

# Parent Handbook



**Small Blessings Child Care Center  
Director, Amy Dutcher  
First United Methodist Church  
1717 Pioneer  
Wharton, Texas 77488**



## **PURPOSE**

Small Blessings is a non-profit outreach ministry of the First United Methodist Church of Wharton, Texas. We are a developmental childcare center for newborn children through four years of age. Our purpose is to reflect the highest values and the best of care for young children. Everyday classroom experiences will be interpreted in ways consistent with a Christian atmosphere. Children of all faiths are welcome.

## **LICENSING STANDARDS**

Small Blessings meets or exceeds all standards set by the Texas Health and Human Services and is fully licensed as required by state regulations. A copy of the Minimum Standards for Child Care is available in our front office. Additionally, the most recent Licensing inspection report is posted in our front office as well as sanitation, fire and gas inspection reports. If you have questions about the services provided, you may call the Childcare Information Line at 1 800 862-5252. You may also reach them at [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us).

## **ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

Amy Dutcher –Director

## **Small Blessing Hours**

Small Blessings – 7:15 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. M-F  
Church Office Hours 8:00-4:30 Monday – Thursday  
8:00-2:30 Friday

**(979) 488-2818** - Small Blessings  
**(979) 532-1100** – Church Office  
**[smallblessings@whartonfumc.org](mailto:smallblessings@whartonfumc.org)**

# GOALS

Our goals for each child that attends Small Blessings:

## **Spiritual**

- To develop a knowledge of God's Creation
- To learn about God Himself
- To begin to understand how God loves us

## **Social-Emotional**

- To develop a positive attitude toward learning
- To experience a sense of self-esteem
- To exhibit a positive attitude toward life
- To demonstrate cooperative, pro-social behavior
- To develop a sense of autonomy
- To acquire self-help skills

## **Physical**

- To enhance gross motor skills (large muscles)
- To enhance and refine fine motor skills (wrist and hand muscles)
- To aid in development of eye-hand coordination
- To use all senses in learning

## **Cognitive**

- To acquire learning and problem-solving skills
- To expand logical thinking skills
- To acquire concepts and information leading to a fuller understanding of the immediate world
- To expand creative and imaginative abilities through make-believe play, art and music
- To expand verbal communication skills

# **PHILOSOPHY**

## **Understanding How Preschoolers Learn**

Children develop and acquire skills through a predictable sequence of stages. At Small Blessings, we provide a learning environment that allows a child to build upon existing skills. Children accommodate new information by interacting with concrete materials and experiencing the environment through their senses.

**Curiosity** is an important method of learning for a preschooler. Children can learn best when they are given the opportunity to ask questions and find different solutions to a problem.

**Repetition and Imitation** are necessary for learning to occur. As a preschooler repeats actions, songs, words, and routines, he/she increases skills and understanding. He/she observes and imitates others who model attitudes and actions.

At Small Blessings, we want to provide an atmosphere where a child feels loved and accepted for who he is - a special person created by God. Parents and teachers working together can support each other in providing positive learning experiences for our children. When this is accomplished, we both can look forward to the promise of Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." Children experience God's love and a sense of self-worth through love and acceptance.

# **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

Small Blessings Child Care Center is an outreach ministry of First United Methodist Church. A revision of the Texas Penal Code states that any area within 1000 feet of the facility must be a gang-free zone and this requirement has been met. It is a non-profit extension of the outreach ministry of the church. Small Blessings has a Board of Directors whose purpose is to approve policy, review the business management of the center, set tuition and fees, and approve the Parent and Employee Handbooks. All voting Board members are members of First United Methodist Church. Board members' names are posted in the front office of Small Blessings and serve for a three year term.

## **STAFF**

We are very proud of our staff. They have been selected for their love of children and their commitment to excellence. Our staff is required to complete 24 Continuing Education Units per year. These CEUs cover a variety of subjects like using different strategies in working with children, ideas for curriculum, and how to understand and work with children going through different or difficult stages. They are certified in First Aid and CPR. A criminal history and fingerprint check for each employee is done before they are hired. Our small size and limited enrollment ensure that each child will receive the necessary individual care and attention from our staff that he or she needs.

### **Child Abuse**

Small Blessings staff are **REQUIRED** by Texas State law and licensing requirements to report immediately to the police or Child Protective Services (CPS) any instance when there is reason to **suspect** the occurrence of physical, sexual, or emotional child abuse, child neglect, or exploitation. Our staff receive annual training on recognizing and preventing abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse. Small Blessings has made a commitment to help increase awareness and prevention techniques to employees. Small Blessings will also coordinate with community organizations on strategies to prevent abuse and neglect.

The staff will not notify parents when the police or CPS is called about possible child abuse, neglect, or exploitation, except on the recommendation of CPS or the police when they are called.

Some examples of abuse and neglect are leaving a child in a vehicle unattended, not securing a child in a seat belt or booster seat, unexplained marks or bruises on opposite sides of the body, and child hygiene issues.

If parents feel they need assistance with possible child abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse, we encourage you to get help. Please call the National Parent Hotline at 1-855-427-2736 or visit [www.helpandhope.org/find-help.html](http://www.helpandhope.org/find-help.html)

The statewide Abuse & Neglect phone number is 1-800-252-5400, if you would like to report any suspected abuse or neglect.

# **PROGRAMS**

Infants – newborn – 14 months  
Wobblers – 12 months to 21 months  
Young Toddlers- 18 months to 2 years  
Toddlers – 2-3 years  
Preschoolers – 3-4 years  
Pre-kindergarten - 4-5 years

## **Infants/Wobblers**

Very young children are important to Small Blessings and our program is designed to meet their needs. Loving, experienced care giving in a safe, stimulating environment is supplemented with a curriculum geared for early learning. Curriculum emphasizes gross motor and fine motor development, as well as cognitive, language and social skills.

We also provide a comfortable place with a rocking chair in our infant room for mothers that are nursing; mothers are more than welcome to nurse at any time and may also bring expressed breast milk in an appropriate bottle for warming.

Blankets and soft bedding are prohibited for infants up to 12 months by Child Care Licensing in the State of Texas for prevention of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. To keep your infant warm, we provide a sleeper suit approved by Child Care Licensing. As needed, these items will be laundered throughout the week.

## **Young Toddlers/Toddlers/Preschoolers**

Preschool age children will enjoy a balanced day filled with age-appropriate activities in our stimulating classrooms. A busy morning of learning centers, music, small group and large group opportunities, including hands-on activities will be followed by lunch and rest. Afternoon activities include a second visit to the playground and extended learning.

**Pre-Kindergarten (4 Year Olds)** The concept that children learn best through play is reflected in the setup of each classroom with learning stations designed to foster choice and independence. This environment encourages experimentation and provides comfort in freedom of choice. The atmosphere encourages independence and the building of self-esteem. We have developed our Pre-Kindergarten program to make sure our students are well prepared for Kindergarten. Literacy focuses on a balanced approach between phonics and whole language. Math skills are developed through hands-on experience and experimentation with manipulatives.

# **ADMISSION**

## **Age**

Children must be at least 4 weeks old to enter Small Blessings. Small Blessings does not discriminate against race, religion, gender, or ethnicity for enrollment in our program.

## **Registration**

Pre-registration for Small Blessings takes place year-round for current openings. Registration is not complete until all required paperwork is returned.

## **Waiting List**

A waiting list will be maintained for those interested in enrollment when space becomes available.

## **School Records**

Prior to a child starting enrollment at Small Blessings, appropriate records must be on file under the direction of the Texas Health and Human Services which oversees childcare licensing. We do not consider a child's registration **complete until ALL THE DOCUMENTATION HAS BEEN COMPLETED AND TURNED IN BEFORE THE FIRST DAY OF ATTENDENCE.** If information on the forms change during the school year, parents are expected to provide updated information. The administration reserves the right to dismiss children who do not have current records on file.

## **Admission Form**

Please inform us of new telephone/cell phone numbers, address changes or new work numbers. Please list all persons authorized to pick up your child.

## **Medical Release and Immunization Form**

The medical report must be completed by the child's physician and parent and returned to the **school PRIOR TO THE START OF ENROLLMENT.** This record is required to be updated annually. All immunizations must be current and signed by your doctor. Please provide updated copies of your child's immunizations as your child receives well-child check-ups. If your child is not current on immunizations, they will be released from Small Blessings.

## **Confidential Information Sheet**

The "Introduce Us to Your Infant/ Child" form is for confidential use of the teachers working with your child. It helps us to understand your child and we appreciate the time you spend on it.



# **FEES**

## **Registration**

A non-refundable registration fee of **\$150.00 per child** is required at the time your child is enrolled to secure a space at Small Blessings. This fee will occur each year, usually in March, prior to the beginning of the new school year. No discount will be given for the registration fee.

## **Tuition**

### Weekly Fees

Infants .....	\$175.00
Wobblers .....	\$145.00
Young Toddlers .....	\$140.00
Toddlers (must be 2 years old as of 9/1).....	\$130.00
Preschoolers (must be 3 years old as of 9/1).....	\$130.00
Prekindergarten (must be 4 years old as of 9/1) .....	\$130.00

Part time students will be accepted depending on our schedule and teacher-student ratio. The Director will let you know if a part time schedule is available.

### Part-Time Fees

Infants & Wobblers-Two Days a Week.....	\$ 95.00
Infants & Wobblers-Three Days a Week.....	\$ 115.00
Young Toddlers & Toddlers- Two Days a Week .....	\$ 85.00
Young Toddlers & Toddlers- Three Days a Week .....	\$ 105.00

### Half-Day Fees (Preschool & Pre-K)

Mon-Fri. 8am-12pm.....	\$ 95.00
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Payments are due on **Monday of each week**. Because we are a non-profit organization and we operate on fixed expenses, **credits are not given for a child's absence**. This includes childhood illness, family vacations, holidays, and inclement weather. Payments may be made monthly as well.

## **Early Arrivals**

Parents needing to drop their children off before 7:15 will be assessed a monthly fee of \$60.00 per family. The earliest children can be dropped off is 7:00. Children who arrive at Small Blessings earlier than 7:15, but who are not enrolled in the Early Arrival Program, will be assessed \$60.00 on the next week's tuition.

## **Rates**

Small Blessings is a non-profit program. Fees are set to reflect the high quality of early childhood education provided. As in any other school, expenses are constant, which **prevents credit or discounts for absence due to illness, vacations, inclement weather or regularly scheduled holidays**. Small Blessings offers a 10% discount to families that have 2 or more children enrolled full time. This discount applies to the oldest child only.

## **Payment**

Please make checks payable to Small Blessings. Payment by check or direct deposit is preferred. Please leave the check on Monday morning in the tuition payment drop box on the Small Blessings office door. If you have completed the required form for direct deposit, the funds will be moved from your account the first of the week. Payment may also be made by cash. If paying by cash, please put the cash payment in an envelope with the child's name, amount and date on the front and drop it in the tuition drop box. If you need a receipt, please make a request. A **\$35.00 fee** will be assessed for any payment that is returned for insufficient funds. A cashier's check or money order will be required as payment for the returned check. Any account will be put on a money order, cash or cashier check basis after two returned checks.

## **Late Fees**

**If tuition is not collected by the following Wednesday at noon, a flat late charge of \$25 will be added to the child's tuition. On Wednesday afternoon, each child with an outstanding balance, will receive written notice that a late charge has been added to the account. If an account is unpaid for the following second week (no payment by Wednesday at noon of the following week), the account will be assessed another \$25 late charge. If the account still has a 2 week outstanding balance and late fees by Friday noon, the Director will notify the parent that a temporary interruption in care will begin the following Monday and last until the account's outstanding balance is paid.**

Part-time participants must pay the first day they are scheduled to be present or will be assessed a late fee. Part-time participants are registered only for the days they are assigned. Children who attend on a part-time basis are not allowed to swap days, and payment is due for days scheduled even if you do not plan to bring your child. Parents that do not pick up their child by 12:00 PM will be assessed a late fee of \$20.00.

## **Withdrawal**

Withdrawal is defined as permanent removal from Small Blessings. We require **written notice 30 days prior to withdrawal** so we can fill that child's spot as quickly as possible. If a family withdraws with less than 30 days notice, tuition for the following month will still be charged.

## **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

Children **MUST** always be in the care of an adult. Licensing requires a child to be signed in and out each day of attendance. Upon arrival, your child must be left with a staff member. At dismissal, a staff member must be made aware of your child's departure. It is the parent's responsibility to inform alternate caregivers such as babysitters or grandparents of these essential security procedures.

**Small Blessings program begins accepting children at 7:15. We will accept children at 7:00 but there will be an additional \$60.00 fee per family added to the monthly tuition for this service. To ensure your child is present for class activities, we ask you bring your child in no later than 10 minutes after class has begun (classes begin at 8:30). If you will be arriving later, please call our office before 9:00 to advise us. No Student will be admitted after 9:00 without our knowledge and no later than 12:00. Our center closes at 6:00 and children must be picked up promptly. After closing, children will be waiting in the Small Blessings Office and a late fee of \$5.00 per minute will be charged. At 6:15 PM we will notify an emergency contact for pickup. Chronic lateness may result in additional late charges and possible dismissal from school.**

It is our policy that each child should be escorted to and from his/her classroom by an adult. Persons picking up must be 18 years of age or older.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **Illness**

**Children who do not feel well should not be sent to school.** Please advise the daycare prior to 9:00 a.m. if your child will not be attending Small Blessings due to illness. Children with fever, diarrhea, vomiting or other symptoms of contagion will not be admitted. Children must be fever free, without fever reducing medication, for 24 hours before returning to school. Fever is considered 100 degrees or higher if taken under the arm. If a child becomes ill during the day, a parent (or another authorized adult) will be called to pick up the child **immediately**. For this reason, it is imperative that emergency numbers are current and up to date.

### **Medications**

Due to the length of time the children are in our care, medication may be administered providing the process for recordkeeping is followed. Medications will be stored in a cabinet in the child's classroom out of their reach. **Written parental permission with**

**dosage instructions must be completed for any over-the-counter medications or prescription medications before administering. All medications must be in the original container, labeled with child's first and last name, labeled with date, and include instructions to administer for their age. We cannot administer medication that does not have a dosage for their age, unless a doctor's note is attached with child's name and dosage.**

Additionally, parents must complete and sign a form authorizing medication distribution, list the reasons for the medicine, and give a defined end date. Medications may not be administered or stored after the expiration date. Any medication in pill form must be counted and count verified by parent when brought to school and when picked up. Medications may not be shared among siblings.

### **Vision and Hearing Screening**

In compliance with the Special Senses and Communication Disorders Act, Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 36, Small Blessings requires children to have a screening or professional examination for possible vision and hearing problems. Children who are enrolled in Pre-Kindergarten (4 years of age or older), must be screened within the first 120 days of enrollment.

### **Allergies**

You must notify us in writing if your child has a specific allergy. Food allergies must be listed on the medical release form signed by your pediatrician. Parents are responsible for providing a nutritional food substitute in the event of a food allergy.

### **Naptime**

All younger children are required to have a quiet time following lunch and are encouraged to sleep during this time. Pre-K students are not expected to nap (unless required under state regulations) but are provided with quiet time. Children who fall asleep will be allowed to sleep until the end of the rest period, as designated by the daily schedule. Children may bring a small item to comfort them and help them rest. The items, including pillows, must be small enough to fit into their school box.

### **Authorization to Pick Up a Child**

**Written authorization is required to release a child to someone other than the parent. Any changes in this information must be given to the office and your child's teacher. Unexpected circumstances do arise, so if someone other than those on your list will be picking up your child, you will need to send a signed authorization to Small Blessings ahead of time.**

### **Medical and Emergency Procedures**

A current medical record form signed by a physician must be on file for each child. A signed emergency form must also be on file in case your child should need emergency medical attention. This form should list medications your child takes routinely, and any allergies. The medical form must be renewed prior to the expiration date of last medical exam to continue care and immunization records must be updated immediately following each well child exam. The medical form expires one year from the date of the last exam listed on your form by your pediatrician.

In the event of a medical emergency, 911 will be contacted as well as the parents. Our staff will administer the necessary medical attention to the best of our ability including first aid, or CPR, as appropriate, until emergency medical assistance arrives. If the parent is unable to arrive while emergency professionals are here, the director will transport with your child to the medical facility and be in contact with the parents via cell phone until the parents can arrive at the medical facility. If a child encounters a poisonous substance, the staff will take direction from Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222. Every effort will be made to contact parents in the event of an emergency. A copy of our emergency preparedness plan is also available in the front office.

### **Incident Report Form**

Minor accidents sometimes occur. Parents will be notified of minor scrapes, bumps and bites on an incident form which will be sent home with your child.

### **Toilet Training**

**Diapers should be worn until toilet training begins. At that time, children should wear cotton training pants or underwear and should bring several changes of clothing to school. All clothing worn during this time should be accessible for toilet training. Suggestions are pants that are easily pulled down or dresses for the girls. No one piece clothing, such as overalls, should be worn. Accidents will happen and are to be expected. However, if a child consistently fails to use the toilet, that is an indication that they are not developmentally ready and toilet training will be postponed. Your child's teachers will be a great help to you when your child is ready to begin training. Please be aware that Small Blessings will not initiate potty training. Children should be trained at home so that the daycare can work with the parents to ensure a smooth transition from home to school.**

A child enrolled in our Preschool program must be toilet trained and be able to manage clothing in the restroom. Those who are not toilet trained will remain in our toddler classroom until Small Blessings feels that it is time for the child to move up

### **Inclement Weather and Other Unforeseeable Events**

Small Blessings will be cancelled if the Wharton Independent School District cancels school due to weather. Parents will be contacted immediately if an unsafe condition arises when children are at school. Inclement weather days will not be made up and there is no discount for days missed.

Unfortunately, a time may arise when there is a water or electricity outage. These unforeseeable events are out of our control, and we will close the daycare if they are out for an extended time that prevents us from actively monitoring your child.

### **Outdoor/Indoor Play**

Physical activities **promote healthy growth and development**. It helps build a healthier body composition, stronger bones, and muscles. It also improves the child's cardiovascular fitness. Physical activities help in the development of better motor skills and in concentration and thinking skills.

Children will have opportunities for physical activity for a minimum of 90 minutes each day through outdoor play, music and movement, and other activities. Child Care Licensing requires an outside play time each day, weather permitting. Examples are races, ball games, chasing paper airplanes and mazes. When children are not able to go outside to play, they will use our rain day boxes. They are created with fully active indoor activities and games. Some examples of indoor activities are hopscotch, jumping, dancing and mazes. Pre-K, Preschool, Toddler, Young Toddler classes play outside in the morning and afternoon each day. Wobbler and Infant classes will play outside either morning or afternoon whenever they can tolerate. If a child has been ill and must be kept inside, please keep the child home until he/she may participate fully in all Small Blessings activities.

It is important that your child has appropriate footwear and clothing each day to allow him/her to participate in physical activity freely and safely.

### **Clothing**

Dress your child in clothing that is durable and comfortable. **No sunglasses or caps/hats should be worn.** Your child will be active in school and will have opportunities to participate in messy activities such as those with paint, glue, and markers. Small Blessings will not be responsible for damage done to clothing during school activities. Weather permitting, children will have outdoor play and should dress accordingly. Mark any removable clothing with your child's first and last name. It is recommended that a change of clothes, marked with your child's first and last name, be available if needed. Infants may require additional sets. Small Blessings has extra outfits for infants in case they soil their extra clothing. In the event that this happens, please wash and return the clothing to Small Blessings the following day.

All children who are able to walk are required to wear shoes to school. Shoes worn during the day must have a back strap and tennis shoes are preferred. Crocs are not allowed.

### **Toys**

Our classrooms have adequate toys which are developmentally and educationally appropriate. Please do not bring any toys from home unless the teachers ask you to bring something for show and tell. Small Blessings is not responsible for toys brought from home.

## **FOOD and NUTRITION**

Good nutrition is important to our school's program. Licensing requires that if children eat lunch while at our facility, the lunch must meet nutritional guidelines. The guidelines state that a school lunch should contain protein (meat, cheese, eggs), vegetables (carrots, celery, tomatoes, etc.), fruit (apple, banana, peach, etc.), and grains (whole wheat products, crackers, etc.). Allergies should be clearly explained on your child's medical form. Infant feeding forms should be updated monthly until they begin eating "table food". Small Blessings will serve one mid-morning snack, lunch and an afternoon snack, all of which are provided by the parent.

### **Breakfast and Snacks**

We understand how hectic morning time is for families and would be happy to feed your child their provided breakfast. However, since our day begins at 8:30 AM, we ask that children arriving after 7:45 be fed at home to minimize classroom disruption, except for our Infant and Wobbler classrooms. Snacks for all students will be provided by the parents as requested by the director. Please do not provide snacks that could cause choking such as teething biscuits, whole grapes, or other uncut fruit.

### **Lunches**

Parents are responsible for supplying their child's lunch. Food to be eaten as "finger food" for Wobblers must be pre-cut into bite size pieces. Food that takes a minute or less to heat is allowed and refrigerated lunches are allowed. However, we do not have time to heat frozen meals that take 3-5 minutes each. Some suggestions for a healthy lunch are a sandwich, crackers and cheese, soup in a thermos, raw vegetables and dip, fresh fruits and juices, yogurt and milk. **When you send lunch to school with your child please do not send any soft drinks, red or dark colored beverages, hard candy, or convenience foods with hazardous packaging. Also, make sure that your child's name is on their lunch.**

## **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

The purpose of all "discipline" at Small Blessings is to help children become increasingly self-managing and socially responsible. Teachers help children express their feelings, cooperate with other children, and negotiate conflicts. Only positive, non-punitive methods are used to achieve our goal. We recognize that young children have limited and highly variable abilities to manage their emotions and control their reactions. When a child needs restrictions, they will be clearly defined and consistently maintained. At no time will a child be physically punished, threatened, or intimidated.

Discipline must be:

1. Individualized and consistent for each child
2. Appropriate to the child's level of understanding

3. Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control

A teacher may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-direction, which include at least the following:

1. Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior
2. Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements
3. Redirecting behavior using positive statements
4. Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age

There must be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:

1. Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment
2. Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training
3. Pinching, shaking, or biting a child
4. Hitting a child with a hand or instrument
5. Putting anything into a child's mouth
6. Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child
7. Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language
8. Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed
9. Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.

If a distressed child needs help to regain his self-control, he will be allowed a supervised private time, away from the situation, to quiet himself before a reassuring adult seeks to help him re-enter his classroom activity. If disruptive behavior is consistent, parents will be contacted so that we can work together to find a solution.

## **TERMINATION**

Although every effort will be made to avoid termination, Small Blessings reserves the right to permanently dismiss any child who is frequently:

- 1) disruptive to the learning process
- 2) destructive
- 3) causing deliberate bodily injury
- 4) using abusive language
- 5) referred to the Director repeatedly without obvious positive results

Other factors that may warrant termination from Small Blessings Child Care:



1. Parent's failure to provide the center with proper documentation in regard to admissions paperwork, shot records, and doctor's release statement;
2. Abusive language, threats, inappropriate conduct or comments made to staff members or children by parents.

## **SPECIAL EVENTS**

### **Birthdays**

If your child wishes to share his/her birthday with classmates, please make arrangements with your teacher ahead of time to send a special snack. Check with the teacher for the number of children and to coordinate the date. **Gifts should not be brought to the honoree.** If you want to do something special, other than a special snack, then you should be present to assist the teacher in the classroom. Alternate arrangements must be made for younger or older siblings as our classrooms are arranged with age-appropriateness and safety in mind.

### **Transportation/field trips**

Transportation is provided for field trips.

Parents will be notified in writing of all scheduled field trips. **Parents must sign and date a permission slip for their child to participate in any activities off Small Blessings premises.** A child shall not be taken on field trips unless a parent or guardian has signed permission forms.

During our Summer Program, older children will be transported via the "Bye-Bye Buggy" to the library for a children's program presented by the Children's Librarian especially for Small Blessings. Notice of dates and times will be sent home in advance. Children are to wear their Small Blessings t-shirts on library days.

### **Holidays and Special Events**

Classroom parties will include Christmas, Valentine's Day and Easter. (Due to licensing regulations, we are not able to accommodate siblings for these events.). The teacher will inform you of your duties during these parties. Other special events may be added depending upon the curriculum.

### **Holiday Closures**

Small Blessings will be closed to observe the following holidays:

- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving and Friday following Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve Day
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day

### **Water Play/Splash Days**

Summer months bring with them intense heat and humidity. To allow the children outdoor activity in a comfortable manner, Summer Splash Days are often organized. During this time, children are able to run through sprinklers, small wading pools, and more to keep cool. Children should bring the following items for designated Splash Days:

- Bathing Suit
- Swim Diapers (if necessary)
- Towel
- Water shoes with a non-slip bottom (not Crocs)
- Sunscreen

### **Parent Volunteers**

The parents of Small Blessings are encouraged to assist in the goal of excellence in all aspects of the center through the donation of time, energy, and skills. These are valuable resources used to accomplish the tasks before us, build a unified community, and engage in Christian fellowship as we educate our children.

Fundraising and special events are designed to be engaging to our community while helping to meet our fundraising goals. Successful fundraisers help to provide enrichment activities to the center and fund center improvements.

### **Suggestions for Volunteer Service:**

- Room Parent (leadership during school fundraisers and organize class functions)
- Teacher Appreciation Week Coordinator
- Miscellaneous Handy Man/Handy Woman
- Read-a-Loud to class
- Special Treats related to theme of curriculum

# **SCHOOL COMMUNICATION**

## **Parent to Teacher**

Your relationship with your child's teacher is very important. The teacher *wants* to communicate with you. A note or a quick word about any changes at home (new baby, parents away, illness, death of a pet, etc.) will allow the teacher to help your child deal with feelings. Conferences with your child's teacher will be scheduled throughout the year. We are happy to schedule specific conferences with the teacher and/or Director upon request. Please refrain from discussing confidential matters at drop off and pick up times.

## **Teacher to Parent**

Teachers will send home a Daily Report for children 18 months and under to provide you with additional insight into your child's school day. **Please check your child's classroom box daily.** Additionally, teachers may contact parents via phone or email so please ensure we have updated contact information on record for your family. Please do not text teachers during the day. They are actively monitoring children and are not encouraged to communicate during this time.

## **Office Staff and Parents**

Small Blessings Office Staff are here to assist you and your children. We welcome your phone calls and written messages. The key to the success of our program is the open communication between parents and staff. We have a suggestion/tuition box in the front office. Please feel free to write down any suggestions and put them in the box. The director is the only one who has access to the box.

## **Open Door Policy**

Small Blessings has an open-door policy for all parents. Parents are welcome to visit the center at any time during our standard hours of operation to observe your child, our operation and program activities. No prior approval is necessary. Please be respectful of napping and quiet times if dropping off or picking up your child.

## **Calendars and Important Notices**

Please make sure to check your email and child's box daily for all important communication.

## **Policy Changes**

Any policy changes will be communicated to parents through written notification with a signature page attached for your acknowledgement to be kept in your child's records.

## **Orientation**

A parent meeting will be held prior to the start of the new school year. The purpose is to answer any questions that the parents might have about the school and classroom policies, curriculum plans and schedules. It will provide an opportunity for parents to meet with the teachers and become acquainted with other parents as well.

## **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

Although every effort is taken to meet the needs of your child, sometimes a parent wants to lodge a complaint or share a concern. Since we are all human and fallible, mistakes can be made and misunderstandings may take place. It is suggested that parents follow these steps when voicing a concern about their child's class or if they have a question:

- Always ask the teacher first if you have a question about something that has taken place in class. They are often able to easily explain a circumstance since they are with the child during the day. It is the goal of all teachers that you and your child are happy. Therefore they will do everything in their power to correct a situation, if need be.
- If you are not fully satisfied with the answers supplied by your child's teacher then you need to speak to the Director. The Director will almost always refer you to the teacher if you have not already spoken with her, and will then investigate the matter herself. During the course of investigating a parent's complaint or concern, the Director will interview the parent as well as the teacher and any other parties involved. Parents are often concerned that if the teacher finds out they are complaining, they will somehow treat their child unfairly. This is not the case as our teachers want parents and children to be happy. The Director will always get back with the parent to put closure on the situation, if at all possible.
- If neither the teacher nor the Director is able to provide you with a satisfactory conclusion to your concern, then you may express your concern in writing to the chairperson of the Center's Board of Directors. The Board of Directors has the final say in all matters pertaining to Small Blessings. After a decision is rendered, the chairperson will send a response to the parent in writing.

Please always be courteous to the teacher and Director by respecting their personal time. Unless it is an emergency, do not contact them personally after hours or on the weekends.

# **TRANSITION POLICY**

Small Blessings will transition children to different rooms as needed developmentally and as space is available.

**Infants** - newborn until your child is sitting up, crawling, pulling up and we have space available in the Wobbler classroom.

**Wobblers** - approximately 12 months until your child is independently eating, following simple directions, beginning to talk, and we have space in the Young Toddler room.

**Young Toddlers**- approximately 18 months to 23 months.

**Toddlers** – 2 years by September 1<sup>st</sup>. Children leaving this classroom should be following directions and speaking in sentences.

**Preschoolers** – 3 years by September 1<sup>st</sup> and toilet trained.

**Prekindergarten** – 4 years by September 1<sup>st</sup>.

These ages are only approximations. We will look at children’s development as well as their chronological age. Some children might be moved more than others because of ratios and birthdates. State licensing prevents children being placed in a classroom with a greater than 18 month age difference between the oldest and the youngest in the group.

## **Process for Transition**

- Parents are given notice of move up

Parents should communicate with their child’s new teacher. Speak to them daily to see how they are doing.

\*Please note that each child is an individual so there may be times that this may have to be changed. Also, Infant/Wobbler or Wobbler/Young Toddler rooms may be combined depending on class size.

## **Preschoolers**

- Lunch and snacks as outlined in “Food” section
- Nap mat and bedding – to be laundered at home each weekend
- An extra change of clothing
- A book bag or backpack for transporting important class work and messages home. Do not leave medications in backpacks. Please check them in with the office.

# SMALL BLESSINGS GOOD HEALTH POLICY

At Small Blessings, we focus on providing a healthy and safe environment for the well being of each child and staff member. We work hard to maintain safe and clean conditions at all times. For this reason, we adhere to a strict Good Health Policy. For clarification on any of the childhood illnesses listed, please consult your child's pediatrician.

Our policies regarding common childhood illness are on the following pages. While we realize doctors may diagnose illnesses differently, and an illness may manifest itself in one way with one child and differently with another, **these policies supersede any written notes from a physician.** We encourage you to follow up with your child's pediatrician for clarification of any illness your child may have. However, it is due to these varying differences that our policies have been established for the overall health of everyone in our program.

If a child does not seem well, we will do our best to provide tender, loving care. Since our staff members are not trained to diagnose illness, the attached policies will be followed at all times. We are required to care for ill children apart from other children, and our limited facilities and staff require this be kept to a minimum. Therefore, parents will be contacted to pick up their child immediately. We appreciate your understanding and support of these important rules. By keeping your child at home when they are ill, or are not responding to medical treatments, you are helping us maintain a healthier environment for everyone.

It is important to be able to contact parents and arrange for pickup quickly. If you are unable to pick up your child within the hour or we are unable to reach you after repeated attempts, we will contact the persons you have listed as emergency contacts on your behalf.

Small Blessing Child Care Center **does not require** adult immunizations for its employees. We follow the Texas Department of Health *requirements* and will update our policies in accordance with the Department of Health's. A Parent/Employee may find information on recommended immunizations for adults at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/downloads/adult/adult-schedule.pdf>

Illness	Symptoms	When To Exclude From Care	When May Return To Care
Chickenpox	Slight fever, loss of appetite, irritability, itchy, blister like rash. Blisters dry and crust over.	When evidence of fever, lesions or blisters are present. Usually about 6-9 days before able to return.	When child has been fever free without medication assistance for 24 hours & all lesions have dried and are crusted over.
Cold Sores	Fever, runny nose, cold sores or fever blisters on the lips or in the mouth.	Not necessary unless fever is present	Once has been fever free for 24 hours without medication
Cold, congestion or upper respiratory illness – Nasal Discharge is green or yellow	Sore throat, cough, headache, nasal discharge, fatigue, muscle aches	Pertulant (continual) yellow or green discharge or copious discharge of color – continues after several wiping.  Unable to participate in group activities (including outdoor play)  And/or  Requiring extensive individualized care	Once evaluated by a pediatrician, on treatment and responding to treatment (minimum of 24 hours).  Must be able to participate in group activities (including outdoor play)
Diarrhea – infectious (May be caused by bacteria, virus, or parasites)	Stools decreasing in consistency	2 or more stools decreasing in consistency in a 24 hour period &/or requiring extensive individualized care	May return when the child has been symptom free for 24 hours without further diarrhea
Diarrhea – non-infectious (may be caused by food intolerance and some antibiotics)	Stools decreasing in consistency	Exclude unless / until the information mentioned to the right is presented and extensive individualized care is not required.	Must have original pharmacy handout indicating child's name, date, name of medication and medication side effects. If related to food intolerance,

			must have written authorization from a pediatrician indicating food allergy.
Ear infections	Pulling at ear, irritability, fever	Exclude if fever is present and/or requiring extensive individualized care.	May return once fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medications and able to participate in group care (including outdoor play)
Fever	Temperature reading of or above 101 degrees (oral), 102 degrees (rectal), or 100 degrees (armpit). Per child care licensing.	Temperature reading of or above 101 degrees (oral), 102 degrees (rectal), or 100 degrees (armpit). Per child care licensing.	When child has been fever free <b>without medication assistance</b> for a minimum of 24 hours.
Fifth Disease	Low grade fever, tiredness, rash on face (“slapped cheek appearance”), rash on body (appears lacey)	If fever is present & / or is requiring extensive individualized care.	Once fever free for 24 hours without medication *Pregnant mothers with children that have been exposed should check with their doctor.
Hand, Foot, Mouth / Herpangina (Coxsackievirus)	Cold-like symptoms initially. Blisters on inside of cheek, gums and tongue. Blisters on palms of hand, fingers, soles of the feet, and sometimes buttocks.	Exclude if fever is present & / or unable to participate in group activities (including outdoor play) and / or requiring extensive individualized care.	Once fever free for 24 hours without medication and able to participate in group activities (including outdoor play)
Head Lice	Persistent itching or scratching at the back of the head or around the ears. Check hair shafts for head lice or their nits (eggs)	Exclude from care and send home all linens	May return after one treatment with an effective medicated shampoo or cream treatment. Treatment must include medicated shampoo & tick /nit removal



			with specialized comb. Prior to re-entering classroom, child must be checked daily for evidence on new infestation for 10 days after treatment.
Impetigo  Impetigo (continued)	Reddish spot or bump on the skin which breaks. Releases a yellow cloudy fluid, leaving a weeping sore. The fluid dries, leaving a yellow, golden or honey-colored crust. Usually involves the face, neck, and limbs but may be anywhere on the body	Exclude from care until on treatment and responding and / or requiring extensive individualized care.	May return after receiving treatment and responding (minimum of 24 hours after receiving treatment)
Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	Cough following a cold that the child has difficulty in catching a breath of air. Characteristic of a “whooping (sound) cough”	Exclude from care until on treatment and responding and / or requiring extensive individualized care.	A person with whooping cough may be considered non-infectious only after they have taken antibiotics for at least the first 5 days of the 14 day course of treatment.
Pinkeye / conjunctivitis	Redness that involves the whites of the eye or surrounding tissues. Itching and burning of the eye. Discharge	When the tissue or whites of the eye are red ,the eye has pertulant colored (green or yellow) discharge or copious amounts of white discharge	May return when child has been on treatment and is responding. Clearing of the redness AND no discharge must be evident. Eyes may be red so long as there is improvement and no discharge.
Teary Eyes (allergic)	Teary eyes, discharge is clear	Evaluate by pediatrician if	-

		continues for more than 3 weeks. Not excluded from care.	
Rashes	Raised, reddened areas of inflammation of the skin. May or may not have fever	When fever is present and / or requiring extensive individualized care.	May return when the rash has been identified by the pediatrician, fever has been absent for 24 hours without medication, rash is gone and child is able to participate in group activities (including outdoor play)
Rashes (continued)			
Ringworm	Flat, scaly areas with reddish borders, spreading in a circular pattern.	Exclude until on treatment and responding	Once on antifungal medication & responding to treatment, may return to group care.
Roseola	Sudden fever that can go up to 106 and last 3-5 days. May have sore throat with swollen glands. Rash will appear after fever breaks. May fade within hours or last 1-2 days	Exclude for fever and rash and requiring extensive individualized care.	May return when fever free for 24 hours without medication and NO rash is evident and the child is able to participate in group activities (including outdoor play)
Strep Throat	Fever, red painful throat, swollen tonsils, ear infections possible	Exclude until on treatment and responding (minimum of 24 hours) and fever free and /or requiring extensive individualized care.	May return when fever free for 24 hours without fever lowering medication and on antibiotic treatment and responding.
Vomiting	Disgorging the contents of the stomach through the mouth	Exclude if there are 2 vomiting episodes in a 24 hour period – may indicate a bacterial or viral infection	May return when child has been symptom free for 24 hours without further episodes.

		and/or requiring extensive individualized care.	
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**SMALL BLESSINGS DAY CARE CENTER  
GOOD HEALTH POLICY  
and  
PARENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I acknowledge that I have received the Parent Handbook and I agree to abide by its policies and procedures.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Child's name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's printed name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I acknowledge that I have read Small Blessings Good Health Policy listing the school policies regarding the care for my child before, during, and after an illness.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date