

Family 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. According to [NAEYC](#), there are a multitude of benefits to playing outside, including:

- It invites children to learn science
- It creates opportunities for social interaction and collaboration
- It promotes physical health
- It invites new contexts for learning
- It promotes better sleep
- It gives children a chance to take appropriate risks
- It may lead to better learning outcomes once children return to other activities
- It supports STEM skills
- It anchors children to the real world

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

7:00 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 - 5:30 PM	Outside play (weather permitting)
5:30 PM	Pickup

We schedule a minimum of three hours of outdoor play, weather permitting.

Operational Schedule and Attendance Guidelines

We are open:

Monday	7:00 am - 5:30 PM
Tuesday	7:00 am - 5:30 PM
Wednesday	7:00 am - 5:30 PM
Thursday	7:00 am - 5:30 PM
Friday	7:00 am - 5:30 PM

We are closed:

- Single day closures
 - New Year's Day
 - Martin Luther King Day
 - Good Friday
 - Memorial Day
 - Labor Day
 - Formula Racing Day
- Extended closures
 - Spring Break: 5 days
 - Summer Break (week of July 4th): 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 & pickup

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). We reserve the right to charge \$1.00 per minute when picking up your child after 5:30 pm. Childcare services will be terminated after the 3rd late pickup in a 3 month period.

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.
- Children must be dropped off by 9:00am, unless the child has a doctor's appointment and it has been communicated to the director ahead of time. Drop off after 9:00am often interferes with schedules and nap times. Breakfast ends at 8:30am, so please provide breakfast at home before dropping off. Sending your child with breakfast to eat at the center is no longer allowed.
- 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

7:30 AM	Breakfast
11:30 AM	Lunch
2:30 PM	Afternoon snack

- 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.

Lunchboxes

Required food groups

Protein

- Lunch Meats (95% fat free)
- Tuna
- Hard-boiled egg
- Chicken
- Tofu or other soy products

- Hummus
- Beans
- Soy butter
- Cheese (low fat)

Carbohydrates

- Whole wheat/grain bread
- Tortillas or corn chips
- Bagels
- Rice cakes
- Pita bread
- Pasta
- Brown rice
- Potatoes
- Couscous or tabouli

Fruits

- Apple
- Pears
- Plums
- Citrus (Oranges, grapefruits, etc.)
- Berries (Strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, etc.)
- Pineapple
- Kiwi
- Pawpya
- Mangos

Yogurt is not a fruit. Yogurt may count as a protein if it is plain or not highly sweetened.

Vegetables

- Carrots (baby or sticks)
- Celery sticks
- Bell pepper
- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Cucumbers
- Tomatoes
- Squash (zucchini or yellow)
- Tossed salad (plus a side of dressing)

- Tossed green vegetables (plus a side of dressing)
- Potatoes or sweet potatoes
- Peas
- Corn
- Green beans

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 have a choice to provide formula and baby food or The Joyful Child will provide formula and baby food.

Breastfeeding

We proudly accommodate breastfeeding and are equipped to handle your expressed breast milk. Our breastfeeding mothers have access to privacy, seating, and pillows as needed. 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 (choose one option below)
 - ¼ cup of 2 Vegetables
 - ¼ cup of 2 Fruit
 - ¼ cup of 1 Vegetable & 1 Fruit
- Protein (choose one option below)
 - 1 ounce Meat
 - ¼ cup of Beans
 - 2 tablespoons of Soy butter
 - ½ of an Egg
 - 4 ounce of Yogurt
- Carbohydrates (choose one option below)
 - ½ slice of Bread
 - ¼ cup of Pasta

Pre-schoolers

- Vegetables & Fruits (choose one option below)
 - ½ cup of 2 Vegetables
 - ½ cup of 2 Fruit
 - ½ cup of 1 Vegetable & 1 Fruit
- Protein (choose one option below)
 - 1 ½ ounce Meat
 - ½ cup of Beans
 - 3 tablespoons of Soy butter
 - ¼ of an Egg
 - 6 ounce of Yogurt
- Carbohydrates (choose one option below)
 - 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 the following items when contacting us:

- 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. Below are useful contact to keep you informed:

- Local licensing (512-834-3426)
- Child Abuse hotline (1-800-252-5400)

Uniform and Dress Code Recommendations

We want to ensure that your child has a wonderful and comfortable experience while playing and learning at our school. Given the wide range of activities throughout the day, including singing, painting, indoor and outdoor play, dancing, and meals, we recommend the following dress guidelines:

- Comfortable, Washable Clothes: Please dress your child in easy-fitting, comfortable, and washable clothes that allow them to move freely. It's best to avoid sending clothing items that you're concerned about getting dirty.
- Footwear: Provide rubber-soled, closed-toe shoes with a closed heel or heel strap. Children can remove their shoes during the day unless a safety issue arises during certain activities.
- Extra Clothing: Supply two complete sets of extra clothes, including socks, and keep them at the school. It's also advisable to provide an extra pair of shoes and a sweater or sweatshirt.
- Labeling: All clothing should be labeled with your child's first and last name for easy identification. Please periodically review and update clothing to

ensure it still fits.

- Cold Weather Clothing: During cold weather, ensure your child is appropriately layered for insulation. This includes items like mittens or gloves, caps, hoods, or hats, sweaters or sweatshirts, warm socks, and waterproof outerwear and footwear.

These guidelines will help create a comfortable and enjoyable experience for your child during their time at our school, no matter the activity or weather conditions.

Outdoor Activities Guidelines

We spend a majority of our day outside, weather permitting, offering a wide variety of structured and unstructured physical activity opportunities throughout the day at levels meeting or exceeding the [Texas Rising Star guidelines](#). To ensure your child's comfort and safety during outdoor activities, please take note of the following:

1. Attire: Send your child to school dressed appropriately for physical activity, including running and climbing. Proper footwear is essential.
2. Health Concerns: Inform our teachers of any health concerns, such as asthma or allergies to insect bites, and provide instructions for preventing and addressing these issues.
3. When temperatures outside feel like 100°F or higher or 32°F or lower, we will limit outdoor play to 30 minutes at a time, pending children have appropriate attire for extreme weather and adequate shade is available. During extreme temperatures, water is offered every 15 minutes, but is available at all times while children are outside. Outdoor play will not be allowed during storms that include lightning and/or thunder or high winds.

Water Activities:

During the warm months of the year, children may participate in water activities on-site. During the Summer months, children may have access to wading pools with or without slides, water tables, and sprinklers. The Joyful Child staff will be by their side during these activities, having at least two staff members present at minimum. All staff members responsible for supervising children are certified in infant, toddler, and adult CPR and First Aid. Staff will ensure all teacher/child wading pool ratios per Texas Minimum Standards are met. All children must have written permission on their enrollment forms to participate in specific water activities.

Sun and Insect safety procedures:

Sunscreen application

- Sunscreen will not be applied to children under 6 months of age. Children in this age group will have limited sun exposure.
- For children under 6 months, we recommend dressing them in long-sleeved clothing, hats, and providing adequate shade while outdoors.

- In direct sunlight, sunscreen will be applied liberally and evenly. If children engage in water activities or sweat, our staff will reapply sunscreen more frequently.

Insect repellent application

- Children under 2 years old should only use insect repellent with no more than 10% DEET, while children over 2 years old can use repellent with 30% DEET.
- Repellents with 10% DEET or less should be reapplied every 1-2 hours to maintain effectiveness.
- Upon returning indoors and before eating, we will wash treated skin with warm water and soap.
- When applying insect repellent, caregivers/teachers will initially apply it to their own hands. When applying to a child, we will use just enough to cover exposed skin but avoid applying under clothing or on hands.
- We will avoid applying repellent near the eyes and mouth, on cuts or irritated skin, or near food.
- If a child experiences a rash or skin reaction from insect repellent, we will discontinue use, wash the affected area with mild soap and water, and contact a local poison center (1-800-222-1222) for further guidance. We will also inform the parent/guardian.

These guidelines are designed to ensure the safety and well-being of your child during outdoor activities and protect them from sun and insect-related concerns.

Screen Time

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.

Safe Sleep Policy

All staff, substitute staff, and volunteers at The Joyful Child will follow these safe sleep recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) for infants to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome/Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS/SUIDS):

- Always put infants to sleep on their backs unless you provide Form 3019, Infant Sleep Exception/Health Care Professional Recommendation, signed by the infant's health care professional.
- Place infants on a firm mattress, with a tight-fitting sheet, in a crib that meets the CPSC federal requirements for full-size cribs and for non full-size cribs.
- For infants who are younger than 12 months old, cribs play yards should be bare except for a tight-fitting sheet and a mattress cover or protector. Items that should not be placed in a crib or play yard include: soft or loose bedding, such as blankets, quilts or comforters; pillows; stuffed toys and animals; soft objects; bumper pads; liners; or sleep positioning devices. Also, infants must not have their heads, faces or cribs covered at any time by items such as blankets, linens, or clothing.
- Do not use sleep positioning devices, such as wedges or infant positioners. The AAP has found no evidence that these devices are safe. Their use may increase the risk of suffocation.
- Ensure that sleeping areas are ventilated and at a temperature that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult.
- If an infant needs extra warmth, use approved sleep sacks as an alternative to blankets.
- Place only one infant in a crib to sleep.
- Infants may use a pacifier during sleep. But the pacifier must not be attached to a stuffed animal or the infant's clothing by a string, cord or other attaching mechanism that might be a suffocation or strangulation risk.
- If the infant falls asleep in a restrictive device other than a crib (such as a bouncy chair or swing or arrives to care asleep in a car seat), move the infant to a crib immediately, unless you provide Form 3019, Infant Sleep Exception/Health Care Professional Recommendation, signed by the infant's health care professional.
- Our child care program is smoke-free. Smoking is not allowed in Texas

child care operations (this includes e-cigarettes and any type of vaporizers).

- Actively observe sleeping infants by sight and sound.
- If an infant can roll back and forth from front to back, place the infant on the infant's back for sleep and allow the infant to assume a preferred sleep position.
- Awake infants will have supervised "tummy time" several times daily. This will help them strengthen their muscles and develop normally. Do not swaddle an infant for sleep or rest unless you provide Form 3019, Infant Sleep Exception/Health Care Professional Recommendation, signed by the infant's health care professional.

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:

- 512-497-0619
- contact@thejoyfulchild.care

For any administration related concerns, 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

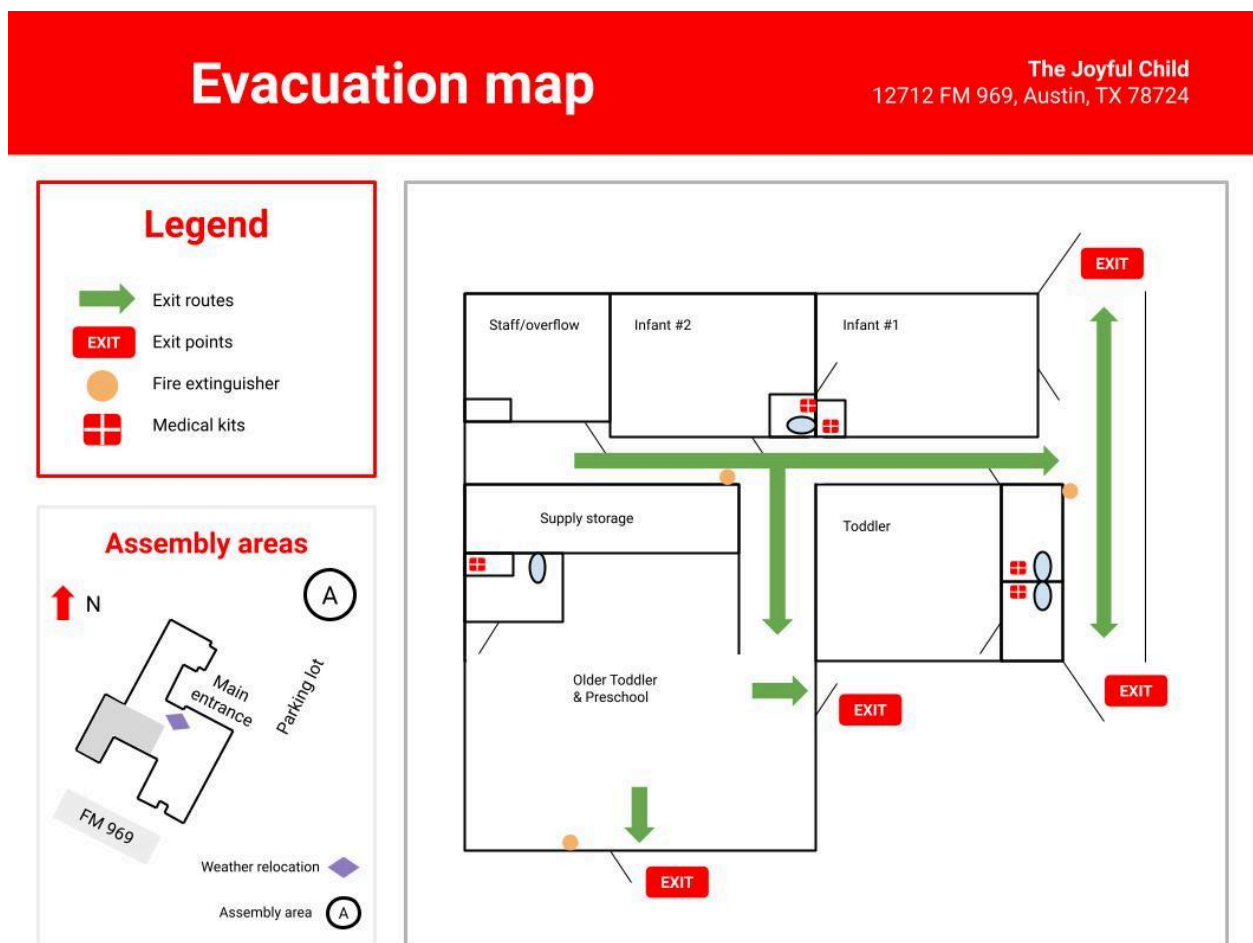
It our policy, as well as State regulation, to report any and all suspected cases of child abuse or neglect immediately by phone to the Department of Family and Protective Services. Parents must follow up in writing within 24 hours to The Joyful Child with matching documentation to the Department of 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.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), a thorough and safe evacuation plan includes a designated location that allows the children to get at least 50 feet away from the building, does not require the children or caregivers to cross the street, and provides shelter if the children cannot return to the building.

Evacuation and relocation diagram



Emergency step-by-step procedures

1. The first responsibility of staff in an emergency evacuation or relocation is to move the children to a designated safe area or alternate shelter known to all employees, caregivers, parents, and volunteers. We have three designated areas to evacuate the center, depending on the weight of the situation.
 - a. Parking Lot- in the event that the emergency is located in the building and children can safely be contained away from immediate dangers and the evacuation is anticipated to be short-term.
 - b. 12804 FM-969 is located directly behind the center parking lot and is a relocation site in the event that we need to move to a safer distance or are in need of toileting facilities.
 - c. Chevron Food Mart located at 13103 FM-969 is a five minute walk, but allows access to all basic necessities in the event of a catastrophic event.
2. How children will be evacuated or relocated to the designated safe area or alternate shelter.
 - a. All children will be evacuated with the assistance of staff personnel. Each classroom teacher and assistants will facilitate face-to-face attendance check with the children they were with at the time of the incident. Radio communication with all personnel will ensure no one is unaccounted for. Children will remain in small groups utilizing the buddy system.
 - b. Children under 24 months of age or who have limited mobility or impairments that may be deemed unsafe, will be evacuated from the center using the mobile cribs.
 - c. Communication with families will be through text message, phone call or email, whichever is available. Please ensure all contact information on file remains up to date. All families will be notified of interventions as quickly as possible.
 - d. Reunification of children with family caregivers will take place as soon as possible. Please ensure that you communicate with staff and sign your child out before leaving.
3. In the event of a lockdown emergency, staff are trained in the Standard Response Protocol. Children and staff will barricade behind locked doors and assist students in remaining calm. 9-1-1 will be notified immediately.

IN AN EMERGENCY TAKE ACTION



HOLD! In your room or area. Clear the halls.

STUDENTS

Clear the hallways and remain in room or area until the "All Clear" is announced
Do business as usual

ADULTS

Close and lock the door
Account for students and adults
Do business as usual



SECURE! Get inside. Lock outside doors.

STUDENTS

Return to inside of building
Do business as usual

ADULTS

Bring everyone indoors
Lock outside doors
Increase situational awareness
Account for students and adults
Do business as usual



LOCKDOWN! Locks, lights, out of sight.

STUDENTS

Move away from sight
Maintain silence
Do not open the door

ADULTS

Recover students from hallway if possible
Lock the classroom door
Turn out the lights
Move away from sight
Maintain silence
Do not open the door
Prepare to evade or defend



EVACUATE! (A location may be specified)

STUDENTS

Leave stuff behind if required to
If possible, bring your phone
Follow instructions

ADULTS

Lead students to Evacuation location
Account for students and adults
Notify if missing, extra or injured students or adults



SHELTER! Hazard and safety strategy.

STUDENTS

Use appropriate safety strategy for the hazard

Hazard

Tornado
Hazmat
Earthquake
Tsunami

Safety Strategy

Evacuate to shelter area
Seal the room
Drop, cover and hold
Get to high ground

ADULTS

Lead safety strategy
Account for students and adults
Notify if missing, extra or injured students or adults

Pet or Animal Visitation

Having a relationship with a pet or animal can help children develop a caring disposition and skills such as nurturing, responsibility, empathy and improved communication. The presence of a pet in an early childhood environment enables children who are not otherwise exposed to animals to learn these skills. Pets or animals that visit our facility will become part of the daily program and lead activities and provide opportunities for children to learn about the visiting animal. The safety of children is always our first priority. Below are our policies for maintaining a safe and engaging environment for children while animals participate in our day.

Animal participation policy

1. Parents will be notified via; email, text, or social media platforms, or other forms of written communication, prior to animals or pets being present at our center.
2. Parents will be allowed to decide whether their enrolled child may or may not have contact with the animals.
3. We ask all parents to notify our caregivers of any known or suspected allergies their children may have to any animal.
4. To mitigate any unsafe or unsanitary conditions during animal visitation, we will;
 - a. Limit access to animals to small breeds suitable for children.
 - b. Maintain up-to-date documentation for every animal visiting our facility in compliance with the Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 826.
 - c. Maintain a health statement from a local veterinarian for dogs, cats, ferrets, and any other animals beyond small rodents, such as guinea pigs, mice, and hamsters, that may be welcomed at our facility.
 - d. Maintain a thorough Behavioral Assessment with each animal prior to their attendance at our facility.
 - e. Not grant access to breeds of animals with known aggressive tendencies.
 - f. Not allow children to handle pets or animals displaying recent signs of illness, including lethargy or diarrhea.
 - g. Ensure that children always receive supervision and guidance from caregivers during activities involving animals.
 - h. Ensure that caregivers and children diligently practice proper hygiene and handwashing after interacting with animals and their associated items, such as water and food bowls, and cages.
 - i. Prohibit contact between children and chickens, ducks, reptiles (including snakes, turtles, lizards, iguanas), or amphibians (such as frogs and toads)."

Animal-related emergencies

If an animal-related emergency occurs, the immediate safety of the children and staff involved is the top priority. We will ensure that any immediate dangers are addressed.

1. **Isolate the Animal:** If the animal appears agitated, aggressive, or is causing harm, we will ensure the immediate removal of the animal from the area to prevent further risk.
2. **First Aid:** If a child or staff member is injured, we will provide immediate first aid and seek medical attention as necessary. We will contact emergency medical services (911) if the injury is severe.
3. **Parent/Guardian Notification:** We will notify the parent or guardian of the child involved in the incident immediately. Provide them with detailed information about what happened and the condition of their child.
4. **Animal Handler:** Contact the person responsible for the animal involved, if known, to secure the animal and ensure its welfare. If the animal belongs to a visitor, gather contact information for them.
5. **Incident Report:** We will document the incident thoroughly, including the date, time, location, individuals involved, descriptions of injuries, and actions taken. These records will be maintained and shared with the animal owner or guardian.
6. **Animal Quarantine:** Depending on the situation, the animal may need to be placed in quarantine for observation. This decision should be made by a qualified veterinarian or animal control officer.
7. **Communication:** In the event of an incident we will contact the relevant authorities, such as animal control, local health department, or child care licensing agency, as required by local regulations.
8. **Review and Update:** After the incident is resolved, we will conduct a thorough review to determine the cause of the emergency and assess if any changes to policies or procedures are needed to prevent a similar incident in the future.
9. **Support for Children:** We will provide emotional support and counseling as needed to the children who witnessed or were involved in the incident. Offer guidance to help them process the experience.

Illness and Exclusion

We do not require vaccinations for our staff, however, to assist in preventing contagious transfers our staff utilizes the following recommendations by Health and Human Services:

- Wearing gloves when handling or cleaning body fluids, such as after wiping noses, mouths, or bottoms, and tending sores;
- Specifying that an employee with open wounds and/or any injury that inhibits hand washing, such as casts, bandages, or braces, must not prepare food or have close contact with children in care;
- Wearing masks when the employee has respiratory symptoms to reduce the spread of droplets to surrounding areas;
- Wearing masks when taking care of children with respiratory symptoms;
- Removing gloves and washing hands immediately after each task to prevent cross-contamination to other children;
- Excluding the employee from direct care when the employee has signs of illness.

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 requiring exclusion

The following are symptoms that warrant exclusion but are not restricted to:

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.
 - 2.4. 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. We do not impose automatic suspensions on children for misbehavior.

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. 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.

Under the Texas Penal Code any area within 1,000 feet of a child -care center is a gang- free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to a harsher penalty.

Parent's Rights

Senate Bill 1098 from the 88th Legislative Regular Session added Section 42.04271 to the Human Resources Code and states that a parent or guardian of a child at a child care facility has the right to:

- Enter and examine the child-care facility during its hours of operation and without advance notice;
- File a complaint against the child care facility;
- Review the child care facility's publicly accessible records;
- Review the child-care facility's written records concerning the parent's or guardian's child;
- Receive inspection reports and information about how to access the child care facility's online compliance history;
- Have the facility comply with a court order that prevents another parent or guardian from visiting or removing the child;
- Be given the contact information for the child care facility's local Child Care Regulation office;
- Inspect any video recordings of an alleged incident of abuse or neglect involving their child provided that:
 - Video recordings of the alleged incident are available;
 - The parent or guardian does not retain any part of the video depicting a child that is not their own; and
 - The parent or guardian of any other child in the video receives prior notice from the facility;
- Obtain a copy of the facility's policies and procedures handbook;
- Review the facility's staff training records and any in-house training curriculum; and
- Exercise these rights without receiving retaliatory action by the facility.

Required Notifications

- The child care facility must provide written notice to the parent or guardian of any other child captured in a video before allowing a parent to inspect a recording.
- The child care facility must provide a parent or guardian with a written copy of the rights no later than the child's first day at the facility.

Childcare Tuition

We prioritize equality and inclusion in our tuition structure. Our averaged pricing model makes high-quality childcare affordable for all families. Tuition remains consistent throughout the year even on days we are closed. This ensures year-round availability and secures each family's spot, providing dependable childcare.

Our tuition covers the following items:

- [Texas Rising Star](#) certified program
- [TXAEYC](#) professional teachers
- Learning philosophy: [Risky Play](#), [Loose Parts](#), [Conscious Discipline](#), [The Curiosity Approach](#), [Messy Play](#), and [Reggio Emilia](#).
- Low ratios
- We provide **ALL** essential childcare supplies and materials.
- We provide **ALL** morning and afternoon meals.
- Family's enrolled gain access to our entire program including; supplies, meals, teachings, developmental assistance, and daily activities.

Tuition

Below is a breakdown of our payment options for Infant, Toddler, and Preschool enrollments. Our tuition remains consistent throughout the year even on days we are closed.

Full-time (5 days)

Age Category	Bi-weekly	Monthly	* (-5%) Annually
Infant	\$750	\$1,625	\$18,525
Toddler	\$600	\$1,300	\$14,820
Pre-school	\$600	\$1,300	\$14,820

Part-time (3 days)

Age Category	Bi-weekly	Monthly	* (-5%) Annually
Infant	\$510	\$1,105	\$12,597
Toddler	\$420	\$910	\$10,374
Pre-school	\$420	\$910	\$10,374

Part-time (2 days)

Age Category	Bi-weekly	Monthly	* (-5%) Annually
Infant	\$340	\$736.66	\$8,397.92
Toddler	\$280	\$606.66	\$6,915.92
Pre-school	\$280	\$606.66	\$6,915.92

**The 5% Lump Sum Discount is automatically applied to the Annual rates above. See our Discounts & Special Offers for more details. Our rates are calculated based on the annual average of 52 weeks in a year, ensuring consistency and accuracy in our pricing model.*

Payment Terms & Conditions

To maintain smooth payment operations, we ask all parents and guardians to follow these terms and conditions:

Discounts & Special Offers

One discount may be applied to each non-subsidized family at a time. Subsidized families are ineligible for these discounts and special offers.

5% Sibling Discount

- Applies when two or more children are enrolled simultaneously.
- This discount applies to the base tuition rates and does not apply to additional fees.

5% Lump Sum Discount

- Applies to families who pay for 6 months or more of child care services in advance.
- Payments must be made in full at the time of enrollment, or at the beginning of the selected discount period.
- This discount applies to the base tuition rates and does not apply to additional fees.

Annual Enrollment Fee

A non-refundable \$175 fee, recurring the first payment of October each year, ensures your child's spot and covers administrative costs. New families enrolled from July through September will have their fee applied through September of the following calendar year, then be inline with our normal October date.

Payment Options

Payments are due on the first Monday of the selected plan. We offer flexible payment plans to accommodate families:

- Bi-Weekly
- Monthly
- Annually (Save 5%)

Accepted Payment Methods

We accept only electronic payments via QuickBooks Email Invoice (ACH Bank Transfers). We do not accept cash, checks, or money orders.

Late Payment Policy

Payments are due on the agreed-upon schedule, with a 1-day grace period. After the grace period, a \$15 daily late fee is applied. Non-payment for two weeks will result in withdrawal until the balance, including late fees, is settled.

Withdrawal Policy

Two weeks' notice is required for withdrawal. Failure to provide notice will result in charges for the two-week notice period.

Non-Payment & Returned Payment Policy

Failure to pay for two consecutive weeks or a total of four weeks in a month will result in termination of enrollment. A \$25 fee applies for returned or bounced payments.

Refunds

Tuition and fees are generally non-refundable. However, we review individual cases in extreme circumstances, such as job loss.

Fee Changes

We reserve the right to adjust fees with two weeks' written notice. For questions or to update payment options, please email us at billing@thejoyfulchild.care.

Parent, Guardian Signature

I have read and agree to the terms and conditions of The Joyful Child family handbook.

Print	Signature	Date
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