



First Step Learning Centre

Your partner in quality childcare.

First Step Learning Centre

Located on the Campus of UT Southwestern Medical Center

“Your partner in QUALITY CARE “

EST. 1998

PARENT INFORMATION AND REFERENCE GUIDE

WELCOME to First Step Learning Centre. Thank you for making us your partner in caring for your child. In this reference guide you will be given the policies and procedures to help guide you with any questions you might have about First Step Learning Centre.

Our MOTTO:

We believe that any working parent should be able to feel one hundred percent confident that their child's safety, education, health, and emotional well-being are given priority by the person to care for their child in their parent's absence. First Step Learning Centre is honored to have the privilege of caring for your child. All children will receive educational opportunities in a fun filled challenging environment here at First Step Learning Centre

Hours of Operation:

First Step Learning Centre's operating hours are Monday through Friday from 6:30 A.M. to 6:30 P.M.

First Step Learning Centre is a year round pre-school. We are closed on Saturdays, Sundays, and all posted annual holidays.

Open Door Policy:

At First Step Learning Centre we have an OPEN DOOR POLICY. We invite you to visit your child at any time throughout the day, no need to secure prior arrangements, just stop by. We also invite you as a parent to participate in any activities we offer to your child at First Step Learning Centre. We will always post notifications of the events coming up on the "Parent Board".

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES:

Upon arrival and departure each parent must sign your child in and out using our Procure System located at the front desk. This system allows each parent and person authorized to pick up a child to electronically sign children in and out using a personalized fingerprint access or code. This is a state licensing requirement as well as a center requirement. The Infant and Toddler area requires additional daily forms that must be filled out upon dropping off of your child.

Children will only be released to the persons listed on your enrollment form. NO phone authorization will be accepted at any time. If it is a first time for a person to pick your child up a valid picture photo identification card is REQUIRED. This is for the safety of your child and our center.

COMMUNICATION/PARENTAL NOTIFICATIONS:

We understand that communication is a very important part of feeling comfortable in leaving your children at First Step Learning Centre.

In our Infant and Toddler Areas you will be given a daily report of your child's activities.

All classrooms will communicate directly with the parents during drop off and pick up. If you feel that you would like a parent/teacher conference at any time – that can be arranged with advance notice.

Located at the front of the center is our "Parent Information Board". All special events and notices will be posted here for parent review. These boards are also located in each classroom.

COMPLAINT AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES:

If you ever have any questions or concerns, please immediately address them with the Director, Wendy Mireault by phone or email. If you feel you need to speak directly to the Director, Wendy is available Monday through Friday. If for some reason, Wendy is not in the center, office personnel can reach me by cell phone at any time.

ENROLLMENT:

All children must complete the total enrollment package before they will be accepted for enrollment. All forms are a requirement of the TDPRS – State Licensing. These forms include, but are not limited to:

Enrollment Application, Parent Agreement, Medical Release Form and Child Nutrition Program Information

Medical Requirement: A statement signed by your child's physician will be required at time of enrollment. Forms will be provided to you in your enrollment packet.

Current Immunization Records are a requirement of enrollment and they must remain current (based on state requirements) throughout your child's enrollment.

ENROLLMENT FEE:

Each family is responsible for an enrollment fee of \$175.00 per family. This is a one-time nonrefundable fee that is due at time of enrollment to secure your child's spot.

TUITION POLICY and ADDITIONAL FEES:

Weekly Tuition is due on Monday of that week of care and considered late on Tuesday. The late fee is \$25.00. This amount will be charged to your account on Tuesday at CLOSE (6:30 P.M.) if payment is not made.

First Step Learning Centre accepts cash, checks and all major credit cards for payment.

Payments must always be for services in advance.

First Step Learning Centre offers automatic draft payments. We can set up your credit card to draft either every Monday for weekly payments or if you would like to pay advance for the full month it will draft the first of every month.

ACCOUNTS IN ARREARS:

Family's accounts that fall two weeks in the arrears will be withdrawn from the centre. Children CANNOT re-enroll until the account is current and ONLY if space is available at the time of re-enrollment.

Family's that re-enroll will be charged \$175.00 Enrollment Fee.

RETURNED CHECK POLICY:

There will be a \$25.00 charge for all returned checks.

LATE PICK UP:

The fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged to you for late pick up. Although a call is courteous, the late fee will start at 6:35 P.M.. Fee must be paid upon pick up of your child that evening.

SUPPLY FEE'S:

Supply fees are due quarterly. The amount is \$85.00 per child enrolled. Supply fees are to replenish toys, supplies, educational curriculum, and classroom necessities. Your account will be automatically billed on the following months: March, June, September and December annually.

BAD WEATHER/VACATION DAYS/ABSENT/HOLIDAYS:

Tuition is the same whether you attend one or five days per week. All enrollments at First Step Learning Centre are FULL TIME care only.

VACATION POLICY:

We allow our families two weeks of vacation time per year at a fifty percent discount. We must have one week notification before we will discount these weeks. We follow the calendar year of January – December.

BAD WEATHER DAYS:

We will follow the Dallas ISD closure for bad weather. These dates will NOT be discounted. Tuition will be required as policy states.

HOLIDAYS:

We schedule our holiday schedule every December for the upcoming year and post the annual holiday schedule on the parent board for your review.

If you have any questions or concerns about childcare closings please address your concerns with Director, Wendy Mireault.

BIRTHDAY PARTIES:

We welcome the celebration of your child's birthday. We like to celebrate these special days during snack time. Just check with your child's teacher in arranging this special event.

CLASSROOM STRUCTURE AND CURRICULUM:

Each classroom follows the education Curriculum of HIGHSCOPE. We use this teaching approach in all classrooms starting in our Infant Program through our Kindergarten Readiness Classes. We have found that HIGHSCOPE masters the educational guidelines to meet all aspects of learning for a child. HIGHSCOPE addresses - Social and Emotional, Physical Health, Language, Literacy, Communication, Math, Creative Arts, Science, Technology and Social Studies. In addition to HIGHSCOPE; we also include in the child's daily schedule:

Computer Lab

Educational Media Time

Art Lessons

Center Time

Outdoor playtime

Sports Adventures – this is available to families for an additional fee monthly. www.mygymstation.com

Children will have the opportunity to play and learn independently along with large and small group interaction during the school day. At First Step Learning Centre our goal is to prepare your child for

classroom structures of Kindergarten. In most cases, this is large group with social interaction with classmates and working as a group. We do strive to have each child work on their own and make independent learning decisions.

CAREGIVERS:

Each Classroom Caregiver must maintain the following: a current CPR and First Aid Certificate, SIDS and Shaken Baby certificate staff caring for any child under the age of 24 months, TB test, state required background check, FBI fingerprint clearance, and annually maintain 24 hours in their classroom related training to enhance their teaching techniques and working with their classroom age group.

VACCINE PREVENTABLE DISEASE POLICY FOR STAFF:

All staff at First Step Learning Centre is encouraged to consult their health care professional regarding the adult immunization recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. TB testing is required upon hiring. No exemption is allowed. Failure to comply with this policy will be grounds for disciplinary action which may include suspension or termination of employment.

NAPTIME:

After lunch a naptime is mandatory for all children. Times: 12:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M., times vary depending on the classroom. Naptime duration is 2 hours in the classroom – check your child's daily schedule.

Each child is required to bring a crib size sheet, blanket, and a standard pillowcase. The pillowcase will house his or her belongings after nap, daily. All your child's sleep necessities will be sent home on Friday for you to laundry and return on Monday.

OUTDOOR PLAYTIME:

Each classroom from Infants through Kindergarten Readiness will receive daily outdoor playtime. Infants will be taken from their rooms one to two times a day on stroller rides depending on the weather. All other classrooms will be permitted to play on the playground two times daily.

Indoor Play will be scheduled when the following conditions exist:

- The temperature or wind chill is 32 degrees.
- The temperature or heat index is above 100 degrees. Shortened lengths of play when heat index is between 96-99 degrees.
- Raining

WATER ACTIVITIES:

During the summer months we may elect to have "SPLASH DAY" in the event of this we will notify parents by posting this information on the Parent Board in each classroom along with the Parent Board at the front of the centre.

ANIMALS:

First Step Learning Centre does NOT allow any type of animals as classroom pets.

FIELD TRIPS AND TRANSPORTATION:

We do NOT offer Field Trips or Transportation at First Step Learning Centre.

SCHOOL PICTURES:

Lifetouch Studios does school photographs two times per year. As a parent you are under NO obligation to purchase photos.

NUTRITION:

First Step Learning Centre will provide:

Breakfast 7:00 A.M. -8:30 A.M., daily

Lunch 11:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M., daily

Afternoon Snack 2:30 P.M. – 3:30 P.M. daily

Times vary depending on classroom

All meals meet and exceed the guidelines set forth by USDA. Any food restrictions must be presented to First Step Learning Centre upon enrollment with Physicians Note or letter from parent due to religious beliefs.

Breakfast and Lunch are served in Pre K – A and our Cafeteria Area. Snacks will be served in each classroom, daily.

There will NOT be any additional charge for these services. Menu will be posted in the cafeteria area and copies of weekly menu are available at the front desk.

BREAST FEEDING ROOM:

We are so excited that we have a private area for moms. This area is located in the hallway by Baby Room's one and two. We provide a quiet area for moms to nurse their babies or just have some one on one time with them during the day. This is a great benefit to being right by mom while she's working. We also have the availability to "pump" if needed. We welcome moms to visit anytime during the day!!

ILLNESS:

Your child's health is of great importance to First Step Learning Centre. If your child becomes ill while at childcare we will notify the parents immediately for you to pick your child up. If your child has a fever of 100.4 degrees or higher they must be fever free for 24 hours before returning back to daycare.

Although, First Step Learning Centre does not have a sickroom, we do have a Clinic Area to accommodate ill children until their parents arrive to pick them up from First Step. This is only a temporary accommodation so we can limit the spread of illness to other children enrolled in First Step Learning Centre.

MEDICATIONS:

All medication given to your child must be signed into the medicine log book in the CLINIC area, daily. NO phone authorization will be taken. All prescription medications must be in their original container, indicating the child's name, type and date of prescribed medication, and the amount of dosage. All medications must go home daily, State and Centre policy. All over-the-counter medications will be given with complete directions and authorization of the parents. Staff member will sign and put the time the medications were given, daily. Medications will only be administered two times a day 11:00 A.M. and 3:00 P.M.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES:

In case of a serious injury or other medical emergency we will immediately call 911. We will then make every effort to contact you. If not successful in reaching you, we will go to the next person listed as your emergency contact on the enrollment form. Please make sure that all your contact information is correct and updated as needed.

HEARING AND VISION:

Children four years old or older must have documented hearing and vision testing as part of their enrollment into First Step Learning Centre.

CLOTHING AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS:

Please make sure your child has a change of clothing in their cubbies at all times. Children are extremely active at childcare and may require a change of clothing.

We ask that you NOT allow your child to bring TOYS from home. We have plenty of educational toys and activities to keep your child busy throughout the day, please have them leave their belongings in the car or at home. We will NOT be responsible for any lost, stolen, or broken items.

DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE PRACTICES:

Discipline consists of positive reinforcement only. The use of physical punishment is PROHIBITED. The Director will contact the parent in the event a child's behavior becomes a threat to himself or other classmates. It's our hope that a solution of satisfactory be reached between centre and parent.

BITING POLICY:

Biting is a natural developmental stage that many children go through. It is usually a temporary condition that is most common between thirteen and twenty-four months of age. The safety of the children at the center is our primary concern. After all preventative steps have been tried by the staff and the child continues to bite routinely the director or designee will call the parent to pick up the child for the remainder of the day. Chronic biting may require that a child be suspended for a period of time or terminated from enrollment. Each biting situation is carefully evaluated by the director or the designee and a solution is formed on a child to child basis while considering all the relating factors.

ABUSE and NEGLECT:

First Step Learning Centre caregivers will never intentionally cause any type of Abuse or Neglect or cause emotional harm or physical injury to, or the death of, a child served by our facility at any time. We will provide a stable, loving, and educational environment during the time we care for your child.

If First Step Learning Centre every suspects ABUSE or NEGLECT by a child's parents it's our duty as a licensed childcare center to report all incidents to the proper authorities of the State of Texas.

All of First Step Learning Centre staff is required to participate in a minimum of one hour of annual training on this topic.

Court Appearances:

First Step Learning Centre staff will not appear in court unless it's mandated through the court directly or through the State of Texas. If we are subpoenaed for a circumstance that does not pertain to us directly then we will charge \$200 per hour per staff member that attends court.

In the event of an EMERGENCY EVACUATION:

- 1) Each staff member in their related classroom is responsible for the relocation of the children to the designated area.
- 2) In the event of being relocated from our building – emergency staff from the University will assist the caregivers in moving children to the designated area.
Severe Weather: Safe Room: Pre-K B – Room with NO windows located at the back of the center.
Fire: Location: Playground Area

- 3) In the event of relocation from the center, we will follow the guidance set forth by the University Task force.
- 4) At First Step in the event of emergency we will notify the parents by phone. We will use our roll book and phone log print out to contact them. Each staff member will use their cell phones to contact the parents of the children enrolled.
- 5) FIRE AND SAFETY DRILLS:

Fire drills are performed 1 time per month and severe weather drills are performed 4 times annually. This is to acquaint your child with First Step Learning Centre evacuation procedures.

To all parents: You must always UPDATE your enrollment paperwork with phone number changes. It is very important that we always have updated information.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

If any changes in our policies or procedures take place, we will notify all parents of the children enrolled by email and writings. Questions regarding policies and procedures should be brought to the attention of Wendy Mireault, owner/director.

GANG FREE ZONE:

New Requirements Regarding Gang-Free Zones for Child Care Centers

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

Penalty under the state law.

First Step Learning Centre is located in a GANG FREE ZONE. We have a secured environment for all children enrolled and are NOT located 1000 feet from any GANG activity.

State DEPARTMENT OF WELFARE:

The school's director or teacher must notify CPS of the local law enforcement officials by telephone when it appears that a child is being neglected or abused away from childcare.

YEAR END STATEMENTS:

According to the IRS childcare expenses for working parent is tax deductible. A statement of your payments will be given to all parents on or by January 31 for the preceding year of service.

Replacement statements if lost will be at a fee of \$10.00.

MINIMUM STANDARDS:

A current copy of the State Minimum Standards is available for your review at the front desk of First Step Learning Centre.

MINIMUM STANDARDS:

The most recent licensing inspection report is available to view in the director's office and also on the DFPS website.

Contact Information:

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|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| First Step Learning Centre | 214-352-8608 |
| First Step Learning Centre FAX | 214-350-0285 |
| First Step Learning Centre website | Firststeplearningcentre.com |
| First Step Director Email | firststeplearningcentre@gmail.com |
| First Step Learning Centre Address: | 6303 Forest Park Road Suite B200. Dallas. Texas. 75235 |
| Childcare Licensing | 214-951-7902 |
| DFPS Website | dfps.state.tx.us |
| Child Abuse Hotline | 1-800-252-5400 |