision when away from the school, no siblings will be allowed for volunteers supervising other children.

Meals and Snacks

All children need to bring a nutritious, well-balanced lunch from home each day. Pack lunches with items that do not require refrigeration and/or which can be kept cool with an ice pack brought from home. Refrigeration for bottles will be provided in the one-year room. Use containers in your child's lunchbox that can be easily opened by your older child. Please label bottles, lunchboxes, and cups with your child's name. Please limit the use of sweets to assist us in teaching good nutrition. Snacks are provided on a regular rotating basis and are provided on each month's calendar. A midmorning snack of crackers, fruit, and a drink will be provided in the classroom.

Clothing

Clothing that children wear to school should be comfortable and easy to put on and remove. We offer art activities, water, outdoor play, and sensory play (shaving crème,

etc.) so children need to wear clothing that allows them to move about freely and get dirty. The children will go outside every day (weather permitting) so dress them accordingly. Each child also needs two complete changes of clothing, labeled with the child's name. Please also have your child wear tennis shoes.

Items Brought From Home

Our center maintains a generous supply of materials, toys, and equipment for the children to use. Therefore, children are asked to keep personal toys at home. This helps us to avoid hurt feelings if an item is lost or broken. Children frequently want to share with their class nature items and treasures from home. Such items are especially welcomed if they support the topic being studied, the teacher will send a note home asking for these particular items.

Holidays

Our school chooses to celebrate the various holidays throughout the year in a low-key manners. Children receive a great deal of stimulation during these times, and our feeling is that we should maintain the consistency that the children come to expect at school. We will discuss holidays, read stories about them, based on children's interests, but we will limit parties (notes will be sent home concerning these holidays during the year). Because we are a Christian school the children will learn about the meaning of Christmas and Easter from the Methodist perspective. Our curriculum demonstrates respect for all customs and celebrates the diversity of all families; therefore we feel it is up to each individual family to celebrate special days in their own way.

Birthdays

Please keep in mind that although we are happy to share in the excitement of your child's birthday, this is not an appropriate setting for a party. We will sing Happy Birthday to your child and say a special prayer. Please do not bring decorative cups, napkins, plates, goody bags, etc. If you wish to have a party for your child, plan to do this somewhere separate from school. If invitations are sent to school for a party, please be sure to send one for each child in the classroom.

Parent Information and Communication

A newsletter will be sent home once a month to keep your family informed of events. There are also notices of activities and events on our information board. Monthly emails are also sent to families to inform of school events and activities.

Please inform your child's teacher of any changes in your routine, such as illnesses, death or separations that may affect them at school. Calling the office is greatly appreciated if your child will miss school. A school staff member will contact you if your child is absent 3 days.