

Parent Handbook

The Joyful Child at Hornsby Bend

Our Curriculum

Where do we learn? Outside!

Welcome to The Joyful Child, where we cultivate a dynamic learning environment that nurtures independence, divergent thinking, creativity, and a lifelong passion for learning. Our philosophy centers on the belief that meaningful learning emerges when it resonates with each child's unique journey. We strive to create a natural and playful atmosphere, where learning is a joyous experience rather than mere memorization.

How do we learn? By playing!

Our play-based curriculum allows children the freedom to grow in their own unique way. We use many natural or open-ended materials and spend much of our day outside. We also incorporate [Mother Goose Time](#) and [Frog Street](#) curriculum, a research-based curriculum that aligns with NAEYC and National Early Learning Standards.

Our Philosophy

Embrace curiosity

The philosophy of The Joyful Child is based on the image of the whole child. We see the individual child as having the right to a high quality education. We respect that the child is the co-constructor of knowledge. This means that the children's interests and their innate curiosity help choreograph our child-centered, nature-based curriculum.

Reference the greats

We support the children's exploration of their environment for learning and the provocation to take another look. Our philosophy combines some of the teachings of the greatest educators in early childhood: [Jean Piaget](#), [Bev Bos](#), [Becky Bailey](#) and [Reggio Emilia's Loris Malaguzzi](#). The environment we provide is structured so that our curriculum is truly child centered, which implies that it is both child initiated and teacher facilitated.

Lead with creativity and trust

We focus on the process of learning in all its intricacies, not just the end result or the product. The learner must be trusted and supported to follow the creative processes without worry of what the finished product may be. At The Joyful Child, we are dedicated to allowing children the freedom to explore the world at their leisure and direction, while setting age-appropriate boundaries and limits to make sure children feel safe.

Early childhood inclusion

Early childhood inclusion embodies the values, policies, and practices that support the rights of every infant and young child and his or her family. Regardless of ability to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society every child is included at The Joyful Child.

The desired results of inclusive experiences for children with and without disabilities and their families include a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and development and learning to reach their full potential. The defining features of inclusion that can be used to identify high quality early childhood programs and services are access, participation, and support.

Three parts of inclusion

Access

Physical barriers are removed. The setting has a wide range of activities, and there are multiple ways to be part of the environment and its activities. Every child and family feels welcome.

Participation

All children participate in the setting's routines and activities. All children feel they belong.

Support

Many things support inclusion. Program policies can encourage diversity. Staff training can increase the ability to serve a wide range of children. Effective communication between parents and providers and a focus on overall quality can be "built in" supports. There may also be support for individual children and youth. Examples include consultation with specialists who know the child, working with an inclusion specialist, and specific communication strategies between parents and providers.

Daily Routine

6:30 am	Arrival (free play)
7:20 am	Clean up
7:30 am	Breakfast
8:15 am	(free play)
8:45 am	Morning welcome
9:00 am	Circle time
9:30 am	(free play)
10:00 am	Outside play
11:00 am	Cleanup
11:15 am	Lunch
11:45 am	Outdoors (preschool)
12:20 pm	Clean up
12:30 pm	Nap time
2:30 pm	Teacher led activities
3:30 pm	Music movement
4:00 pm	Story time
4:30-6:00 pm	Outside play (weather permitting)
6:00 pm	Pickup

Policy and Procedures

We are open:

Monday	6:30 am - 6:00 pm
Tuesday	6:30 am - 6:00 pm
Wednesday	6:30 am - 6:00 pm
Thursday	6:30 am - 6:00 pm
Friday	6:30 am - 6:00 pm

We are closed 32 days a year:

- Single day closures
 - New Year's Day
 - Martin Luther King Day
 - Good Friday
 - Memorial Day
 - Independence Day
 - Labor Day
 - Formula Racing Day
- Extended closures
 - Spring Break: 5 days
 - Summer Break: 5 days
 - Thanksgiving Break: 5 Days
 - Christmas Break: 10 days

Ample notice will be given for any additional closures. If a holiday falls on the weekend, then the acknowledged Federal/State holiday prevails. Example: If Christmas is on Sunday, we will be closed the following Monday.

Late Drop Off & Pick Up

We understand that certain conditions may cause a delay in your commute. We ask that parents notify teachers should they be late to pick up or drop off their child(ren).

The facility closes at 6:00 pm. We reserve the right to charge \$1.00 per minute when picking up your child past 6:00 pm. After 3 late pick ups, your child care will be terminated.

Attendance & Release of Children

- We strongly encourage every child who is enrolled in the center to attend regularly, to promote the child's development and sense of consistency.
- Each child must be accompanied into the building and presented to the teacher by an adult. Your signature will be required to sign your child in and out.
- Children will only be dismissed to their parents or an authorized adult listed on the application.
- If an authorized adult listed on your child's application will pick up your child, please have them bring a driver's license for identification purposes.
- If your child will be absent, please call us and let us know so we can plan accordingly.

Emergency Closures:

The Joyful Child will follow the Del Valle School district (DVISD) emergencies for delayed-openings and closures determined by extreme weather hazards or unsafe driving conditions.

- Should DVISD announce a two hour delayed-opening, we will open at 10:00am.
- Should DVISD announce a 12:00pm delayed-opening or an all-day closure, we will open at 12:00pm or announce an all day closure.

Meals and Nutrition

Meal times

Breakfast	7:30 am
Lunch	11:30 am
Afternoon snack	2:30 pm

- We participate in the [USDA Child & Adult Care Food Program](#).
- We have “family style” meals.
- Monthly menus are posted on the first of the month.
- Milk is provided with breakfast and lunch. Milk, juice, or water is served with snacks.
- We spend a lot of time outdoors, so please send a labeled water bottle/cup for your child.
- We strive to teach children good nutrition.
- We are happy to send home healthy meal and snack suggestions if you need some fresh ideas.

Additional information

- Liquids and food hotter than **110 degrees Fahrenheit** are kept out of reach.
- All staff are educated on food allergies and they take precautions to ensure children are protected.
- On days that this center serves meals, prepared food that is brought into the program to be shared among children is commercially prepared OR prepared in a kitchen that is inspected by the local health officials.
- Healthy snacks (as listed by the [Texas Department of Agriculture](#)) are available for school aged children as children arrive.
- The Joyful Child does not allow food from home, unless special dietary needs exist. Parents can find [healthy snacks here](#).

Food allergies

Parents should be aware of food allergies. This is when your body mistakes harmless food as something that could make you sick. When you eat something you're allergic to, your immune system responds to protect you. You might get a mild skin rash or itchy eyes, or you could have a bigger reaction that leaves you gasping for breath. Food allergies can be serious, but you can take steps to manage them. One of the best things you can do is avoid your trigger foods.

All staff of The Joyful Child are educated on food allergies and they take precautions to ensure children are protected.

Allergy related foods:

- Milk
- Eggs
- Peanuts
- Tree nuts (Walnuts, almonds, pine nuts, brazil nuts, pecans)

Celebrations & Birthdays

Seasonal and cultural celebrations and birthdays are special days for children, and we understand you may want to celebrate these occasions at school.

If you'd like to provide food for the celebration, we ask that **all food items be commercially packaged with ingredient statements** in order to properly account for child food allergies.

We encourage healthy snack options such as whole-grain items, vegetables with dip, or fresh fruit platters. Due to allergies and necessary scheduling needs, please make arrangements with the director prior to the special day.

Required food portions

Infants

Given the specific needs of infants, Child Care Licensing requires parents to provide a monthly feeding schedule and update it monthly as infants develop and change eating routine. The parents must provide formula or breast milk, but baby food will be provided. We proudly accommodate breastfeeding and are equipped to handle your expressed breast milk. Please contact your director for more details or information about breastfeeding.

Supplemental resources:

- [La Leche League International](#)
- [Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children \(WIC\)](#)

Toddlers

- Vegetables & Fruits
 - ¼ cup of 2 Vegetables
 - ¼ cup of 2 Fruit
 - ¼ cup of 1 Vegetable & 1 Fruit
- Protein
 - 1 ounce Meat
 - ¼ cup of Beans
 - 2 tablespoons of Soy butter
 - ½ of an Egg
 - 4 ounce of Yogurt
- Carbohydrates
 - ½ slice of Bread
 - ¼ cup of Pasta

(required food portions continued next page)

Pre-schoolers

- Vegetables & Fruits
 - ½ cup of 2 Vegetables
 - ½ cup of 2 Fruit
 - ½ cup of 1 Vegetable & 1 Fruit
- Protein 1 ½ ounce Meat
 - ½ cup of Beans
 - 3 tablespoons of Soy butter
 - ¼ of an Egg
 - 6 ounce of Yogurt
- Carbohydrates
 - ½ slice of Bread
 - ¼ cup of Pasta

Administration

Contact information

For any questions or concerns about our administration process or policy and procedures, please contact us at administration@thejoyfulchild.care. Many issues can be easily resolved once we are aware of them. Policies are reviewed annually and updated if necessary.

Please include:

- Additional contact information
- Availability
- Question or concern

License and minimum standards

We have a bulletin board in the main playroom; we display our latest licensing report. Please feel free to view the [State's minimum standards](#) for licensed child care centers with our copy.

Useful resources:

- Local licensing (512-834-3195)
- Child Abuse hotline (1-800-265-5400)

(administration continued next page)

Uniforms

We want to be sure your child has fun while playing and learning in school. Because a full day can include such activities as singing, painting, playing both indoors and out, dancing, and eating, we recommend easy-fitting, comfortable, washable clothes. Please do not send special clothing items that can not get dirty.

Be sure shoes are rubber-soled and closed-toe with a closed heel or heel strap. We allow children to remove shoes during the day. They are not required unless a safety issue arises with certain activity.

- Please provide **two complete sets** of extra clothes including socks. We request an extra pair of shoes and a sweater or sweatshirt to be kept at the school, too.
- **Clothing should be labeled with your first and last name, and reviewed periodically to make sure it fits.**
- In cold weather, provide appropriately layered clothing to create insulation, including:
 - mittens or gloves
 - caps, hoods, or hats
 - sweaters or sweatshirts
 - socks
 - warm waterproof outerwear and footwear

Physical activity and screen time

Structured and unstructured physical activity opportunities are provided throughout the day at levels meeting or exceeding the [Texas Rising Star guidelines](#). We spend a majority of our day outside, weather permitting.

Please send child to school wearing proper attire for physical activity including shoes appropriate for running and climbing. Be certain to inform teachers of any health concerns such as asthma or allergic reactions to insect bites as well as necessary procedures for preventing and addressing these issues.

Screen Time is prohibited in our center for children under age 2 as recommended by the [National Association for the Education of Young Children and the American Academy of Pediatrics](#). Screen time is limited for children aged 2-5 years and reserved for developmentally-appropriate videos relating to the curriculum.

Parent-Teacher communication

Parents are required to complete our daily sign in sheet each morning they arrive at the daycare. This sheet includes space for the parents to give information from the previous night or any other special notes for the day.

Parents will normally be given verbal/sometimes written information about the child's day, or any special notes, including incidents/accidents (written & signed). Throughout your child's enrollment, please be sure to update all emergency information as needed, including your:

- Permanent address
- Home, work, and cellphone numbers
- Email address
- Child's medical information
- Authorized personnel for drop-off and/or pickup

We prioritize communication with our families. If you have any questions, or are unable to contact the owner, or a director of The Joyful Child, please contact us at:

- administration@thejoyfulchild.care

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are offered at least twice per year. This is a time for parents to bring forward any concerns about their child's development to the teacher. Our teachers will also spend time letting the parents know about their child's development in the classroom.

We will work together to create goals for your child. You may request a conference outside of the scheduled conferences at any time. Resources for parenting education are available upon request; please feel free to request resources regarding either general or specific parenting education or information. This is the time we will review the curriculum assessment given during the year in Fall and Spring.

Termination of Service

Families may terminate services at any time. Families are asked to be considerate and give a two-week notice prior to termination. Once families have withdrawn from The Joyful Child, your child may re-enroll if:

- Capacity is less than our maximum.
- Clients do not have outstanding balances.

Reporting abuse

It our policy, as well as State regulation, to report any and all suspected cases of child abuse or neglect immediately by phone to the Department of Family and Protective Services. Parents must follow up in writing **within 24 hours** to The Joyful Child with matching documentation to the Department of Family and Protective Services. We will offer full cooperation of staff during the investigation of the reported incident. Retaliation towards school staff of required reports to DFPS will not be tolerated.

Emergency Preparedness Plan

Each quarter of the year, we rehearse our evacuation plans to put our children and staff's safety into practice in case of fire, tornado, storm or other natural disaster. We provide parents access to our evacuation plan on-site on our bulletin board.

In case of a need to relocate to:

- Parking lot
- 12804 FM 969

Illness and Exclusion

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services give specific guidelines regarding exclusion if a child shows symptoms of an infection. These guidelines are the basis for our "sick policies," and require immediate action by both staff and parents in the event of illness.

Staff will be required to remove the child from other children to avoid exposure, and parents must promptly pick up their child. If you are unable to respond in person, please have a back-up person available to pick up your child within the hour of notification.

Symptoms of inclusion

1. A temperature of 100.4 degrees or greater*
2. Vomiting or diarrhea:
 - 2.1. A very loose bowel movement (BM) accompanied by nausea.
 - 2.2. Two loose BMs that the Teacher/Director judges to be diarrhea.
 - 2.3. Loose BMs that are uncontained by the diaper.
 - 2.3.1. This includes antibiotics induced diarrhea (we recommend using a probiotic to reduce loose BMs).
3. Extreme runny nose or dark/green discharge
4. Ongoing cough, resulting in expulsion of phlegm or vomiting
5. Discolored matter in the eyes or extreme redness around pupil (i.e. pink eye)
6. Skin irritation causing discomfort such as rash, blisters, itching, etc.
7. Sore throat (includes redness or pain accompanied by loss of voice, swollen glands, white spots or blisters)

Response time

Response time is vital! If you are notified of your child's symptoms, please respond promptly. This helps limit other children's exposure to contagious illness. Also, parents are encouraged to report any contagious diseases (particularly illnesses confirmed by your child's healthcare provider) to your teachers and to the Director for the safety of the rest of the children.

Teeth cutting

Occasionally, when we call parents because their child has a fever, the parent's initial response is, "They are cutting teeth." We have been advised by physicians that children who cut teeth will not run a fever higher than 100 degrees. Therefore, the State of Texas considers a temperature of 100.4 degrees or greater to be an indication of a contagious factor and mandates that the child be sent home.

Sick child return policy

1. No fever for 24 hours, **unmedicated**, prior to attendance. If a child returns to school and within the course of the day runs a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher, we will again request that you pick up your child.
2. If your child has a contagious infection, they may return once the fever has abated and they have been on their medication for a minimum of 24 hours.

3. Viral infections cannot be cured with medication and must be allowed to run their course at home.
4. If sent home with vomiting/diarrhea, the child may return 24 hours after the last episode.

Policies regarding exclusion and re-admittance are dictated by the regulations of the Health Department. Please understand the importance of these guidelines. They are for the protection of your child as well as others. The only way for us to break the ongoing transfer of illness is to remove the contagious party until the threat of infection has passed.

Illnesses are transferred very quickly in a group childcare setting and we are doing our best to keep all children healthy and follow our state regulations. Also, it is our belief that children who do not feel well need a good dose of love and comfort, lots of special one-on-one attention, and a lap all their own. In the event of an emergency, the Director will call 911.

Medications

Before administering medications:

1. Authorization to administer medication to a child in your care must be obtained from the child's parent:
 - a. In writing, signed and dated;
 - b. In an electronic format that is capable of being viewed and saved or;
 - c. By telephone to administer a single dose of medication.
2. Authorization to administer medication expires on the first anniversary of the date the authorization is provided.
3. The child's parent may not authorize you to administer medication in excess of the medication's label instructions or the directions of the child's health-care professional.
4. Parent authorization is not required if you administer a medication to a child in a medical emergency to prevent the death or serious bodily injury of the child, provided that you administer the medication as prescribed, directed, or intended.

Allergies

All allergies need to be listed in your child's enrollment packet and a note from a physician, dietician or specialist is required. Be as specific as possible. Inform the

Directors and teachers, in writing, of all updates as you get them. A copy of the child's allergies will be kept on file and posted in the eating area.

Medical Emergencies

In case of medical emergencies, 911 will be called first, then the guardian/emergency contact will be called and informed. If applicable, CPR/First Aid will be administered to the child immediately after 911 is called.

Immunization and Other Health Screening

A written documentation of immunizations for measles, mumps, rubella, polio, diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, tuberculosis, and HIB must be presented at the time of enrollment. A well child statement from the child's doctor must also be provided at enrollment. For infants or children who have yet to receive all their vaccinations, vaccination records must be updated with the school on a regular basis, as new immunizations are received.

If you choose to opt out or delay your child's immunization schedule, you must obtain an official affidavit from the Health Department. This affidavit must be notarized and kept at school in place of your child's immunization records. The immunization schedule you must follow and instructions on how to order the opt-out affidavit from the health Department may be accessed through the [Department of Family Protective Services](#).

You must keep the documentation of your child's medical records current with your facility Director.

Vision & Hearing Screenings

Vision & hearing screenings are required for any child who is 4 by September 1st. They must be screened or have a professional examination. This needs to be completed within 120 days of admission for first time students or before the end of the first semester.

Positive Guidance and Challenging Behaviors

Part of what children are learning in their early years is how to get along with others and what behaviors are appropriate in different situations. We take a proactive and preventive approach to guidance that reinforces appropriate behaviors rather than focusing on inappropriate behaviors. To do this, we are trained to use various techniques including redirection, praise, and distraction.

In this positive guidance atmosphere, most inappropriate behaviors are avoided. However, in extreme situations and as a last resort, a child may be guided to an alternate activity away from the group for the benefit of the child and the rest of the children. This helps redirect the child when he or she returns to group activities. The child is allowed to return to the group activity when he or she feels ready to do so.

A central objective of The Joyful Child is to help children develop self-discipline. To encourage this, we use a positive guidance approach that:

- Is individualized, consistent, firm, and benevolent
- Fosters the child's development of inner controls
- Sets limits, gently and consistently enforced
- Accepts and acknowledges the individual child's feelings
- Constantly and positively reinforces appropriate behavior
- Is age appropriate for limits and guidance
- Redirects behavior using positive statements

It is the policy of The Joyful Child to work with the parent in redirecting challenging behaviors. The following will be addressed through the parent and the teacher together in order to foster positive learning and guidance. The teacher and director will have ongoing conversations about behavior concerns.

It is stressed that we encourage a collaboration on any strategies in addressing a child's challenging behavior. Discussions with families are framed around the objective of The Joyful Child commitment to foster developmentally appropriate practice and guidance. Parents are also informed as to their child's progress. A documentation form is included in this handbook. We do not use any corporal punishment or threats per State of Texas licensing standards.

In the event that the school is no longer able to provide care for a child, The Joyful Child will do its best to help guide the family to care that may be better suited for

the child and family using outside resources and professional guidance.

Parent Participation & Visiting-Open Door Policy

Families are encouraged to visit the school whenever they wish. We feel the more involved the parents are in childcare, the more positive the children's experiences will be. Your participation and involvement are important to us as we work as partners to provide the best care and education possible for your child.

The Joyful Child offers a complete open door policy and you may stop by at any time of day to visit. However we do encourage the families to discuss visits with the Director, as most children associate seeing their parents with going home.

It might be hard on some children to have to say goodbye to their parents again in the middle of the day. If you have any special talents or skills (such as playing an instrument, or if you are a police officer or firefighter, etc.), then we welcome you to share those skills with the children, and encourage you to talk to the Director about arranging special visits or activities for the children.

Although we encourage parent participation, we do request that you refrain from inappropriate language and display respectful interactions with staff and children. For the safety of all parties, visitors must not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Childcare Tuition

The Joyful Child's childcare program provides a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment for children to learn and grow. Teachers at The Joyful Child use a play-based curriculum that focuses on developing social, emotional, physical, and cognitive skills. We believe in creating a fun and engaging learning environment that encourages children to explore and discover the world around them. We currently offer full-time enrollment.

Our tuition fees cover:

- Daily activities and educational materials
- Diapers, wipes
- Enrichment activities
- Healthy meals and snacks
- Bathing
- Laundry
- Health and personal hygiene
- Availability of childcare services

We understand that choosing childcare can be a significant decision for families, and we strive to make our program accessible to all. We offer competitive tuition rates and flexible payment options to accommodate a variety of family needs.

Full-time Childcare

Slot type	Age	Weekly rate	Monthly rate
Infant	0-17 months	\$277	\$1,200
Toddler	18-35 months	\$277	\$1,200
Preschool	3-5 years	\$277	\$1,200

Service provides access to:

- Up to 230 hours of monthly care
- Breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack
- Health and personal hygiene
 - Bathing
 - Laundry
- [Frog Street](#) Learning Curriculum
- [Enrichment Program Gymnastics](#)

Payment Terms and Conditions

To ensure the smooth and efficient operation of our program, we require all parents and guardians to adhere to the following payment terms and conditions:

Annual enrollment fees

Please note that this fee is non-refundable and is due at the time of enrollment or re-enrollment. It helps cover administrative costs and ensures your child's spot in our program for the upcoming year.

Payment Options

1. Bi-Weekly
2. Monthly

Payment Due Dates

Payments are due the first Monday of the selected payment frequency.

1. Bi-Weekly payments:
 - a. due by the first and third Monday of each month.
2. Monthly payments
 - a. due by the first Monday of each month after.

If you wish to change your payment option, please notify your childcare Director, or email billing@thejoyfulchild.care at least one week in advance of your next payment period with your payment update request.

Payment Methods

We do not accept cash, checks, or money orders. We currently accept the following payment methods:

- PayPal leesarod@gmail.com
- Venmo @Leesa-Rodriguez
- CashApp \$LeesaRod
- Zelle 512-497-0619

Late Payment Policy

1. **All payments are due on the Monday of the agreed upon payment plan.**
2. Clients will be allowed a one-day grace period from the due date to make payments without incurring any late fees.
3. After the grace period ends, a daily late fee of \$15.00 will be added to the total payment.
4. If the client fails to make payment in full, including any accrued late fees, within two weeks from the original due date, the client's child will be withdrawn from the daycare until payment is made in full.
5. Any missed days due to non-payment will still be charged and will need to be paid in addition to the late fees and outstanding balance before the child can return to the daycare.
6. We reserve the right to terminate child care if payment is not received by the 5th date.

Withdrawal Policy

We require two weeks notice for withdrawal from our program. If you withdraw your child without giving sufficient notice, you will be responsible for payment for the two-week period following the date of notice.

Non-Payment Policy

If payment is not received for two consecutive weeks or a total of four weeks in any given month, we reserve the right to terminate your child's enrollment in our program. Any outstanding balance must be paid in full before your child's enrollment can be reinstated.

Refunds

Please note that tuition fees are generally non-refundable. However, we understand that extreme circumstances such as job loss may arise, and we are committed to handling such situations on an individual basis to best support our families.

Updating Payment Option

If you wish to change your payment option, please notify your childcare Director, or email billing@thejoyfulchild.care at least one week in advance of your next payment period with your payment update request.

Changes to Fees

We reserve the right to change our fees at any time. If we do so, we will provide you with written notice at least two weeks in advance of the effective date of the new fees. By enrolling your child in our program, you agree to abide by these payment terms and conditions. We appreciate your cooperation in ensuring the timely payment of fees and the smooth operation of our program.