



# THE LEARNING GARDEN

## *Family Handbook*

Proverbs 22:6 ~ Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

This handbook is intended to familiarize families of The Learning Garden with our current policies, practices, and standards. Parents/guardians of The Learning Garden must fill out, sign, date and return all forms prior to their child's official start date. The Learning Garden reserves the right to revise its policies, practices and standards listed in this handbook as deemed appropriate by the Director at any time. Families of The Learning Garden will be notified and given a printed copy of such revisions. The Learning Garden adheres to all state and federal requirements including Chapter 42 of Texas Human Resources Code. To review a copy of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services "Minimum Standard Rules for licensed child care center", or obtain a copy of the most recent licensing report, go to:

[http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Care/Child\\_Care\\_Standards\\_and\\_Regulations/default.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Child_Care_Standards_and_Regulations/default.asp)

### MISSION STATEMENT

At The Learning Garden, we know kids. From our experienced, caring staff and St Paul's Lutheran Church to our clean, safe facility, we're in a class of our own. You'll notice the difference from the moment you walk in the door. Our concepts put the attention solely on the kids. When they're here, it's all about them. Our goal is to nurture the child as a whole: to promote physical, cognitive, emotional, and spiritual growth. Families are encouraged to become involved in their children's activities as well as activities that the church has to offer. A strong happy family has strong happy children. The words of Proverbs define our philosophy of care here at The Learning Garden. We believe that we are to assist children in coming to know Jesus Christ.

### PHILOSOPHY

We believe that positive, early childhood experiences affect children's successes and perspectives throughout their lives. As caregivers, we strive to support and encourage our children to learn and grow in a fun and educational setting. We will work together with our parents to ensure that our children feel safe and cared for while they are here. The following principles shall serve as the foundation for our program here at The Learning Garden.

- Young **children need consistency** between home and child care.
- **Family is what is most meaningful to a child.** Learning begins in a family, continues in early care and education settings, and depends on **parent involvement and caregiver guidance.** A child's home language and culture can play a significant role in the child's cognitive and linguistic development.



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- Children develop knowledge of their world through **active interactions with caregivers**, peers, materials, and events.
- Without a **safe environment**, children are not **free to explore and learn**. **Supervision** is the primary means of ensuring the **safety of children**.
- **Outdoor experiences** provide many opportunities for learning that an indoor environment cannot.
- Children naturally mimic **familiar situations** and places in their everyday lives. Guidance and redirection foster socialization and strengthen a **child's sense of security** by providing children with boundaries and choices.
- **Music and movement activities** provide opportunities for large and small motor development and can be a **wonderful sensory experience**.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

#### ADMINISTRATION:

Director: Tracie Fielding

[tfielding@learninggardenykt.com](mailto:tfielding@learninggardenykt.com)

Assistant: Shawn Williams

[swilliams@learninggardenykt.com](mailto:swilliams@learninggardenykt.com)

Office: (361) 564-9444

Fax: (361) 564-9222

TLG Email ~ [thelearninggardenyorktown@gmail.com](mailto:thelearninggardenyorktown@gmail.com)

TLG Website ~ [www.learninggardenykt.com](http://www.learninggardenykt.com)

#### HOURS OF OPERATION:

The Learning Garden is open Monday through Friday from 7:00am to 6:00pm.

The center is closed on the following days for Holidays or other events:

- New Year's Day
- Friday during Spring Break
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day (2 or 3 days ~ depends on how other holidays fall)
- Christmas (1-3 days ~ depends on when it falls during the week.)



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The center is closed on the following days for Staff Development Days:

- New Year's Eve or the Friday before or Monday after if it falls on the weekend.
- Friday before Memorial Day
- Friday before Labor Day

### **PROGRAMS:**

The Learning Garden offers the following childcare programs:

- Full Time Program (Monday-Friday)
- Part Time Program ~ (3 Days a week ~ Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday)
- Part Time ½ Day Program (Only for Prekindergarten Class) ~ Monday-Friday 7am-12pm
- After School Program (Children can ride the bus to our center after school daily. On days that there is no school and during the summer children can attend all day. Full Time and 3 Day Programs are available.)

Classrooms:

- |                   |                        |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| • Infants         | 6 weeks to 12 months   |
| • Toddlers        | 13 months to 24 months |
| • Two-Year-Old's  | 2 years                |
| • Early Preschool | 3 years                |
| • Preschool       | 4 years                |
| • School Age      | 5 years to 9 years     |

### **RATIOS:**

At The Learning Garden, we maintain the following caregiver-to-child ration at ALL times in our classrooms (including when emergency procedures are in effect):

- |                          |                                   |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • 6 weeks to 11 months   | 1 caregiver for every 4 children  |
| • 12 months to 18 months | 1 caregiver for every 5 children  |
| • 18 months to 23 months | 1 caregiver for every 9 children  |
| • 2 years                | 1 caregiver for every 11 children |
| • 3 years                | 1 caregiver for every 15 children |
| • 4 years                | 1 caregiver for every 18 children |
| • 5 years to 12 years    | 1 caregiver for every 22 children |

Children of different age groups may be combined if the following guidelines are followed and it is approved by the Director:



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- Infants are never combined with children over the age of 17 months and must maintain a 1 to 4 ratio.
- Children 18 months and older may be combined using the specified age (list children by ages in order from youngest too oldest, divide the total number by 2 to get the core number, count starting at the youngest age until you reach the core number, the age of that child is the specified age of the group). Based on the specified age will determine the ration of caregiver to children needed for the group.
- Children 18 months and older may be grouped at a ratio of one caregiver per group of 16 children during the 45 minutes after opening and 45 minutes before closing.
- Children 18 months to 4 years may be combined for joint activities and exceed the maximum group size for a maximum of 30 minutes. The child/caregiver ration must be met for each group and activity.
- Children 5 years and older may be combined for joint activities and exceed the maximum group size for a maximum of 1 1/2 hours. The child/caregiver ration must be met for each group and activity.
- Caregiver to children rations must be maintained during naptimes and may only be reduced by 50% in the event of an emergency, if approved by Director.

### **LICENSING:**

The Learning Garden is a public center licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. A copy of the Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers licensed by Texas Department of Family and Protective Services is available for review in the front office, each designated classroom and on the web at <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us>. All staff members of The Learning Garden should familiarize themselves with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers.

Child Care Licensing ~ Victoria

(361) 574-7416

### **WEATHER RELATED CLOSINGS:**

The Learning Garden typically follows the Yorktown Independent School District inclement weather closings and delays. If Yorktown ISD is closed or opening late due to inclement weather, The Learning Garden will close with the same schedule. Tune in to your local radio stations for announcements, or view the Yorktown ISD website: [www.yisd.org](http://www.yisd.org).

### **UPDATING ENROLLMENT RECORDS:**

It is important for parents to complete and update, as needed, an Emergency Contact and Pick up Persons on the Enrollment form. This form contains contact information for both the parents as well as the



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individuals authorized to pick up the child in the event of illness or emergency. Additionally, this form allows The Learning Garden employees to seek emergency authorized care for medical providers in the event of serious injury.

**All parents/guardians will be required to update this information every January and July however, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to complete this form and to make corrections to this information when necessary.**

**Health status information is critical to ensuring that the individual needs of children are met, while protecting the health and safety of all children in care.** Therefore, other records *must* be updated throughout the year, such as physicals and immunization records. When visiting the child's physician for an annual "well-child" appointment, please request a copy of the child's physical and most recent immunization record. ***For children age 4 and older, we will also need records of their hearing and vision screening.*** These items may be personally delivered to the Center or faxed by the physician's office to The Learning Garden at 361-564-9222.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY:**

Confidentiality is a top priority for The Learning Garden. Personal information of families and employees will not be shared for any reason without prior written consent of the individual. When discussing a child's activities and friends in the classroom, only first names will be used. In situations regarding behavior problems and/or Incident/Illness Reports, names of children involved will ever be given to families.

### **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT:**

All The Learning Garden's employees are mandatory child abuse reporters. Suspected cases of child abuse or neglect **MUST** be reported to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services to:

TEXAS ABUSE HOTLINE 1-800-252-5400

Employees may directly report suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and should complete all necessary paperwork. The employee should inform the Director and/or Executive Assistant of the report and together decide whether or not the parents /guardians should be informed of the report.

***ALL caregivers are to perform a health check of each child as they arrive each day.*** A health check is a visual and/or physical assessment of a child to identify potential concerns about a child's health, including signs or symptoms of illness or injury, in response to changes in the child's behavior since the last date of attendance.

***ALL*** caregivers are required to have at least one clock hour of training that *must* focus on prevention, recognition and reporting of child abuse and neglect. All classroom and the office shall post these following warning signs of child abuse, which include but are not limited to the following:



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- **Unexplained injuries:** Visible signs of physical abuse may include unexplained burns or bruises in the shape of objects. You may also hear unconvincing explanations of a child's injuries.
- **Changes in behavior:** Abuse can lead to many changes in a child's behavior. Abused children often appear scared, anxious, depressed, withdrawn or more aggressive.
- **Returning to earlier behaviors:** Abused children may display behaviors shown at earlier ages, such as thumb-sucking, bed-wetting, fear of the dark or strangers. For some children, even loss of acquired language or memory problems may be an issue.
- **Fear of going home:** Abused children may express apprehension or anxiety about leaving school or about going places with the person who is abusing them.
- **Changes in eating:** The stress, fear and anxiety caused by abuse can lead to change in a child's eating behavior, which may result in weight gain or weight loss.
- **Changes in sleeping:** Abused children may have frequent nightmares or have difficulty falling asleep, and as a result may appear tired or fatigued.
- **Changes in school performance or attendance:** Abused children may have difficulty concentrating in school or have excessive absences, sometimes due to adults trying to hide the child's injuries from authorities.
- **Lack of personal care or hygiene:** Abused and neglected children may appear uncared for. They may present as consistently dirty and have severe body odor, or they may lack sufficient clothing for the weather.
- **Risk taking behaviors:** Young people who are being abused may engage in high-risk activities such as using drugs or alcohol or carrying a weapon.
- **Inappropriate sexual behaviors:** Children who have been sexually abused may exhibit overly sexualized behavior or use explicit sexual language.

**Some signs that a child is experiencing abuse or violence are more obvious than others. Trust your instincts. Suspected abuse is enough of a reason to contact authorities. You do not need proof.**

If you suspect a child has been abused, keep calm. Tell the child that you believe them, show interest and concern, reassure and support the child. **Take action, it could save a child's life!** If you suspect a child is in immediate danger, **call 911**. If you suspect a child has been abused, **do NOT** panic, overreact, pressure the child, or confront the offender. Never blame the child or minimize the child's feelings and do not overwhelm the child with questions.

The Learning Garden shall help increase awareness and prevention of child abuse and support services for children and families impacted by violence and abuse.

The Learning Garden reserves the right for the Director/Permit holder to interview any child in its care. Texas Department of Family and Protective Service agents have authority to interview any child in the Center's care as well.



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Should an employee of The Learning Garden be accused of abuse and/or neglect by a parent or co-worker, such an accusation will be reported by the Director and a determination will be made as to whether there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse and/or neglect. If reasonable cause is presented, a report **must** be made to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). The Learning Garden will cooperate with any DFPS investigation. Any employee accused of such allegations will be informed and given the opportunity to respond. Termination of employment at that time will be at the discretion of the Director.

### **SUGGESTIONS:**

The Learning Garden is always open to suggestions that would help improve procedures, working conditions and environment for the children. Families are always encouraged to offer their suggestions to the Director and/or Executive Assistant.

### **SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND TOBACCO USE:**

All tobacco products are prohibited on The Learning Garden premises, including outdoor play areas and parking lots. Employees that smoke are strongly advised against doing so immediately before or during their shift, as smoke residuals can stay on clothing and hair for an extended amount of time. Employees **must** wash hands immediately after smoking, before returning to the Center.

### **ENTRANCE AND ACCESS POLICY:**

The Learning Garden has a key pad door that only parents, employees, board members, and Church staff have the code for. These codes can be disengaged if necessary to ensure the safety of the children at The Learning Garden.

Any person in the Center who is not an employee, board member, substitute, subcontracted employee, or volunteer that has had a background check and approval to be involved with child care **SHALL NOT** have unrestricted access to children for whom that person is not the parent, guardian or legal custodian. Such person **SHALL NOT** be included in the caregiver to child ration. Unrestricted access occurs when a person has contact with a child alone or is directly responsible for child care.

A person who does not have unrestricted access will be under the supervision of a Learning Garden employee at all times and will not be allowed to assume any child care responsibilities. The Lead Teacher will assume responsibility of the supervision of such persons unless they delegate it to the other caregiver present in the classroom due to a conflict of interest, in which the Director and/or Office Manager must be notified.

A non-agency person or persons that are on the premises of the Center for reasons such as maintenance, repairs, etc., will be monitored by a Learning Garden employee and will not be allowed to interact with children on the premises.



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The Learning Garden employees will be expected to approach anyone on the premises of the Center without their knowledge to ask what that person's purpose is. If the employee is unsure of the reason/purpose they **must** politely ask that the person allow the employee to walk them to the office to seek approval from the Director and/or Executive Assistant. If the person poses any threat of danger, the employee shall then follow the "Dangerous Adult" procedure.

A convicted sex offender with a sex offense against a minor (even in the event that the sex offender is the parent, guardian or legal custodian) who is registered with the Texas sex offender registry:

- **SHALL NOT** operate, manage, be employed by, or act as a contractor or volunteer at The Learning Garden.
- **SHALL NOT** be on the property of The Learning Garden without written permission from the Director, except for the time reasonably necessary to transport the offender's own child to and from the Center. This exception does **NOT** include access to any room other than the front office, in which an employee will **graciously** receive the child/children (check in/out of classroom) for that parent. The Director is under no obligation to provide permission and must consult with their Texas Department of Family and Protective Services licensing agent first.

## **VISITORS**

All persons who are visiting the center (a person other than a parent, employee or authorized pick-up person) is required to sign in at the front office with a valid driver's license or identification card before entering the Center. The visitor is also required to sign out before leaving the Center. Employees are expected to notify the Director and/or Executive Assistant if expecting a visitor.

## **SCHEDULES AND ACTIVITIES INCLUDING CURRICULUM**

Consistency is particularly important to the overall well-being of children and the classroom environment. ***Children flourish with consistency!*** Routines should be maintained especially for arrivals and departures; meals and snacks; nap/resting time; personal care such as diapering/toileting and hand washing; and transitions.

**Daily schedules, lesson plans and menus must be posted in the classroom and visible at all times.**

Caregivers are expected to work cooperatively in creating a daily schedule and planning activities that meet each child's developmental abilities and needs and carrying out the schedule and activities. Should caregivers need guidance and/or help with any portion of these activities, it is expected that they seek such guidance from the Director. The daily schedule and activities should create a balance between small and large group muscle activities, indoor and outdoor play, as well as child-initiated and teacher-directed activities.

The Learning Garden uses ABC Jesus Loves Me curriculum in each of its program rooms. ABC Jesus Loves Me is a Christian based curriculum that builds upon the foundation of the Bible, academics, social skills, and preparation for Kindergarten.



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Each classroom should maintain a weekly lesson plan which contains a number of activities designed to foster each child's developmental ability, and ability of the group as a whole. If needed due to children's changing interest, lesson plans should be adjusted to accommodate this change of interest.

Each classroom is set up in centers such as blocks, dramatic play, books, gross motor, fine motor and art. Caregivers are responsible for ensuring that these designated areas are clearly defined with obvious boundaries. Quiet areas should be as far away from noisy activities as possible. The classroom décor should consist of child artwork, photographs/collages of family, animals, food, etc. at the child's eye level.

***ALL*** room arrangements should take into consideration that ***CAREGIVERS MUST BE ABLE TO SEE EVERY CHILD AT ALL TIME.***

Assessments will be made on all children using the Department of Family and Protective Services Child Assessment form 7293 or a form that The Learning Garden has made.

Free-play is meant for a child to have the opportunity to choose which center or activity he/she participates in and ***must*** be included in the morning and afternoon schedules. Free-play promotes creativity expression and development which is critical in the development of social skills. Caregivers are expected to actively participate with the children during free-play. Caregivers ***must*** ask questions prompting direction from the children, participating in pretend play, reading books when asked and encouraging students to try new activities, etc.

Outdoor play is critical in the child's physical development and ***must*** be included in both the morning and afternoon schedules, in almost ***ALL*** weather conditions. If weather consist of rain, severe wind/cold, or extreme heat, children are permitted to stay indoors. Caregivers should refer to the ***Child Care Weather Watch Poster*** to determine if it is safe for outdoor play. All caregivers are expected to actively engage in activities when promoted by the children. Children should be allowed to choose who to interact with since outdoor play is more child directed play. It is not a requirement for lesson plans to include an outdoor learning component however, it is suggested that caregivers offer an extension of the learning environment indoors while outdoors. For example, showing them that playing with cars in the grass is different due to textures and building things on uneven ground is more challenging than on an indoor floor.

Nap/rest time ***must*** be provided, a supervised sleep or rest period after the noon meal for all children 18 months of age or older. The sleep or rest period must not exceed three hours. Caregivers ***must*** not force a child to sleep or rest. Caregivers must allow each child who is awake after resting or sleeping for one hour to participate in an alternative, quiet activity until nap/rest time is over for the other children. Napping equipment may not block entrances or exits to the area, set up during other activities or left in place to interfere with children's activity space. Caregivers ***must*** arrange napping equipment to provide a sufficient walk and work space for caregivers between each cot/mat. They ***must*** also be arranged so that each child and caregiver has access to a walkway without having to walk on or over the cots/mats of other children and so that the ***caregiver can adequately supervise all children in the group at all times.***

Activities using TV/video, computer, or video games are ***prohibited*** for children under the age of 2 years. TV/video, computer or video games may be used to supplement, but may not be used to replace the activities for children ages two years and older. When using TV/video, computer or video games as an



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activity for children, it **must** be related to planned activities, age-appropriate and is **not to exceed** two hours per day.

To ensure safety and health of our children, **no animals are permitted** at The Learning Garden.

**Violent play is not allowed** at The Learning Garden. If a child engages in such behavior, the Director and/or Executive Assistant and parent should be notified. Redirection should be used as violent play and/or bullying is not acceptable behavior. All efforts will be made to guide children in finding appropriate ways to interact with others.

### FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are creative way to learn about the world that surrounds us. Caregivers are encouraged to use this type of enrichment in their classrooms. The Learning Garden does not go off of the Church Grounds for Field Trips.

- Field trips are limited to the **inside of the complex** in which the inside of the complex in which the Center is located **must** be approved by the Director and/or Executive Assistant. Additionally, parents complete the area on the Admission Form that gives permission for these types of field trips. When we do go on a Field Trips we will post a notification on the classroom door and **must** remain posted until all children on the field trip have returned to The Learning Garden.

Additionally, caregivers must comply with the following requirements:

- One or more caregivers **must** carry emergency medical consent forms and emergency contact information for each child on the field trip.
- Caregivers **must** have a written list of all children on the field trip and must check the list frequently to account for the presences of all children.
- Caregivers **must** have a first-aid kit immediately available on the field trip.
- Each child on the field trip **must** wear a shirt, nametag, or other identification listing The Learning Garden and the Center's phone number is 361-564-9444.
- Each caregiver **must** be easily identifiable by all children on the field trip by wearing a hat, The Learning Garden shirt, brightly colored clothes, or other easily spotted identification.
- Each caregiver supervising a field trip must have a communication devise such as a cellular phone, message pager, or two-way radio available in case of emergency.
- Caregivers with training in CPR and first aid with rescue breathing and choking **must** be present on the field trip.
- Field trips involve higher risk to children and require increased supervision by adults. Injuries and serious incidents are more likely to occur when a child's surroundings change or when there is a change in routine. When children are excited or busy playing in unfamiliar areas, they are



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likely to forget safety measures unless they are closely supervised. Therefore, when children are on a field trip and mixing with children and adults who are not from The Learning Garden, the following child/caregiver ratios **must** be met.

- |               |                                  |
|---------------|----------------------------------|
| ➤ 0-23 months | 1 caregiver to every 1 child     |
| ➤ 2 years     | 1 caregiver to every 2 children  |
| ➤ 3 years     | 1 caregiver to every 6 children  |
| ➤ 4 years     | 1 caregiver to every 8 children  |
| ➤ 5 years     | 1 caregiver to every 10 children |
| ➤ 6–12 years  | 1 caregiver to every 12 children |

The child/caregiver ratio for field trips may include adult volunteers or other The Learning Garden employees who are not qualified as caregivers only for trips when children are mixing with children and adults not associated with The Learning Garden, as long as the classroom child/caregiver ratio with qualified caregivers is maintained at the least.

### **WATER ACTIVITIES:**

Children almost unanimously enjoy water play. Water play and warm weather go extremely well together. When a child steps into the spray of cold water on a warm day, it is activating their senses. This type of sensory play is important in a child's development, contributing to their physical, cognitive and social-emotional growth. A child develops physical strength while running and jumping and improves their physical dexterity when capturing water in their cupped hands. They learn social skills and how to take turns while playing with others. Therefore, The Learning Garden will offer sprinkler play in which the classroom child/caregiver **ratio must** be maintained and children **must** never be left alone with the sprinkler equipment.

Although children love water play, they can become bored with repetitious play. The Learning Garden shall offer regular changes in water play such as the following:

- Water balloon toss— children 2 years of age and older are just starting to learn how to throw and catch a ball, while water balloons add a challenge to this, children enjoy the balloon popping when the balloon is missed and pops.
- Water relay races— children 3 years of age and older are just learning how to problem solve and their coordination in running, throwing and catching have improved substantially. Using a small bucket filled with water, and empty bucket and a large sponge, children may take turns running to the empty bucket with the sponge, squeezing out the water and returning to hand off the sponge to the next person in line.
- Sensory tables using water may be used for learning and exploration purposes.

All of these can also be enhanced to enrich the experience by using colored water.

**Although water play is extremely enjoyable, it requires very close supervision. The following are requirements of the caregivers:**



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- Parents must sign a Water Activities Permission form and it be filed in the child's permanent folder.
- Parents must be notified at least 2 days in advance of any water activity requiring a change of clothes, sunscreen, towels and water shoes. They shall be reminded the day before with a posting in the classroom or individual handouts of supplies needed for their child to participate. It is not necessary to notify or have a water activities permission form for water/sensory table play.
- Parents are required to supply sunscreen SPF 15 or above for their child/ren/ a permission slip must be on file before sunscreen will be applied to a child by a caregiver.
- Parents are encouraged to apply insect repellent to their child before arriving for the day, as The Learning Garden employees are not permitted to apply insect repellent.
- **Close supervision of water activities is required.** Children can drown in as little as one inch of water. ***BE ALERT!***
- Water tables, tubs, etc. **must** be emptied, cleaned and sanitized at the end of each day. Standing water should never be left in water tables overnight.
- The ground around a water play area can become very slippery. Children should wear shoes (preferably water shoes) during sprinkler and other water activities.
- Children may not feel the heat of the sun while cooling down in the sprinklers. Caregivers shall apply waterproof sunscreen (provided by parent) and reapply throughout the sprinkler and/or water activities.
- Children should be hands before and after play at water tables. It is acceptable to wash hands using liquid soap and running water from a house or outdoor faucet.
- Be alert to water toys that are mouthed by children. Sanitize any toys that have found their way into children's mouths before returning them to the water.
- Remind children that the water in a water table or tub is for play and not for drinking. Caregivers **must** have drinking water and cups and shall encourage children to drink regularly as they can become dehydrated while playing in the warm weather/sun.

### GUIDANCE STRATEGIES

Caregivers have a **moral responsibility** to guide, correct and socialize children toward proper behaviors. These actions are generally referred to as guidance and discipline. It is critical to offer positive guidance and discipline as they teach children responsibility, help children make thoughtful decisions and encourage children to have self-control. The more effective caregivers are at promoting these types of behaviors, the less time the caregiver spends correcting inappropriate behavior.

The Learning Garden employees will **ONLY** use positive guidance strategies. Positive guidance and discipline preserve children's self-esteem and dignity, which in turn promotes healthy development. Acknowledging a child's efforts and progress is the best way to promote healthy development. However, teaching self-discipline is a very demanding task and requires patience, attention and understanding of the child.

When interacting with children, caregivers should make sure they are validating the child's feelings, encouraging problem solving, respecting the child's choices, using positive reinforcement, talking with



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the child at their level (including their eye level) and paying attention to the children by circulating throughout the classroom.

### **UNDERSTANDING MISBEHAVIOR:**

Children are not naturally born to misbehave. There are several reasons why children misbehave and if a caregiver is familiar with these reasons, they will be more successful with guidance and discipline. Listed below are just a few possible reasons for a child's misbehavior.

- The child's expectations between home and school are different.
- Children will test whether a caregiver will enforce the rules or not.
- Children may not understand the rule or do not have the developmental levels to adhere to the rule
- Children want to declare their independence
- The child may be ill, bored, hungry or tired

### **PREVENTING MISBEHAVIOR:**

It is not possible to prevent misbehavior completely, but there are many steps that a caregiver can take to help prevent the majority of misbehavior.

- Set clear rules and be consistent when enforcing them.
- Create a safe and worry-free environment for the children.
- Participate with the children and show interest in their activities.
- Provide meaningful choices to encourage independence.
- Focus on desired behaviors and not the misbehaviors.
- Help children to build their self-image as dependable, responsible and helpful.
- Give clear directions, step by step.
- Use positive reinforcement and praise when a child has done something right.
- Help children understand empathy and how their actions affect others.
- **BE A GOOD EXAMPLE!**
- Avoid using the word "NO" or words that create a negative undertone as much as possible. The following are examples:
  1. Instead of saying "No" or "Don't" - say "Please stop" or "That's not okay" or "That's not okay" or "That's not a choice"
  2. Instead of saying "That's not nice" - say "That's not okay" or "That hurts Jane" or "Please use gentle touches" or "Please use your inside voice"
  3. Instead of saying "No running" - say "Please use your walking feet" or "We can run when we go outside"
  4. Instead of saying "Stop crying" - say "I need you to use your words to tell me what happened or what's wrong"



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### **RESPONDING TO MISBEHAVIOR:**

The following are strategies that The Learning Garden caregivers will use to respond to a child's misbehavior:

- **Structured Consequences**– Children need to understand the direct correlation with their actions and the consequences. Caregivers should remind a child of the consequences when they are misbehaving. For example, when a child stands in his chair the caregiver should say, “Johnny, if you stand in your chair, you will fall and get hurt and then you will be sad.”
- **Redirection**– If a child is being uncooperative or is not following directions, direct the child's attention toward a new activity. For example, “Johnny, please help me put this puzzle together. You have been at the are easel for a long time now and it is Jane's turn.”
- **Participation in the solution**— When a child damages something, have them help fix it or clean it up. If a child hurts another child, help them to understand that the other child is sad and that they should apologize and help make them feel better.
- **Take a break**– If a child becomes overwhelmed or violent, they may need to be removed from the situation. In a case, a child should be directed to take a break in a designated area to give the child a change to calm down. Once the child has calmed down, the child should be talked to about the cause and effect of their actions.

If these strategies do not help change the child's misbehavior, the caregiver should then report the misbehavior and strategies used by the caregiver to the Director and/or Executive Assistant. The Director and/or Executive Assistant will then observe the child and meet with the caregiver to develop a behavior management plan. The Director and/or Executive Assistant will discuss the behavior management plan with the child's parents and put the plan into place. Adjustments will be made as evaluations by the Director and/or Executive Assistant or caregiver deem necessary. All adjustments *must* be approved by the Director.

### **MEALS AND NUTRITION**

The Learning Garden follows the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services' Minimum Standards practice guidelines for meals and snacks.

- Before each meal is served, tables must be washed with soapy water and sanitized with bleach/water solution.



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- All caregivers and children must wash their hands before and after each meal, for at least 20 seconds.
- Caregivers shall sit with children at the tables and supervise all mealtimes. Caregivers should encourage conversation by asking questions or talking about the food. Caregivers should model good table etiquette.
- Children **must** have every food served on their plate. Should a child state a dislike for a particular food item, they will still get the serving of that food, but they do not have to eat it. If the child has dietary restrictions and parents have provided special diet instructions from a health care provider that prohibit that particular item, the item should not be placed in any quantity on the child's plate. **Children must never be forced or bribed to eat.**
- The parent **must** inform the caregiver if their child cannot eat certain foods or different dietary needs (vegetarian, lactose intolerant) so a substitution can be made. For certain dietary restrictions including those mentioned above, the parent may be asked to provide food from home for their child.
- Parents may bring special treats for children for birthday's, holiday's, or special occasions but please check with your child's Caregiver, Director, and/or Executive Assistant first to make sure that they children can have what you plan on bringing.
- Parents may provide the child's meal and/or snacks from home but the need to be healthy and well balanced to meet the nutritional values that a child requires. No drinks with added sugars, carbonated beverages, fruit punch, or sweetened milk and no candy. ***(The Learning Garden is not responsible for its nutritional value or for meeting the child's daily food needs.)***
- See The Learning Garden's and/or Classroom Schedule for times your child eats Breakfast, Lunch, and Snack.

### **HANDS WASHING PROCEDURES:**

All employees in The Learning Garden's classrooms must follow ALL of the steps provided below to prevent the spread of communicable diseases to children and other employees.

### **EFFECTIVE HAND WASHING:**

- Use soap and warm running water
- Rub hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds, washing all surfaces including back of hands, wrists, under fingernails with hands pointed to the sink drain.
- Rinse hands well under running water
- Dry hands with disposable towels and then use disposable towel to turn water off

### **WHEN EMPLOYEES ARE TO WASH HANDS:**



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- Upon arrival to the Center
- Before preparing or serving food
- Before and after eating food
- After diapering/toileting a child
- After contact with bodily fluids including mucus, vomit and blood
- Before and after administering medication
- Before and after sensory play including water play
- After coming indoors or returning from a break
- After using the restroom
- After using any cleaners or toxic chemicals

### **WHEN CHILDREN ARE TO WASH HANDS:**

- Upon arrival to classroom
- Before and after eating food
- After using the restroom or having diaper changed
- After contact with bodily fluids including mucus, vomit and blood or any other time the caregiver has reason to believe the child has come in contact with substances that could be harmful
- Before and after sensory play including water play
- After coming indoors or playing in sand

Caregivers are to wash the hands of children too young to wash their own hands. Older children need to form a good habit of hand washing. They learn by watching their caregivers, **BE A GOOD EXAMPLE!**

### **WASHING AND SANITIZING:**

Research supports preventive steps such as regular and proper hand washing, ventilating rooms regularly with lots of fresh air, and establishing cleaning routines helps to limit the spread of infections. Germs have difficulty growing in clean, dry, and well-ventilated environments. Washing and/or cleaning with soapy water removes dirt from surfaces. Sanitizing with a disinfectant solution removes dirt and germs. Sanitizing requires a four-step process. For the sanitizing process to be effective, you must follow these steps in order:

1. Washing with water and soap
2. Rinsing with clear water
3. Soaking in or spraying on a disinfecting solution (at least two minutes). Rinsing with cool water only those items that children are likely to place in their mouths.
4. Allowing the surface or article to air dry.

A disinfecting solution may be:

- One tablespoon of regular strength liquid household bleach to each gallon of water used for disinfecting such items as toys and eating utensils



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- One-fourth cup of regular strength liquid household bleach to each gallon of water used for disinfecting surfaces such as bathrooms, crib rails, and diaper-changing tables.

The bleach and water solution **must** be prepared fresh daily and placed in a closed and labeled container. Unused bleach/water solution should be poured down a drain at the end of the day. **Keep all containers of cleaning and disinfecting products out of reach of the children.**

Bleach and water solution may be used in several ways:

- Dipping the object into a sink or pan filled with the bleach/water solution then letting the object air dry
- Using paper towels soaked in the bleach/water solution to wash surfaces then letting it air dry
- Using spray bottles filled with bleach/water solution to thoroughly wet a surface then letting it air dry

### **INFANT, TODDLER AND TWO-YEAR-OLD PROGRAMS**

- Parents **must** supply diapers, wipes, diaper cream, bottles, formula, baby food, extra clothing, pacifiers, blankets, and stuffed toys for rest time. **Please label all items with child's name.** Each diaper should have the child's first and last initial on it, see caregiver and/or Director for example.
- Infants may use pacifiers but are not allowed to have blankets or stuffed toys in the crib with them at rest time. Toddlers and Two-Year old's may use pacifiers, blankets and stuffed toys during rest time. To reduce the risk of spreading communicable diseases, these items **must** be kept in a child's cubby or diaper bag during all other times of the day. The Learning Garden encourages that all items brought from home be placed in the child's cubby shortly after arrival. Remember all items should be taken home on the last day that your child will attend for the week for proper cleaning.
- All children being fed breast milk, formula or baby food must complete a feeding form.
- Breast milk **must** be brought in ready-to-use containers. The Learning Garden will not be able to store bags of frozen milk for extended periods of time due to health risk.
- **Children must be held when bottle feeding, bottle propping is forbidden.**
- Check with parents before introducing **ANY** new food. The Learning Garden highly recommends that all **new foods be tried at home first.** Prior to allowing a child to eat foods prepared by The Learning Garden, a parent should review the monthly menu to ensure that the food has been introduced to the child at home first.
- We provide a comfortable place with a seat in our center or within the classroom that enables a mother to breastfeed your child. In addition, we want you to know that you have the right to breastfeed or provide breastmilk for your child while in our care.

### **DIAPERING PROCEDURE:**

To minimize contamination outside of the diapering area, prepare for a diaper change before bringing the child to the diapering area.



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- Changing the table paper to cover the table
- Having enough wipes for the diaper change and hands if needed (as a temporary measure only)
- A clean diaper, plastic bag for soiled clothes and clean clothes if soiled clothing is anticipated
- Non-porous gloves and diaper cream if needed and provided by parent

### Caregivers *must*:

- **Promptly** change soiled or wet diapers or clothing
- Thoroughly cleanse children with disposable wipes
- Ensure that the children are dry before placing a new diaper on the child
- Only apply powders, creams, ointments or lotions with parent's written permission; if the parent supplies these items, permission is implicit and no written permission is needed
- Ensure that each child's diapering supplies are labeled with that individual child's name
- Keep all diaper-changing supplies out of reach of children
- Wash their hands using the hand washing procedure
- Wash the child's hands or see that the child's hands are washed after each diaper change
- Discard disposable gloves if used and wash hands with soap and running water
- Sanitize the diaper changing surface after each use; if needed due to changing diapers on a number of children consecutively, a non-absorbent paper liner may be used and disposed of between each diaper change
- Cover containers used for soiled diapers or keep them in a sanitary manner such as placing soiled diapers in individual sealed bags
- Set aside toys that are played with or objects that are touched, while children's diapers are changed, to be sanitized

A pleasant attitude while changing a child's diaper, even if a child has had a loose stool, helps to develop a child's positive sense of self.

### **Cloth Diapers:**

Only commercially available disposable diapers or pull-ups may be used at The Learning Garden, unless the child has a documented medical reason that does not permit their use. Documentation from the child's physician *must* be provided to the Director and/or Executive Assistant before the cloth diapers will be used while the child is at the Center. Families must provide a container for storage of soiled cloth diapers while at the Center.

### **SUDDEN INFANT DEATH SYNDROME (SIDS):**

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), the sudden and unexplained death of an infant, is a major cause of death in babies between 1 and 4 months old. It is known to affect infants up to the age of 1. After 30 years of research, scientists still cannot find a cause for SIDS. However, research has found that the risk



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of SIDS may be reduced by placing a healthy infant on his or her back to sleep. Therefore, The Learning Garden has a strict policy for the sleep placement of a child under the age of 1 year.

**All infants less than one year will be placed on their back to sleep (face-up position)**

**Infants shall not be allowed to sleep in a car seat or swing for a period longer than 15 minutes.**

**No blankets, stuffed toys or pillows should ever be placed in a crib**

Caregivers found to violate this policy will be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure and possibly termination

Once placed in the crib, if the infant rolls from back to front and is able to roll from front to back, it is acceptable to leave the infant sleeping on his/her stomach.

If the infant was born with a birth defect, often spits up after eating or has a breathing, lung or heart problem, a licensed health care physician must provide a written documentation stating that a different sleeping position is allowed and will not harm the infant.

## **PARENT RELATIONSHIPS**

Many of our employees will become well acquainted with parents. This is a vital part of providing quality child care. However, there are a few guidelines to which all The Learning Garden's employees **must** adhere to:

- Use **“manners”** such as “yes/no ma’am/sir”, “please” and “thank you”. Address the parent using “Mr./Mrs.” and their first name.
- Employees **must not** use other children’s names when discussing behavior concerns and/or incident reports with parents.
- Conversations with parents at arrival and departure should be brief. A caregiver’s chief responsibility remains the supervision of the children. If a caregiver feels that a parent needs more time or attention, ask to schedule a time to meet outside of the classroom or with the Director and/or Executive Assistant.
- Babysitting for The Learning Garden’s family outside of the Center is strongly advised against. No matter when or where an accident/incident happens with a child, if an employee of a child care center is involved, it is reflected upon the Center. Therefore, in the event that an employee of The Learning Garden chooses to engage in such activity, the caregiver and parent must complete The Consent to Hold The Learning Garden Harmless for Staff Babysitting. If a The Learning Garden caregiver is found participating in such activity without consent form, they will be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure and may be terminated.

## **FAMILY AND CENTER PARTNERSHIP**

**New Family Orientation:**



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Each family is strongly encouraged to schedule a time with the Director and/or Executive Assistant to complete a “New Family Orientation.” This orientation is a great time for parents to drop-off routine care items (diapers, extra clothes, bottles, etc.) as well as an opportunity to participate in a portion of classroom activities with their child, familiarizing themselves with their child’s routines at The Learning Garden. This is a time where important policies and procedures are also reviewed and required paperwork for enrollment may be completed.

### **Daily Activity Sheets:**

For children enrolled in the infant, toddler and two-year-old programs, a daily sheet will be completed each day to inform you about your child’s day. This sheet contains information about toileting, meals, naps and other activities. Parents of children in the older are programs may request a daily activity sheet be filled out for their child. There will be a monthly newsletter regarding curriculum and daily activities as well as announcements about the Center. The newsletter will be posted on the main bulletin board near the main office.

### **Room Transitions:**

Children will transition to a new classroom when he/she has reached the developmental milestones for a particular classroom. As the time for a transition to a new classroom approaches, the parent will receive notice of such transition. Current caregiver and new caregiver will be available to address any questions or concerns during the transition period.

### **Parent Participation and Conferences:**

Parent participation is strongly encouraged at The Learning Garden. Some prime opportunities to participate are:

- Field trips
- Leading or assisting special projects (snack making, art projects, and etc.)
- Construction or collection of raw materials for art projects, dramatic play props, etc.
- Eating lunch or snack
- Volunteering in the classroom (story-time, circle time, etc.)

Parents are asked to please inform caregivers in advance (one day prior or the morning of) if there is an interest in participating in one of these activities.

Parents/Legal Guardians may visit the Center at any time during the hours of operation to observe their child, the operation and program activities, without having to secure prior approval.

Parent-Teacher/caregiver conferences will typically be held each time a child transitions classrooms. The goal is to gain insight into the child’s development both in the Center and at home. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to request conferences whenever they feel it necessary.

### **Program Surveys, Question and Concerns:**



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The Learning Garden will ask parents to complete an anonymous survey each year to help the Center improve the overall quality and to develop goals. A parent's point of view is different than a caregiver's point of view. Therefore, parent feedback is very important to the success of our Center's program and the satisfaction of our families.

If a parent has a question or concern, they are asked to please not hesitate in bringing it to the attention of the caregiver most directly involved or contacting the Director via phone or email. A copy of the DFPS Minimum Standards is always available to review in the front office at the parent information table, as well as the most recent inspection reports posted on the parent information board.

### **FEES, BILLING AND VACATION POLICIES**

- Upon enrollment and any changes made to tuition, families are provided with a copy of the enrollment packet. This should be carefully reviewed and checked for errors.
- Payments are **due on the first of the month** for monthly payers or **due on Monday** for the upcoming week for bi-monthly and weekly payers. If a holiday falls on the day you are scheduled to make a payment, the payment will be due the next business day. Payments cannot be made with a credit or debit card or cash. Money orders or checks are acceptable.
- Any returned checks will automatically be resubmitted up to three times. The maximum fee allowed by state law will be charged and the parent will be responsible for the insufficient amount owed and all returned check fees. After **2 returned checks**, the parent will be required to pay tuition in the form of a **cashier's check or money order**. Repeated incidents of return checks or insufficient funds notices could result in termination of child care services.
- Families that are more than 2 weeks behind in payments may have their child care services terminated however parents may come and speak to the Director in order to settle their bill which can include making payments. It is at the sole discretion of the Director as to the amount of the payment or if payments will be accepted at all.
- You will be charged \$10.00 for each day that your payment is late.
- Families with two or more children enrolled at The Learning Garden are eligible for a 10% discount from the tuition rate/s.
- The Learning Garden does offer a part-time enrollment rate. However, part-time enrollment is for 3 days with those days being Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.
- A late fee of \$2.00 will be charged for every minute until the child/ren is/are picked up after we close. (\$120.00 an hour.)
- Each family that attends The Learning Garden will receive 1 week of vacation each year. Vacation days will be given out after the first 6 months of enrollment as long as the family account is in "good-standing." **PLEASE NOTE:** Vacation days are per family, not per child. Please provide the Director and/or Executive Assistant with two weeks' notice when you wish to use your vacation week. Request to use your vacation week **must** be provided in writing.



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- In the event that a child needs to take an extended absence, due to illness or such as summer break, and wishes to return to the program after a period of time, please discuss with the Director and/or Executive Assistant to make arrangements. An extended absence needed due to illness may require a doctor's notice.

### **AFFIDAVIT POLICY**

At times, families may be dealing with difficult situations at home. When legal matters are present in the home, families may need to collect affidavits for their legal team. Due to the nature of the relationship between caregiver and child, families may choose to ask a Learning Garden employee to provide such a statement. However, employees will not provide written statements or affidavits of a professional nature to families. Our program's priority is providing the best possible care when children are away from home and our focus will remain on the child, making sure all their needs are met during what could be a difficult time at home. In the event of separation/divorce of parents/guardians and custody matters, all original ***court registered*** documentation ***must*** be provided to the Director in order to alter any releasing rights, etc. to a contact person originally listed as a parent/guardian on the Enrollment Packet Form.

### **GANG FREE ZONE NOTICE**

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 harsher penalty.

Subject:       **Allergy Action Plan**

**Allergy Action Plan:**

1. Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan is filled out by parent and the Physician.  
(Example is attached to this plan.)
2. All additional information from Physician is attached with it the Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan.
3. We follow the Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plans steps for Severe Symptoms or Mild Symptom unless the Physician has stated for us to do something different.
4. The original will be placed in child's file and a copy will be with the child's teacher.
5. The Learning Garden also uses the teacher/counselor form to post with a sign of who has the allergy in a binder in each classroom including lunch room with child's picture so all staff know that the child has an allergy.
6. The child with the allergy is assigned a bracelet with their allergy on it. This bracelet is kept in the child's cubby. Every morning the parent or teacher places the bracelet on the child with the allergy and when child is picked up at the end of the day it is placed back in the child's cubby. This helps any staff member that may not be familiar with the child know that they have an allergy.

Subject: **Biting Policy**

Biting is unfortunately not unexpected behavior for toddlers. Some children and many toddlers communicate through this behavior. However, biting can be harmful to other children and to staff. This biting policy has been developed with both of these ideas in mind. As a day care, we understand that biting, unfortunately, is a part of a day care setting. Our goal is to help identify what is causing the biting and resolve these issues. If the issue cannot be resolved, this policy serves to protect the children that are bitten. If a biting incident occurs, state regulations require that the parent of the child biting and the parent of the child who was bitten be contacted. Names of the children are not shared with either parent.

### **I. When Biting Does Occur:**

Our staff strongly disapproves of biting. The staff's job is to keep the children safe and help a child that bites learn different, more appropriate behavior. We do not use techniques to alarm, hurt, or frighten children such as biting back or washing a child's mouth out with soap.

a. For the child that was bitten:

1. First aid is given to the bite. It is cleaned with soap and water. If the skin is broken, the bite is covered with a bandage.
2. Parents are notified.
3. The "Incident/Illness Report" form is filled out documenting the incident.

b. For the child that bit:

1. The teacher will firmly tell the child "We don't bite, biting hurts!"
2. The child will be removed from the situation, redirected, and placed in thinking time for no longer than the child's age (one year old, one minute).
3. The parents are notified.
4. The "Parent Communication Form" is filled out documenting the incident.

### **II. When Biting Continues:**

- a. The child will be shadowed to help prevent any biting incidents.

Subject: **Biting Policy**

- b. The child will be observed by the classroom staff to determine what is causing the child to bite (teething, communication, frustration, etc.) The administrative staff may also observe the child if the classroom staff is unable to determine the cause.
- c. The child will be given positive attention and approval for positive behavior.

**III. When biting becomes excessive:**

- a. If a child inflicts 3 bites in a one-week period (5 weekdays) in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, a conference will be held with the parents to discuss the child's behavior and how the behavior may be modified.
- b. If the child again inflicts 3 bites in a one-week period (5 weekdays) in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, the child will be suspended for **2 business days**.
- c. If a child once again inflicts 3 bites in a one-week period (5 weekdays) in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, ***the parents will be asked to make other day care arrangements.***
- d. If a child, who has been through steps 1 and/or 2, goes 3 weeks (15 business days) without biting, we will go back to step one if the child bites again.
- e. If a child bites twice in a 4-hour period, the child will be required to be picked up from day care for the remainder of the day. This will not count towards the 2-day suspension.

\*\*\*This policy is effective August 1, 2017. All past experiences of biting are not included in this policy, as this policy was not in effect at the time of biting. All biting occurrences from today forward will be counted towards a child's total biting incidents.

Subject: **Drop off and Pick up Policy**

## I. Arrival:

Parents are required to accompany their child into the Center and into their child's classroom, unless restricted. Parents should also speak with the caregiver in the classroom, if only briefly. We encourage parents to communicate with their child's teacher, about their child's temperament that particular day, how she/he slept the night before, whether he/she has eaten that morning, etc.

Most children go through periods of difficulty with separating from their parents. This is common and developmentally appropriate. Try these tips for a successful drop-off:

- a. **Establish a regular, predictable routine.** Whether you have a kiss and a hug and go, or you help your child put his/her things in the cubby first, do it the same way every day. What often makes separating stressful for children is the uncertainty. If your child can predict what will happen, the separation is not as difficult.
- b. **Separate one time only.** If you come back into the classroom again and again, it will increase a child's stress. Remember the moment of separation is the worst part for a child, so doing it more than once makes it more stressful for a child.
- c. **Be reliable.** Return when promised. Children who are picked up later than expected may have more difficulties separating. Phrase time in terms a child will understand. For example, say "I will be back after snack time" or "before nap time."

**All parents and guardians must make sure that a staff person recognizes that the child has been dropped off or is being picked up from child care.**

## II. Cut Off Time:

The Learning Garden does have a cut-off time to arrive at the center. Our cut-off time is 9:00am. **NO CHILDREN WILL BE ALLOWED TO STAY FOR THE DAY IF THEY ARRIVE AFTER 9:00AM!** Child counts are made by our cook at this time so she knows how much food to prepare for the day, as well as we have Morning Assembly/Chapel that starts at 9:00am.

- a. The only exceptions that are made will be for appointments that are first thing in the morning. We must have notice of this appointment in advance. Your child needs to arrive at the center by 11:30am.
  - If your child has missed lunch served at The Learning Garden make sure that they have eaten before you drop them off.
  - If your child will be back before his scheduled lunch we need to know this the day before so we can have food for them when it is their lunch time.We do not allow children to come back during nap due to disrupting the children that are napping.
- b. If you are running late due to an emergency or car trouble that is understandable but we need notice as soon as you are aware. However, if it becomes a habit of you calling in with circumstances you may not be allowed to bring your child.

Subject: **Drop off and Pick up Policy**

### **III. Regular Attendance:**

Regular Attendance is strongly encouraged for the benefit of the child as well as the classroom as a whole. If a child will be absent, please call the Center by 9:00am so that the child's caregiver may make accommodations to the lesson plan. If a child will not be in attendance due to an illness of a communicable disease, please inform the Director and/or Executive Assistant of such illness.

### **IV. Release of a Child**

Parents are required to indicate the name and phone number of all authorized individuals who are clear to pick up the child. All parents and/or authorized individuals are to sign-in and sign-out on the provided sheet located in the child's classroom, each day the child is dropped off and picked up from the daycare. Only persons designated to pick up a child will be allowed to do so.

### **V. Unauthorized Pick Up**

The parent/guardian is required to notify the caregiver verbally or in writing if someone else, other than the authorized persons, will pick up the child. Please provide name, phone number, and description of the person. The person will be asked to show photo identification. If necessary, police will be called for assistance.

### **VI. Custody and Related Court Orders**

The Learning Garden staff cannot become involved in the marital or custody issues of the families that we serve. If a custody or court order exists, a copy of the order needs to be placed in the child's file. The guardian is responsible for providing up to date and accurate information concerning the legal guardianship of the child. Without a custody or court order on file, the caregiver cannot deny access to the non-enrolling parent. If the non-enrolling parent is not listed on the pick-up list, the policy on unauthorized persons will be implemented. The guardian will provide all consents.

### **VII. Late Pick Up**

A late fee of \$2.00 will be charged per every minute is late being picked-up. IF a child is not picked up by 6:00pm, an employee including the caregiver shall attempt to contact parents/guardians at all available phone numbers. If the parents/guardians cannot be reached, and attempt to contact the authorized pick-up persons shall be made. If these attempts are unsuccessful, the employee must contact the Director and/or Executive Assistant. The Yorktown Police Department or Texas Department of Public Safety will then be contacted.

Subject: **Emergency Procedures**

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

### **Emergency Medical/Dental Procedure:**

It is important for parents to complete and update, as needed, their Emergency Contact and Release Persons in the Enrollment Packet. This form contains contact information for both the parents as well as the individuals authorized to pick up the child in the event of illness or emergency.

Additionally, this form allows The Learning Garden employees to seek emergency medical or dental care from authorized care providers in the event of serious injury. All parents/guardians will be required to update this information every January and July however, ***it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to complete this form and to make corrections to this information when necessary.***

If a child becomes ill or injured after arriving at The Learning Garden, the Lead Teacher/Caregiver will attempt to contact the parent(s) at all available telephone numbers. If a parent cannot be reached, the individuals listed as emergency contact/authorized pick-up persons on the Emergency Contact and Release Persons page of the Enrollment Packet will be called.

Children who are ill or seriously injured will be sent to the office and remain under the supervision of the Director and/or Executive Assistant until a parent, guardian, and/or emergency contact arrives.

### **If a child requires immediate medical attention:**

- The employee who witnessed the emergency situation will remain with the injured child and instruct someone else to call 911. If no one is available, first ensure that the child is stable and if possible, the employee should take the child with them to call 911.
- **Call 911**
  - Provide the Center's name and address **"The Learning Garden, 234 N. Gohmert St."**
  - Provide the child's name and description of the incident
  - Follow instructions given by the 911 operator
- An employee that witnessed the emergency situation shall accompany the child to the hospital, taking the child's medical information forms and their emergency contact and release person form.
- **Employees may not transport an ill or injured child in a personal vehicle.**

### **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES FOR CHILDREN YOUNGER THAN 24 MONTHS OF AGE OR THAT HAVE LIMITED MOBILITY:**

- Children under the age of 24 months that do not walk will be placed in a crib and rolled out of the building to our designated meeting location that is stated in our emergency procedure plans.
- If children are in a wheelchair they will be wheeled out of the building to our designated meeting location that is stated in our emergency procedure plan.

Subject: **Emergency Procedures**

## **EMERGENCY FIRE PROCEDURE:**

- If a fire is detected, flip the switch to the fire alarm located on the wall outside the entrance door.
- If it is a small fire, attempt to extinguish the fire using the nearest fire extinguisher. Should the employee be a caregiver on duty at the time of a fire, the caregiver **must** follow the instructions below and evacuate the children first.
  - Exit the Center and proceed to the designated meeting place.
  - **Call 911**
    - Provide the Center's name and address **"The Learning Garden, 234 N. Gohmert St."**
    - Provide the location of the fire

### **If the fire alarm sounds while caregivers are on duty in the classroom:**

Assist in the evacuation of the children from the classroom

- Collect the classroom first aid kit, classroom binder, two-way radio, and daily count sheet
- Caregiver closest to the outdoor exit is responsible for leading children out that exit and to the designated meeting place: **far fence by street in the playground**
- **Every classroom must stay together as a group**
- The Director and/or Executive Assistant are responsible for ensuring that everyone has evacuated the building
- In the event that there is only one caregiver in the classroom (only where child/caregiver ratios allow), someone such as a floater, aide, the Director and/or Executive Assistant will meet the caregiver at the classroom exit door to assume responsibility of the caregiver closest to the outdoor exit described above and the caregiver will then assume responsibility of the caregiver farthest from the outdoor exit as described above.
- Once assembled at the designated meeting place, the Lead Teacher/Caregiver is responsible for using the classroom daily count sheet to ensure that all children are accounted for. If the Lead Teacher/Caregiver is not present, the Assistant Caregiver will assume this responsibility. They will report to the Director and/or Executive Assistant that all children and staff in their rooms are accounted for.
- The Director and/or Executive Assistant will verify, as soon as possible, that all children are accounted for or that someone is not accounted for and where they might be located in the building to the Fire Department and/or Emergency Personnel.

### **If unable to return to the Center in a timely manner:**

- All children and employees will be taken into the Church Basement or Church 2nd Parsonage located more than a block away. Until parents arrive to pick up their children.
- Lead Teachers/Caregivers will be responsible for contacting parents and informing them of the situation.

**\*\*FIRE DRILL WILL BE CONDUCTED MONTHLY\*\***

**The Director or Executive Assistant will initiate all drills and maintain records of all drills.**

Subject: **Emergency Procedures**

## **EMERGENCY TORNADO PROCEDURE:**

**Church Basement Procedures** ~In the event that the Yorktown warning sirens are sounded, assist in the evacuation of the children from the classroom.

- Collect the classroom first aid kit, classroom binder, two-way radio, and daily count sheet
- Caregiver closest to the outdoor exit is responsible for leading children out that exit and to the designated meeting place: **Church Basement**
- **Every classroom must stay together as a group**
- Caregivers farthest from the outdoor exit is responsible for ensuring that everyone has evacuated the classroom
- The last caregiver to exit the classroom must turn off all lights and close the doors.
- Once assemble in the designated meeting place, the Lead Teacher/Caregiver is responsible for using the classroom daily count sheet to ensure that all children are accounted for. If the Lead Teacher/Caregiver is not present, the Assistant Caregiver will assume this responsibility. They will report to the Director and/or Executive Assistant that all children and staff in their rooms are accounted for.
- The Director and/or Executive Assistant will verify, as soon as possible, that all children are accounted for.
- **All children and employees must remain on the floor in the designated shelter area and wait to receive an “all clear” from the Director and/or Executive Assistant.**
- During a tornado warning, the Director and/or Executive Assistant will be responsible for monitoring the weather information radio and will keep employees informed of emergency weather changes.

**Hallway Procedures** ~In the event that the Yorktown warning sirens are sounded and we do not have time to go to the Church Basement, assist in the evacuation of the children from the classroom.

- Collect the classroom first aid kit, classroom binder, two-way radio, and daily count sheet
- Caregivers lead your children out of your classroom to the hallway.
- **Every classroom must stay together as a group**
- Last caregiver out of the classroom is responsible for ensuring that everyone has evacuated the classroom.
- Children are to get on their knees, face the wall, bend down, and cover their heads.
- The last caregiver to exit the classroom must turn off all lights and close the doors.
- Once assemble in the designated meeting place, the Lead Teacher/Caregiver is responsible for using the classroom daily count sheet to ensure that all children are accounted for. If the Lead Teacher/Caregiver is not present, the Assistant Caregiver will assume this responsibility. They will report to the Director and/or Executive Assistant that all children and staff in their rooms are accounted for.
- The Director and/or Executive Assistant will verify, as soon as possible, that all children are accounted for.
- **All children and employees must remain on the floor in the designated shelter area and wait to receive an “all clear” from the Director and/or Executive Assistant.**

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- During a tornado warning, the Director and/or Executive Assistant will be responsible for monitoring the weather information radio and will keep employees informed of emergency weather changes.

**\*\*TORNADO DRILLS WILL BE CONDUCTED MONTHLY\*\***

**The Director or Executive Assistant will initiate all drills and maintain records of all drills.**

**BLIZZARD/SEVERE WINTER WEATHER:**

The Learning Garden typically follows the Yorktown Independent School District inclement weather closings and delays. If Yorktown ISD is closed or opening late due to inclement weather, The Learning Garden will close with the same schedule. Tune in to your local radio stations for announcements, or view the Yorktown ISD website: [www.yisd.org](http://www.yisd.org).

The Director and/or Executive Assistant will also monitor the weather and local news stations throughout the day to determine when it is appropriate to close the Center early or cancel care for the following day as well.

Lead Teacher/Caregivers are responsible for contacting parents to inform them of the situation. Routine classroom activities will continue until parents, guardians, and/or emergency contacts arrive.

**LIGHTNING:**

All children must immediately return and remain indoors when lightning is observed.

**POWER FAILURE:**

Employees and children should remain in the classroom and if possible, proceed with activities as usual, or may alter going to the outdoor playground (weather permitting) until the power is restored. In the event that the power is not restored within a reasonable amount of time, the Center will close and parents will be contacted.

- Lead Teacher/Caregivers are responsible for contacting parents to inform them of the closing and of the need to immediately pick up their children.
- Activities shall resume as possible until parents arrive.

**EMERGENCY PROCEDURE FOR IF THE ELEVATOR IS NOT WORKING IN THE CHURCH:**

Two teachers will carry the crib or wheelchair down the side stairs to the basement.

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**EARTHQUAKE:**

In the event of an earthquake, employees will assist children in seeking shelter under tables or outdoors away from buildings (parking lot) The first aid kit, classroom binder, and daily count sheets should remain with the Lead Teacher/Caregiver at all times. When notified by the Director and/or Executive Assistant that the situation is safe, the Lead Teacher/Caregiver must use the daily count sheet to verify that all children are accounted for. Parents will be notified as soon as possible.

**CHEMICAL SPILLS****OUTDOOR CHEMICAL SPILL:**

In the event that The Learning Garden receives notification from the Yorktown Police/Fire Department that there has been a chemical spill in the area, or if employees observe an unusual odor while outdoors:

- Employees and children **must** immediately return and remain in their classrooms
- All doors and windows **must** be closed immediately
- The Director and/or Executive Assistant will monitor the situation and provide information to employees as it becomes available. Further action taken will depend on instructions received from the Yorktown Police/Fire Department.

**INDOOR CHEMICAL SPILL:**

This includes the mixing of chemicals which creates hazardous fumes.

Immediately notify the Director and/or Executive Assistant of the situation then assist in the evacuation of the children from the classroom.

- Collect the classroom **first aid kit, classroom binder, two– way radio, and daily count sheet.**
- Caregiver closest to the outdoor exit is responsible for leading children out that exit and to the designated meeting place: **Church Basement**
- **Every classroom must stay together as a group**
- Caregiver farthest to the outdoor exit is responsible for ensuring that everyone has evacuated the classroom
- The last caregiver to exit the classroom must turn off all lights and close the doors.
- In the event that there is only one caregiver in the classroom (only where child/caregiver ratios allow), someone such as a floater, aide, the Director and/or Executive Assistant will meet the caregiver at the classroom exit door to assume responsibility of the caregiver closest to the outdoor exit described above and the caregiver will then assume responsibility of the caregiver farthest from the outdoor exit as described above.
- The Director and/or Executive Assistant are responsible for ensuring that everyone has evacuated the building
- Once assembled at the designated meeting place, the Lead Teacher/Caregiver is responsible for using the classroom daily count sheet to ensure that all children are accounted for. If the

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Lead Teacher/Caregiver is not present, the Assistant Caregiver will assume this responsibility. They will report to the Director and/or Executive Assistant that all children and staff in their rooms are accounted for.

- The Director and/or Executive Assistant will verify, as soon as possible, that all children are accounted for or that someone is not accounted for.
- The Director and/or Executive Assistant will contact the Yorktown Police Department to inform them of the situation. Further action taken will depend on instructions from the Yorktown Police Department.

**If unable to return to the Center in a timely manner:**

- All children and employees will be taken into the Church Basement until parents arrive to pick up their children.
- Lead Teachers/Caregivers will be responsible for contacting parents and informing them of the situation.

## **INTRUDER OR DANGEROUS ADULT**

A dangerous adult is considered someone who is displaying inappropriate or threatening behavior, carrying a weapon, or showing signs of intoxication from either drugs or alcohol. This also includes an individual that is prohibited by court order from picking up or having contact with a child.

In the event that there is an intruder or dangerous adult in the Center:

- Employees in the immediate area will position themselves between the children and the intruder/dangerous adult.
- An employee will attempt to have the intruder/dangerous adult move to the hallway and close the classroom door, while a second employee calls the Director or Executive Assistant to assist with the situation.
- Employees will be notified by the Director or Executive Assistant of the threat by two-way radios.
- All employees and children must return to their classrooms, lock the classroom doors and sit on the floor away from the doors and windows. Wait for the all clear from the Director and/or Executive Assistant before continuing with activities. If the Director and/or Executive Assistant's voice are not recognized during the all clear, do not continue on with activities. The Director and/or Executive Assistant will perform a walk-through of the Center once they have personally made the all-clear to verify that it was them making the all clear call.
- The Director and/or Executive Assistant, or employee designated by the Director, will contact the Yorktown Police Department at 361-564-2611 to inform them of the situation.
- The Director and/or Executive Assistant will instruct the intruder/dangerous adult to leave the premises, maintaining visual contact with the individual until the police arrive, or until the individual leaves.

In the event of an intoxicated parent/guardian:

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The Director and/or Office Manager and the Lead Teacher/Caregiver will talk with the intoxicated parent about alternative arrangements for pick-up, while another authorized pick-up person is contacted.

If another authorized pick-up person cannot be reached, the child must be released to the intoxicated parent.

- The Director or Executive Assistant will then inform the parent that the police will be noticed.
- Call the **Yorktown Police Department** and inform them of the situation. Provide as much information as possible, including parent's name, make/model of the car, and license plate number.

## **MISSING OR ABDUCTED CHILD:**

In the event of a missing child, the Lead Teacher/Caregiver will search for the child in the immediate area, while another staff member calls the Director and/or Executive Manager to help with the search. If the child cannot be located in a reasonable amount of time, the Director and/or Executive Assistant will notify the **Yorktown Police Department** and the child's parents/guardians.

In the event of an abducted child, the Lead Teacher/Caregiver must notify the Director and/or Executive Assistant, the child's parents and the **Yorktown Police Department** immediately.

## **BOMB THREAT:**

If an employee receives a bomb threat or locates a suspicious package, the Director or Executive Assistant must contact the **Yorktown Police Department**.

### **If a caregiver is on duty in a classroom:**

- The caregiver should position themselves between the children and impending threat as much as possible.
- Collect the classroom first aid kit, classroom binder, two-way radio, and daily count sheet
- Caregiver closest to the outdoor exit is responsible for leading children out that exit and to the designated meeting place: **Church Basement unless we have to leave the Church premises. If needed, we will walk to the Church 2nd Parsonage located more than a block away.**
- **Every classroom must stay together as a group**
- Caregivers farthest from the outdoor exit is responsible for ensuring that everyone has evacuated the classroom
- The last caregiver to exit the classroom must turn off all lights and close the doors.
- Once assemble in the designated meeting place, the Lead Teacher/Caregiver is responsible for using the classroom daily count sheet to ensure that all children are accounted for. If the Lead Teacher/Caregiver is not present, the Assistant Caregiver will assume this

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responsibility. They will report to the Director and/or Executive Assistant that all children and staff in their rooms are accounted for.

- The Director and/or Executive Assistant will verify, as soon as possible, that all children are accounted for.

**If unable to return to the Center in a timely manner:**

- All children and employees will be taken into the Church Basement until parents arrive to pick up their children.
- Lead Teachers/Caregivers will be responsible for contacting parents and informing them of the situation.

## **GENERAL EMERGENCY PROCEDURE GUIDELINES**

- Staff at The Learning Garden are CPR and First Aid Trained and are to follow all practices that are taught to them in the CPR and First Aid Class.
- There is a First Aid kit in each classroom in the emergency/outdoor bag. An additional First Aid kit as well as extra supplies are available in the office that you may take from to restock the classroom first aid kits. The Classroom Teachers are responsible for restocking items monthly and filing out the First Aid Checklist and returning to the Director. It is also the Teachers responsibility for reporting when additional supplies are needed when they notice we are low on supplies.
- All incidents/accidents (including biting) are reported to parents, Lead Teacher/Caregiver, Director and/or Executive Assistant using the Incident/Accident Report Form. A completed form must be signed by a parent/guardian on the day of the incident. A copy must be given to the parent and the signed original form given to the Director or Executive Assistant to be filed in the child's permanent file. In the event that a child has visible marks, bruises, and/or cuts, employees are required to contact parents and the Director and/or Executive Assistant in regard to the incident/accident.
- **In the event of an emergency, it is important to remain calm.**
- **As a caregiver, the first responsibility is to ensure the safety of the children enrolled.**

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Subject: **HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**

**I. HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY:**

The Learning Garden requires all children to be up to date on their shots. When your child turns 4 they are required to get a hearing and vision test done at their Doctor's office. Our number one priority is to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for our children.

**(A) NOTE REQUIREMENTS FROM A LICENSED HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL**

When your child is sent home from school with any of the illnesses listed in our policy the child will not be able to return to school unless they have a note/excuse from a Licensed Health Care Professional.

- 1) The note is to state when the child can return to school.
- 2) The note is also to state what the child's illness was.

**(B) ILLNESSES**

Should a child experience any of the following, it must be reported to the Director and/or Executive Assistant and they will be sent home as soon as possible:

- 1) Children will be sent home with fever of 100.4 or higher. The child must be free of fever for 24 hours, with NO TYLENOL OR MOTRIN during the 24 hours, before returning to school.
- 2) An illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities (determined by caregiver)
- 3) An illness that requires attention greater than the caregivers can provide without jeopardizing the health and safety of the other children in the classroom
- 4) Signs/symptoms of illness such as lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, inexplicable irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing (and/or wheezing)
- 5) Diarrhea or vomiting during the previous 24 hours. Students should return when appetite and energy have returned to normal or the continued diarrhea is deemed not infectious by a licensed health care professional
- 6) Blood in stool (not associated with diet changes, medication or hard stool)
- 7) Vomiting until vomiting stops or vomiting is deemed not contagious by a licensed health care professional and the child is not at risk of dehydration
- 8) Abdominal pain for more than 2 hours or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs/symptoms of illness
- 9) Mouth sores with any amount of drooling, unless deemed not contagious by a licensed health care professional

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- 10) Rash with fever or behavior change until deemed not contagious or symptom of a communicable disease by a license health care professional
- 11) Conjunctivitis (pink eye) until treatment has been initiated
- 12) Head lice until first treatment is complete and all nits are removed
- 13) Scabies (highly contagious skin infection caused by mites that burrow into the skin) until treatment has been completed
- 14) Tuberculosis (infectious disease that is caused by bacteria that affects the lungs) until a licensed health care professional states the child is receiving appropriate therapy and may attend child care
- 15) Impetigo (contagious skin infection caused by staph or strep) until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated
- 16) Strep throat until 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has been initiated and fever ceases
- 17) Chicken pox until all sores have dried and crusted (anywhere from 5-21 days)
- 18) Pertussis (whooping cough) until 5 days of appropriate antibiotic treatment has been completed
- 19) Mumps (viral infection causing face/neck to swell) until 9 days after onset of symptoms
- 20) Hepatitis A (viral infection of liver) until 7 days after onset of illness
- 21) Measles (highly contagious respiratory disease) until 4 days after onset of rash
- 22) Rubella (highly contagious viral infection with a distinct red rash) until 6 days after onset of rash
- 23) Herpes Simplex (cold sores/fever blisters) with uncontrollable drooling
- 24) Coxsackie Virus (highly contagious viral infection causing sore in the mouth, on the hands and feet and sometimes the buttocks) until 3-6 days after onset
- 25) Unspecified respiratory illness combined with another illness which requires exclusion

### **(C) RECOVERY FROM ILLNESSES**

- 1) If your child has been ill, please allow adequate recovery time, so that your child does not re-introduce illness at school, by returning too soon.
- 2) Please consider the fact that some children are very fatigued during illness recovery, and do need a little extra time at home.

### **(D) WHEN THE CHILD BECOMES ILL AT THE LEARNING GARDEN**

- 1) If a child becomes ill at The Learning Garden, they must be removed from the classroom in order to limit exposure of other children to any communicable disease. Any ill child should be sent to the office to wait for their parent to arrive.
- 2) The Learning Garden reserves the right to make the final determination of exclusion due to illness. Any exceptions to our illness policy will require a written note from a licensed health care professional stating that the child is not contagious and may attend child care.

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**(E) NOTICE OF EXPOSURE AND REPORTING DISEASE:**

- 1) If a child or employee is found to have a communicable disease, a notice will be posted on the door of all affected classrooms and in the office. In addition to the postings, families who have provided an email address will receive email notification of the communicable disease and the Director will notify the health department and the Texas department of Family and Protective Services.

**(F) VACCINE-PREVENTABLE DISEASES:**

- 1) A vaccine-preventable disease that is included in the most current recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- 2) The Learning Garden does not require our staff to be vaccinated for vaccine-preventable disease.
- 3) The Infant Teachers are required to have the Pertussis (Whooping Cough) vaccine and Flu shot.

**(G) TUBERCULIN TESTING:**

- 1) Currently TB testing is not required in DeWitt County so The Learning Garden does not require it.

**(H) MEDICATION AUTHORIZATIONS:**

- 1) Employees may not administer any medication to any child unless a parent has completed a Medication Authorization Form and it has been approved by the Director and/or Office Manager. Parents/guardians **must** indicate a start date and end date, a reason for medication and the exact dosage or medication **cannot** be administered. All medication should be in the original bottle or package, this includes both prescription and over the counter medication. If prescription medication is brought to the center it needs to be labeled with a pharmacy label stating the child's name, the prescription name, dosage and expiration date. Should a child become ill while at The Learning
- 2) Garden and a parent request that medication be given, verbal authorization can only be given to the Director and/or Office Manager. A Medication Authorization Form will be completed by the Director and/or Executive Assistant and **must** be signed by the parent upon pick-up.
- 3) Medications may ONLY be administered by a teacher, the Director or Executive Assistant. When medication is administered, the administering employee must document the type of medication administered, the dosage amount and the time it was given as well as any unusual reactions or circumstances.

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- 4) Medications **must** be stored away from food (if refrigerated) or in a high and/or locked cabinet/drawer while in use at the Center. The Medication Authorization Form **must** remain in your medication binder **at all times**. Unused medications **must** be immediately returned to the parent and **must** not be stored at the Center. Expired Medication Authorization Forms **must** be turned in to the Director or Office Manager to be filed in the child's permanent file.

**(I) DOCUMENTATION OF INCIDENT/ILLNESS REPORT:**

- 1) Caregivers shall document accidents and incidents that occur at The Learning Garden using the Incident/Illness Report Form. When documenting a biting incident an Incident/Illness Report will be filled out for the child bitten and a Communication Report **must** be completed for the biting child. Use great detail in explaining events, but never include other children's names. If the injury is serious, a parent **must** be contacted prior to pick-up. The parent shall sign the report the same day as the incident. A copy may be given to the parent, but **ALL** Incident/illness Report Forms **must** be given to the Director and/or Executive Assistant to be placed in the child's permanent file.
- 2) In the event that a parent is contacted regarding a child that has become ill while at the Center, the caregiver should complete an Incident/Illness Report Form. The parent shall sign the report the same day as the incident. A copy may be given to the parent, but **ALL** Incident/Illness Report Forms **must** be given to the Director and/or Office Manager to be placed in the child's permanent file.
- 3) All parents will be notified of any communicable disease present in the Center via a notice that will be posted on the door of all affected classrooms and in the office. In addition to the postings, families who have provided an email address will receive email notification of the communicable disease and the Director will notify the health department and the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

**(J) DOCUMENTATION OF ALLERGIES:**

- 1) A child with allergies must have an Allergy Action Plan posted in a visible location in that child's classroom.
- 2) If it is a food related allergy, that Allergy Action Plan must be posted in the kitchen area as well. All caregivers working in the classroom of the child with allergies **must** review the Allergy Action Plan to ensure understanding of the emergency procedures that should take place in the event of an allergic reaction. A Health Incident Report **must** be completed, signed and filed each time that an allergic reaction occurs.

Subject:       **Return to School Doctor Notes**

**(K) DOCUMENTATION OF SPECIAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS:**

- 1) An Emergency Care plan *must* be kept in their permanent file for any child or employee with special health care needs (asthma, seizures, and etc.).
- 2) A copy of the Emergency Care Plan *must* also be kept in the classroom emergency binder.
- 3) *All* caregivers working in the classroom with a child or co-worker *must* familiarize themselves with this plan in the event that an emergency should arise. If necessary, caregivers will receive training regarding a child's or employee's special health care needs.

Subject: **Suspension or Expulsion Policy**

**In our handbook, you will find our Discipline Policy. We have added the following policy to our handbook. Please read.**

## **SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION:**

Our policy is to work closely with any child who is misbehaving. Children who continue to misbehave and/or not follow the rules set forth to the group at the beginning of the year will receive a disciplinary form. When a child receives three disciplinary forms he/she may be suspended from The Learning Garden for three days. Upon return if the behavior does not improve, the parent will be asked to withdraw their child from the program. If the staff considers a particular behavioral incident to be particularly severe, the child might be expelled from the program immediately.

Judging the severity of an incident or the need to write up an incident will be at the discretion of the staff.

*Please note: if a child is suspended, no credit or reimbursement will be given for days missed. If a child is expelled from the program, no credit or reimbursement will be given for the remainder of that month.*

## **Expulsion Guidelines**

### **Causes for Immediate Expulsion (not necessarily a complete list)**

1. The Child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children, staff, or himself/herself.
2. Parent threatens physical or intimidating actions towards staff members,
3. Parent exhibits verbal abuse to staff in front of enrolled children.

### **Parents Actions Leading to Child's Expulsion (not necessarily a complete list)**

1. Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payments
2. Failure to complete required forms including the child's immunization records,
3. Habitual tardiness when picking up your child.
4. Verbal abuse to staff.

### **Child's Action Leading to Expulsion (not necessarily a complete list)**

1. Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time.
2. Uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts.
3. Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children.
4. Excessive biting. (see biting policy)

## **Schedule for Suspension or Expulsion**

If the remedial actions above have not worked, the child's parent/guardian will be advised verbally and in writing about the child's or parent's behavior warranting a suspension or expulsion. A suspension is meant to be for a specific period of time so that the parent/ guardian may work on the child's behavior or to come to an agreement with the center.

1. The parent/guardian will be informed regarding the length of the suspension period.
2. The parent/guardian will be informed about the expected behavioral changes required in order for the child or parent to return to the center.

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3. The parent/guardian MAY be given specific suspension date that allows the parent sufficient time to seek alternate child care.
4. Failure of the child/parent to satisfy the terms of the plan may result in permanent expulsion from the center.

A Child Will Not be Expelled If:

A child's parent(s):

1. Agreed to let The Learning Garden contact Child Find for them to do a behavior evaluation on the child.
2. Made a complaint to the Office of Licensing regarding a center's alleged violations of the licensing requirements.
3. Report abuse or neglect occurring at the center.
4. Questioned the center regarding policies and procedures.
5. Without giving the parent sufficient time to make other child care arrangements.