



Parent Handbook

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Statement of Purpose

To develop and enhance each child's self-esteem, physical, social and emotional growth.

To encourage creativity and imagination through art and music.

To provide a variety of "hands-on" learning experiences.

To introduce children to quality children's literature.

To provide a caring, nurturing program staffed with qualified teachers.

To serve as an outreach of Northridge Presbyterian Church.

NCDC does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, or religious beliefs.

Faculty

Heather Kolodziej
Director/Reading Fairy

Rachel Larlee
Music and Movement Teacher

Michelle Janssen
Busy Bees (2's) Teachers

Megan Kohler
Busy Bees (2's) Teachers

Dusti Damon
Friendly Foxes (3's) Teachers

Megan Hopper
Friendly Foxes (3's) Teachers

Nicole McIntire
Friendly Foxes (3's) Teacher-Aide

Kristin Trojan
Outstanding Owls (4's) Teacher

Cristina Ballard
Outstanding Owls (4's) Teacher
Spanish Teacher

Our teachers attend annual training in Child Development, monthly staff meetings, and additional curriculum planning and evaluation sessions. All of the teachers have many years of early childhood experience.

Information about each teacher will be emailed to the parents.

Hours of Operation

School hours are 9:30-2:00 for all classes. The 2-year-old (Busy Bees) class meets every Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, and the 3- and 4-year-old (Friendly Foxes and Outstanding Owls) classes meet Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Meet The Teacher for parents and students is the Tuesday after Labor Day. NCDC follows the DISD elementary calendar concerning holidays and is in session September-May. NCDC is not in session June-August.

Drop-off and Pick-up

Parents/caregivers are required to bring the student(s) to the school in the morning starting at 9:30 and pick up the student(s) from the school by 2:00 in the afternoon. We request that your child come to school on time as being late is disruptive to learning. Each child must be signed-in and out using the Brightwheel App. Parents/caregivers will enter through the double doors near the church office and then will walk inside the school using door by school office. Parents/caregivers will help students put items in cubby that is in the hallway. We ask that parents do not walk inside classroom with student. Give them a hug at the door and remind them you will be back to pick them up. You will exit using the door closest to the church nursery. Doors will have signs to remind everyone. Doors are locked at 9:50 and unlocked at 1:45. Please notify the classroom teacher and message on Brightwheel if there is to be a change in the person designated to pick up your child. People designated, but with whom we are unfamiliar, will be asked to show identification.

Your child needs the security of knowing that you will be on time every day. Student pick up is by 2:00. **A penalty of \$5.00 per five minutes will be assessed for pick-ups after 2:05.**

Illness

Your child must have the completed Medical Form and current immunization records on file.

If your child is ill, please do not send him/her to school. Children with the following symptoms may not attend school:

- Fever within the previous 24 hours
- Vomiting within the previous 24 hours
- Diarrhea within the past 24 hours
- Headache, muscle aches and pain
- Head lice

Impetigo, conjunctivitis, contagious diseases

If a child exhibits any of these symptoms while at school, the child's parents will be notified and must arrange for immediate pick-up.

All parents are notified in case of any reports of head lice, contagious disease, etc.

Please read the NCDC Health and Safety Policy for more details.

Teachers and staff must abide by these same guidelines pertaining to illnesses. Teachers are also required to submit current immunizations each school year.

Medications will not be dispensed at school, unless we have written and signed instructions from the parent(s) and an emergency plan from a pediatrician, or for cases where a child may need an Epi Pen.

In case of a medical emergency, one teacher will notify the director, CPR or first aid will be administered if needed, 911 called, and the child's parents notified.

Allergies

Please be sure to include any allergies on the Registration Form and Getting to Know You Form. Additionally, alert the teachers verbally on or before the first day of school as to your child's allergy. You can also add this information within the Brightwheel App. **Please give the office an emergency care plan to have on file in the office, if applicable.** Our primary responsibility is student safety. Allergic reactions can come on rapidly and be life-threatening. We will eliminate those foods from the school or classroom that have been determined to cause allergic reactions in children.

Hearing and Vision Screenings

Hearing and vision screenings are required for students that are 4 years old on September 1 and those records will need to be turned into director by end of December. You must provide records showing your child has been screened, or an affidavit stating that the screenings conflict with your church or religious practices or denomination.

Inclement Weather

In case of inclement weather, NCDC will follow the school closings for the Dallas Independent School District. Inclement weather days will not be made up. You will be notified before school through email and the Brightwheel App if the school is closed.

Disaster Preparedness

Because your child's safety is of the utmost importance, we have devised an emergency preparedness plan in the event of a disaster, natural or otherwise. Staff and students participate in drills each month. If you would like to view the plan, it is on file in the center's office.

In case of any of these situations, teachers will retrieve their cell phones and class contact lists, move or evacuate students, dial 911, and then begin to notify all parents of the details of any emergency situation. This will be communicated through Brightwheel, email, and phone. It is important to note that if electricity is lost to the building, then the land line phone will not work. In the event that it is not safe to stay on the premises, the preschoolers will be evacuated to Lakewood Elementary School or White Rock YMCA.

It also needs to be noted that Northridge Child Development Center is a gang-free, gun-free zone. Any offenses relating to organized criminal activity within 1,000 feet of the preschool is subject to harsher penalty under the Texas Penal Code.

Preventing and Responding to Abuse or Neglect of Children

The teachers at NCCDC are required to complete 24 hours of training each year. A portion of that training is required to focus on preventing and responding to abuse or neglect of children.

If any abuse or neglect is suspected, the teachers will follow these guidelines:

- 1) Each teacher is required to keep a written log describing what is observed or said by a child suspected of being abused or neglected. This documentation must be dated and verified by another teacher.
- 2) The director will be notified of these observations.
- 3) The director will keep a log of conferences with the teachers about the observations made of the child in question.
- 4) The director will observe the child in question and document observations.
- 5) The director will place a call to Child Protective Services or the Child Abuse Hotline.
- 6) The teachers and director will act upon the advice of Child Protective Services or the Child Abuse Hotline.

If a parent is a victim or suspects a child is a victim of abuse or neglect, he/she can contact the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Dallas intake office at [214-583-4253](tel:214-583-4253) or on their website, www.dfps.state.tx.us. To call the Child Abuse Hotline, dial [1-800-252-5400](tel:1-800-252-5400) or visit their web site at www.txabusehotline.org.

Northridge Child Development Center follows Minimum Standards for Child-Care

Centers. These standards can be viewed at www.dfps.state.tx.us along with the most recent licensing report.

Parent Communication

Parent communication is a priority at NCDC. Drop off and pick up times are opportunities for parent/teacher communication. The director and teachers are happy to set up meeting times to discuss any issues.

Parents receive a monthly newsletter informing parents of upcoming events, a class calendar listing the thematic units and art activities and a copy of the memory selection, color of the month song (Busy Bees class), shape of the month song (Friendly Foxes class), etc.

Messages on Brightwheel are also sent each week by the director with reminders and information pertaining to the week.

We use an online platform, the Brightwheel App, for important messages and inclement weather updates. Parents download the app from the App Store. You will receive an invitation after the director as your child. Parents may make tuition payments, communicate with teachers, and receive information through the app. Documents can be added and pictures shared.

Parent Conferences are held in April. Students do not attend class on the day of conferences. Conferences will be scheduled for 15 minute periods. During that time, teachers will discuss the progress of your child. A written summarization will be given to the parents. A Kindergarten Readiness Test is administered to students in the Outstanding Owls Class. Results are shared with parents during the conference period.

The director and teachers are always open to answer questions or meet with parents as concerns arise. Staff members will be discrete and respect confidentiality. Also, the chair of the school board, Cindy George, is available if there are questions or concerns concerning the school's policies, procedures, teachers, or director. She can be reached at cindyjgeorge@gmail.com.

Discipline Management

The goal of the discipline management program is to encourage children to become respectful and responsible decision makers. We do not focus only on unacceptable behavior, but also use words of praise and encouragement for good behavior. Discipline is handled in a gentle, non-punitive manner. Natural, respectful and logical consequences are utilized. Students will be re-directed, and if needed, students may need a supervised time away from the group that will be limited to no more than 1 minute per year of the child's age.

Parents will be notified of any extreme behavior that needs to be addressed.

Extreme behavior (biting, hitting, kicking, etc.) may require a conference between the parents, teachers, and director. In some cases, we recommend a therapist observing the student at school. If after 4 occurrences of extreme behavior, and the student does not exhibit signs of improvement, we reserve the right to suspend the student for 1 month. After 1 month, if the child returns and the previous behavior continues, we reserve the right to expel the child for the remainder of the school year.

Enrollment Procedures

Immediately upon acceptance, parents must complete and return the following three documents for each child enrolled at NCDC by the deadline specified in the acceptance letter:

The parent contract that is included on the registration form

A completed and signed Registration Form accompanied by a copy of current immunizations and a check for the registration fee

The form at the back of this Handbook acknowledging you have read and agree to the policies stated herein

Registration begins each school year in January for the upcoming school year beginning that fall. Church Members, current students, and siblings of former or current students may register early and have first priority in registering for the upcoming school year. If space is available after early registration, then new students will be accepted. Once enrolled, a note from the child's pediatrician stating that the child can attend pre-school, a signed Photo Release form, a copy of results of hearing and vision screenings (if applicable), and a completed "Getting to Know You" form must be turned into the director. The forms must be turned in within first week of school. The director will notify the parents of any policy changes initially via e-mail, then an updated Parent Handbook will be distributed to each family.

Registration, Tuition, and Supply Fees

Non-Church Members:

	2's/ 3 Day Program (M, T, W)	
Registration:	\$300	Non refundable
Supply:	\$ 75	Per Semester
Tuition:	\$535.50	Sept.- May Monthly
Per semester:	\$2409.75	Per year: \$4819.50
	3's/ 4 Day Program (M, T, W, Th)	
Registration:	\$300	Non refundable

Supply:	\$ 75	Per Semester
Tuition:	\$546	Sept.- May Monthly
Per semester:	\$2457	Per Year: \$4914
4's/ 4 Day Program (M, T, W, Th)		
Registration:	\$300	Non refundable
Supply:	\$ 75	Per Semester
Tuition:	\$598.50	Sept.- May Monthly
Per semester:	\$2693.25	Per Year: \$5386.50

Church Members:

2's/ 3 Day Program (M, T, W)		
Registration:	\$300	Non refundable
Supply:	\$ 75	Per Semester
Tuition:	\$483	Sept.- May Monthly
Per semester:	\$2173.50	Per Year: \$4347
3's/ 4 Day Program (M, T, W, Th)		
Registration:	\$300	Non refundable
Supply:	\$ 75	Per Semester
Tuition:	\$493.50	Sept.- May Monthly
Per semester:	\$2220.75	Per Year: \$4441.50
4 Day Program (M, T, W, Th)		
Registration:	\$300	Non refundable
Supply:	\$ 75	Per Semester
Tuition:	\$546	Sept.- May Monthly
Per semester:	\$2457	Per Year: \$4914

Payment is due on the first school day of the month. For those paying by the semester, the second payment is due upon return from Christmas Break. All payments received after the tenth will be charged a late fee of \$10.00. All payments received after the twelfth will be charged a late fee of \$20.00. Students whose tuition is not paid by the fifteenth may be dropped from the program and registration fees may be charged upon reentry. A 30-day notice must be given when a student is exiting the program. Tuition will be charged for that period. Tuition can be paid online via the Brightwheel App. The director will send out information. You can also choose to pay with cash or check and given to director. Checks should be made payable to NCDC.

Attire

Children will be engaged in a variety of activities including outdoor play. They should be dressed in comfortable play clothes with sneakers or rubber soled shoes. Hats may not be worn in the classroom. A hat may be brought to school to be worn on the playground for sun or cold protection. **It is advisable to apply**

sunscreen and bug spray before coming to school when necessary.

Supplies

All students should have a large zip lock bag containing 2 complete changes of clothing, including underwear, socks, etc. Label the clothing and bag. The bag will be stored in the classroom and used as needed. Students wearing diapers or pull-ups should bring a package of wipes and a package of diapers or pull-ups. Please label each. These supplies should be dropped off at Meet the Teacher.

Lunch, Snacks, Birthdays

Parents will be notified of any food allergies in the classroom and/ or school.

Lunch:

Students eat in the classroom. Please provide a lunch and beverage daily. Parents are encouraged to pack items in disposable containers that students can open and handle independently. Please send a labeled water bottle.

Snacks:

The first month of school NCDC will provide snacks to all classes. Parents will receive a snack schedule that will start in October. Each family will be given a week(s) to bring the class snack. Items do not have to be individually packaged. Snacks should be low in sugar. Suggestions of possible snacks:

Grapes (sliced) and Chex mix

Apples slices and cubes of cheese

Baby carrots and Ranch dip

Cheese sticks and crackers

Birthdays:

Parents may bring cookies or cupcakes for their child's special day.

Absences

If your child will be absent, please message in Brightwheel. Also, please inform us if your child has an illness that may be communicable.

Parent Participation

Parents are encouraged to participate in the classroom during the school year. You may share an interest, hobby, or talent. Some suggestions are listed below:

Play a musical instrument

Read a story

Introduce a family pet

Carve a jack-o-lantern

Craft activity

A sign-up genius will be sent out to parents at the beginning of the year.



School Day Schedule

Schedules will be emailed to the parents along with the monthly calendar.

Busy Bees

Welcome/ Learning Centers/ Craft
 Outdoor Play
 Yoga (M) Music and Movement (T) Spanish (W)
 Learning Centers
 Lunch
 Circle Time/Color, Weekly Theme, Reading Fairy
 Outdoor Play
 Snack
 Rest Time
 Dismissal

Friendly Foxes

Welcome/ Learning Centers/ Craft
 Yoga (M) Music and Movement (T) Reading Fairy (W) Chapel and Spanish (Th)
 Circle Time/ Weekly Theme, Phonics, Math, Science
 Outdoor Play
 Lunch
 Learning Centers
 Outdoor Play
 Sensory Exploration
 Snack
 Dismissal

Outstanding Owls

Welcome/Free Play
 Yoga (M)/ Music and Movement (T)/ Spanish (W)/ Fairy Tale (Th)
 Snack
 Circle Time/Phonics, Math, Science, Weekly Theme
 Small Group Work/Learning Centers
 Outdoor Play
 Lunch
 Small Group Work/Learning Centers
 Outdoor Play
 Dismissal

Curriculum and Curriculum Tools

Greeting Students:

As students enter the building in the morning, they are greeted by the director. This brief exchange builds social skills such as maintaining eye contact and using a mannerly greeting.

Pocket Poems:

Research shows that children spend a large amount of time waiting to use the restroom, to get water, to go to a different classroom, or to go outside. When children become disengaged, they will find a way to occupy themselves that may not be desirable. These waiting moments can be engaging and provide opportunities for enriching learning. The Pocket Poems are organized by themes or units. Pockets Poems generally have the poem on one side and a visual to display to the children. The picture on the card reinforces vocabulary in the poem.

Music in the Morning:

Classical music is played in each classroom in the morning during center activities. Research has shown there are many benefits of listening to classical music including reducing stress and anxiety, improving memory, enhancing concentration, and sparking creativity.

Spanish:

Young children have a natural ability to learn languages, with 50% of this ability being developed in the first few years of life, 30% by age eight (Kotulak, 1996). The first three to four years of life are considered the best time for children to learn a second language, and is as easy as acquiring knowledge in their first language (Vos, 2008). The benefits of learning a second language in preschool are numerous, and bound to positively impact children's present and future academic and professional lives. Second language acquisition is tightly linked to increased performance in areas of social and academic development such as verbal communication, mathematical development and reasoning skills. It is also linked to increasing young children's cultural awareness and understanding of differences. Students in all classes attend Spanish classes once weekly. Students in the 2-year-old class build a vocabulary base through songs, games and activities. Students in the 3- and 4-year-old classes engage in the Salsa program. Salsa is Georgia Public Broadcasting's award-winning Spanish language series for young learners in kindergarten through the third grade. Puppets in familiar stories, digital graphics, and animation teach the language.

Music and Movement:

Research shows that children who are actively involved in music (who play it or sing it regularly); do better in reading and math when they start school; are better able to focus and control their bodies; play better with others; and have higher self-esteem.

All classes attend Music and Movement class once per week. Psychologists, neuroscientists, and experts in early childhood development have demonstrated that music helps children's brain cells make the connections needed for virtually every kind of intelligence. The curriculum follows the Musikgarten programs and

links with the topics studied in the classroom. There is a strong focus on dramatic and imaginative movement and activities using scarves, instruments, and hoops. Students in the 2- and 3-year-old classes concentrate on matching pitch and developing a sense of rhythm. The children engage in echo singing as well as a variety of movement activities. Children in the 4-year-old class play with the elements of music.

Gross Motor:

Students in all classes participate in targeted gross motor activities throughout the week. Each Monday, all students practice “Superman Monday”. This helps build the core. A strong core is the base for strong fine motor skills. Students will also engage in yoga poses. Your child’s muscles grow from proximal to distal, meaning that your child gains stability in areas like their shoulder and shoulder blade before they gain stability of smaller muscles such as those in the hand. If muscles are not gained in your child’s shoulder, then you may see difficulties with fine motor activities. Generally, stability comes from your trunk, to your shoulder, then to your elbow, wrist and finally the hand. Hand skills are developed from gross motor to fine motor. To build gross motor, students do easel activities, parachute games, and a variety of targeted activities often with balls, balance beams, and stepping stones developing coordination, balance, strength, and endurance.

Handwriting Without Tears:

The Handwriting Without Tears® curriculum draws from years of innovation and research to provide developmentally appropriate, multisensory tools and strategies for the classroom. The program follows research that demonstrates children learn more effectively by actively doing, with materials that address all styles of learning. All students receive instruction in Handwriting Without Tears. Students in the 2-year-old class learn to identify the names of the shapes that makes the capital letters. Students in the 3-year-old class engage in the Mat Man activity as well as learning the name of the letters and how they are formed. The most intensive instruction is in the 4-year-old class. Each child receives a copy of My First School Book with which they practice readiness and pre-writing skills.

Character Development:

The preschool focuses on a character trait each month. All students will learn a song to help them understand the concept. Lessons are incorporated weekly. Some traits include being a friend, being industrious, trying again, and having determination.

Numbers Plus Preschool Mathematics Curriculum:

This curriculum is a comprehensive set of detailed plans for small and large group activities developed by High Scope. Aligned with the standards of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and developed under a grant from the Institute of Educational Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, Numbers Plus is divided into five content areas: Number Sense and Operations, Geometry, Measurement, Algebra, and Data Analysis.

Fairy Tale Fairy:

“If you want your children to be intelligent, read them fairy tales. If you want them to be more intelligent, read them more fairy tales.” — Albert Einstein

Fairy tales are very important for a child’s imagination and creativity. Below are eight ways fairy tales are beneficial:

1. Fairy Tales Show Kids How to Handle Problems
2. Fairy Tales Build Emotional Resiliency
3. Fairy Tales Give Us a Common Language
4. Fairy Tales Cross Cultural Boundaries
5. Fairy Tales Teach the Parts of a Story
6. Fairy Tales Develop a Child’s Imagination
7. Fairy Tales Give Opportunities to Teach Critical Thinking Skills
8. Fairy Tales Teach Moral Lessons

Monthly, the Reading Fairy visits each class. Each month one fairy tale is explored. The first week, the children hear the story read in the traditional manner. The second week, the children retell the story using puppets. The third week, the children listen to the story but with a twist (told from a different character’s perspective, different setting, etc.) The fourth week, the students participate in an activity connected to the story.

Little Scientists:

Each month a unit of study is explored (my five senses, plant life, etc.) Weekly, the students are involved in hands on activities and experiments to help them understand their world. Teaching child science topics at a young age during preschool can help to build a lifelong interest in the subject. Additionally, early science experiences can set a child up for school success by fostering positive attitudes toward learning. The foundational science skills that a preschool teacher imparts to the young child can help that student to think critically, problem solve and better understand the world around him or her. More specific concepts such as learning about animals, plants, weather and the physical world are also important components to the early science education that can benefit the child later in life.

Letter of the Week:

The students in the 3- and 4-year-old classes will study one letter per week. The order in which the letters will be studied is based on Handwriting Without Tears. The curriculum for letter sounds is based on Jolly Phonics. The class will explore the letter and its corresponding sound through a variety of activities. Students will use gross motor skills to “draw” the letter in the air. Students will develop listening skills while hearing songs that emphasize the sound of the letter. The 4 year old students will receive a binder to keep at home at the start of the school year. Each student will bring home a letter each week to place in their binder.

Teaching Tools:

- 1) Water Drawing Board, used monthly to teach students to focus. The teacher “paints” a basic picture on the board and asks the students to watch carefully as it fades.
- 2) Dry Erase Boards
- 3) Magnets and Magnet Boards, used to help learn letters and numbers.
- 4) Felt Boards, used to tell stories.

- 5) Flip Charts and Nursery Rhymes, used in the 2- and 3-year-old classes.
- 6) Individual Chalk Boards, used in the 4-year-old class to practice writing letters.

Poetry Selections:

Each month, the children will commit to memory a poetry selection. The students in the 2- and 3-year-old class will learn a Mother Goose nursery rhyme while the students in the four year old class will learn a children's poem or a selection from classic writing. This type of memorization task exercises the brain, giving it strength to retain more information. Researchers found that through extended exercises in rote learning, learners can actually recall more information overall. As students spend time memorizing passages, tables, anything at all, they learn to find focus. Educators have found that students who were required to memorize from an early age often go on to have more capacity to focus on educational tasks as high school and college students. Students will also learn pre-reading skills. They learn that the written word corresponds with the spoken word; we read from left to right and top to bottom.

Color and Shape of the Month:

Students in the 2-year-old class will focus on a color of the month. Students are encouraged to bring a small item (preferably one that may not be returned) ex: a ribbon, a crayon, etc. Students in the 3-year-old class will focus on a shape of the month. They will play games and sing songs about each shape.

Thematic Units:

The thematic unit is the content and structure for organizing learning activities. Through units, children are able to develop skills and learn information about the topic being studied. Preschool themes are based on children's needs, interest and developmental level. Children begin to understand the world around them through thematic activities.

Centers:

1) Blocks

When children build with blocks, they are developing control of the small muscles of their fingers and hands. In the Block & Construction Center children let their imaginations soar while learning to think, plan, and develop problem solving skills. Children role play, explore, build cooperatively, sort, group, compare, arrange objects, observe similarities and differences and create patterns in their structures. Children also learn to deal with the spatial and structural challenges of balance and enclosure.

2) Reading

When young children are exposed to books, they learn how books work and that print carries meaning. As children explore page by wondrous page, they develop reading skills, including: vocabulary, reading comprehension, letter and print knowledge, and sound recognition.

3) Dramatic Play

In the dramatic play area, children have the opportunity to role play real life situations, practice language, develop social skills, release emotions, and express themselves creatively.

4) Practical Life (Housekeeping)

In the Practical Life center, children learn the social skills of cooperation, sharing, negotiating, expressing emotions and taking turns, all through play. While children practice and learn important self-help and life skills, they develop large and small muscle coordination, a longer attention span, independence, self-discipline, self-confidence, self-esteem, and friendships.

Chapel:

Students in the 3- and 4-year-old classes will attend chapel every Thursday. The director of Christian and family ministries at Northridge leads the children in chapel where they will hear a non-denominational Bible story and sing songs with the music director.

Please sign and return this form to the NCDC office by the date indicated in your enrollment packet.

I have received and read the Northridge Child Development Center Parent Handbook. I understand and agree to abide by the policies and procedures outlined in the handbook.

(Child's Name)

(Parent or Guardian's Name Printed)

(Parent or Guardian's Signature)

Date: _____