



Temple Emanu-El
Early Childhood Education Center

Parent Guide

(2018-2019)

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Temple
Emanu-El



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Background

History of Temple Emanu-El

Temple Emanu-El is a Reform Jewish congregation that was founded in 1875. It is an outgrowth of the first Jewish organization in Dallas, the Hebrew Benevolent Association. The Hebrew Benevolent Association was formed by eleven men in 1872 to help the sick, bury the dead, and hold religious services.

The original Temple, built in 1877 to accommodate 32 families, was located in the heart of downtown Dallas. When that building became too small, a slightly larger Temple was erected at St. Louis and Ervay Streets in 1899. As the congregation expanded and Dallas' residential population left the downtown area, the congregation relocated to South Boulevard at Harwood Street in 1916. In 1956 it moved to its current location at Hillcrest and Northwest Highway. The building was dedicated in 1957. None of the three previous Temple buildings are still standing.

History of Temple Emanu-El Early Childhood Education Center

While the Early Childhood Education Center that exists today at Temple Emanu-El started in 1981, this was not the first Early Childhood Education Center at Temple Emanu-El. Different programs have existed in the congregation throughout the years, going as far back as the late 1800's. From its beginning, the Early Childhood Education Center has been licensed by the State of Texas. It started with 37 children, two classes and a staff of five teachers. Today it has over 200 children.

About This Handbook

This handbook describes the personnel policies and practices of Temple Emanu-El. Please read it carefully to familiarize yourself with the Temple's policies. It is important that you understand these policies, as well as your rights and responsibilities as an employee of Temple Emanu-El. Discuss any questions you may have with the Early Childhood Education Director. As a contractual employee, if a policy in this handbook disagrees with the terms of your contract, the contract governs.

Temple Emanu-El reserves the right to discontinue, amend, or change any of the policies or programs described in this handbook without notice, and to approve special situations. The policies in this handbook do not guarantee any specific term of employment or limit the rights of Temple Emanu-El or any Temple employee to terminate the employment relationship at any time for any reason or no reason at all.

Temple Emanu-El intends to comply fully with federal, state, and local laws governing employment and employee relations as they may apply to a religious

institution. Temple Emanu-El Early Childhood Education Center intends to fully comply with National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Policies and practices will be modified to comply with any changes in legislation.

Changes/updates to the Parent Guide will be posted on the ECEC parent portal as well as in our weekly newsletters.

Our School

TE ECEC takes the typical early childhood experience from ordinary to extraordinary!

Our Mission

The Temple Emanu-El Early Childhood Education Center's mission is to create a dynamic, engaging, Jewish, child-centered community characterized by developmentally appropriate learning, inquiry based exploration, scientific investigation, genuine diversity, and consistent respect.

Our Philosophy

Our school's philosophy is Reggio-inspired and is not bound by a single educational theory. We use many of today's best developmental practices in education including, but not limited to project-based learning, collaborative exploration, and differentiated instruction.

We view children as powerful individuals. We respect children for who they are now, as well as for their potential. We provide open-ended materials which invite and cultivate thinking, collaboration and representation of ideas. Learning is embedded in all aspects of our day through meaningful experiences and opportunities for hands-on and minds-on engagement.

We share a powerful partnership with our parents which is vital to the success of our school and our children. We offer families the assurance of a safe, caring, and nurturing environment for their children and an atmosphere of support and understanding for themselves.

Our Environment

We consider our environment the "third teacher." Both our indoor and outdoor environments are intentionally designed with engaging materials that promote a variety of learning opportunities. The arrangement of the environment communicates to the children the value of focus, collaboration, and choices for complex play and learning.

- Classrooms are filled with natural light, visually pleasing and curiosity inducing natural materials.
- Children's photographs and work samples are displayed throughout our hallways.
- Our Art Atelier (Art Studio), facilitated by our skilled Atelierista, is a place to explore and combine many materials, tools and techniques.
- Gan Shalom, our garden and Living Science Atelier, model our commitment to caring for our world.
- The Culinary Arts teaching kitchen extends the concept of seed to table.
- Our environmentally-centered school culture encompasses daily practices include recycling, composting and energy awareness beginning at a very young age.
- Our Natural Playscapes were custom designed with a variety of elevations and plants indigenous to Texas to encourage exploration, creativity, teamwork and innovation.

Our Staff

Our dedicated educators facilitate the learning process by actively listening to and observing the children. Teachers enable opportunities for discovery and problem solving, guide and document the learning process and nurture individuals and relationships. Teachers help build a sense of community in each classroom and school wide.

Our Curriculum

We do not teach curriculum out of a box. We believe in meeting children's needs as they interact with their environment, weaving their interests into an *Emergent Curriculum*. Children's intellectual development is encouraged by teachers through the exploration of multiple symbolic "languages" including: Clay, dramatic play, construction, music, literacy, culinary arts, gardening, farming, and kinesthetic movement.

As children explore these languages, they discover and communicate what they know, understand, wonder about, question, feel and imagine. In this way they make their learning visible. This inquiry-based approach allows ample time for investigation and encourages the child's identity both as an individual and as part of a community. Emergent curriculum enhances a child's creativity and problem solving skills by providing authentic experiences on their educational journey.

Jewish values and practices are woven/integrated throughout our program. School-wide observances of Jewish holidays create a sense of community and an appreciation of our traditions. Our meaningful experiences respect diversity and individuality while fostering a strong Jewish identity.

Judaica

Judaism is woven throughout our daily classroom and school life. Each week we gather for Havdalah and celebrate Shabbat every Friday morning as a school community. We explore Jewish holidays and values through hand-on experiences as well as traditional activities.

Gan Shalom – Garden of Peace

Gardening provides a tremendous opportunity for children to understand and explore the natural world, as well as learn first-hand the benefits of growing, harvesting, and eating healthy foods. It's called the 'people-plant connection', and every child deserves an opportunity to have access to this relationship. No activity better links young people to food and nature than gardening. The garden experience bonds children to the cycles of life and teaches them to understand where their food comes from. Is there any greater satisfaction – or “greener” activity – a child can experience than smelling a flower from his or her own garden, plucking a carrot from the ground, or digging new potatoes from warm soil? What can make parents happier than hearing their child tell them they want bell peppers for dinner?

Life Science

Exploration, questioning and discovering are very much part of a child's life. In a Life Science Program, children explore the fascinating habitats of a variety of living creatures and plants. Children investigate how to recycle organic waste and cultivate soil by composting worms. They also study the life cycles of a variety of insects and mammals.

Art

Children experience the process of creating art using a variety of materials. Children are provided with opportunities to mold build with clay, create 3-D sculptures, and study an array of artists. This is an enriching and rewarding atelier class that boosts self-confidence and enhances the child's creative skills.

Music

Our music program introduces children to rhythm, movement, various musical instruments, and song. Each week children learn early childhood songs as well as songs for Shabbat and Jewish holidays.

Farm to Table

We get children into the kitchen and teach them that nutritious foods can be delicious. “When you teach children to cook, you feed them for a lifetime”. We teach children the concept “from seed to table.”

Library/Drama

Library time for our children begins to build a foundation for a love of literature! Each week children will check out a book of their choice. Stories are brought to life with the use of puppets as well as imaginative role play. Children will also learn to create and document their own stories. We place a big emphasis on early literacy.

Yoga

Children engage mind, heart and body through a combination of children's literature and stretching.

Physical Education/Gross Motor Skills

This program is designed to increase gross motor coordination, teach cooperative team skills and promote positive self-esteem, and introduce children to a variety of sports.

Social Skills Groups

Children in our threes, Pre-K and Kindergarten classes learn vital social skills such as empathy, emotion management, problem solving, and cooperation taught by our school counselor as needed.

SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM/CONFIDENTIALITY AND STUDENT RECORDS

Through a partnership between Jewish Family Service and the pre-schools, day school and high schools that are served, our counselors work closely with school personnel and parents to assess student behavior and make recommendations for intervention. As part of the special needs initiative our school counselors will work with teachers to determine the student's abilities and disabilities in relation to the curriculum.

The following services are provided to the school by our consultants:

- Assess the behavior of children who have been referred, by observing classrooms, recess and lunch, and then making recommendations.
- Assist teachers, parents and administrators with academic, behavioral, social/emotional or family issues.
- Provide crisis intervention and limited individual counseling to students, 1-2 sessions.
- Provide group intervention when appropriate on topics such as peer relationships, problem solving, and conflict resolution.
- Offer consultation to parents
- Provide social skills program which emphasizes feelings, problem solving and anger management

The purpose of the program is to be a resource for the school, the parents and caregivers, as well as the teachers and students at the Temple Emanu-El ECEC. When indicated, referrals will be made to community agencies, private mental health professionals, and or/ Rabbis for additional assistance.

Faculty or parents may refer students to the counselor. All personal information about the students is kept in strictest confidence. Information regarding a student will only be released with written consent from the parent or caregiver.

Discipline Policy

We believe that discipline is defined as helping a child develop self-control. Our teachers provide guidance and encouragement, build self-esteem and correct misbehavior. Learning self-control is a slow, gradual process that is developmental in nature. The goal of discipline is to teach children how to make positive choices. Productive discipline requires that children experience the consequences of their misbehavior. Teachers are trained to use a variety of methods to reinforce discipline in the classroom and consider each child on an individual basis. Our teachers work with the children to define the problem and generate a solution or resolution. The teachers and children will reevaluate the situation after some time has passed. Our Early Childhood Education Center staff is always open to trying something new in order to resolve a situation.

Social Justice

As a school we value and encourage students to think about and do for others. Through school and community service, all Temple Emanu-El Early Childhood Education Center students learn to contribute to a community and experience a sense of commitment, responsibility and pride. Service responsibilities are designed to provide age appropriate, curriculum-rich experiences. Past service has included: lunch and entertainment for senior citizens, lunch for maintenance staff, recycling, and blanket collection for operation kindness.

Project-based learning

Project-based learning is a teacher-generated approach to curriculum that is organized and planned to be integrated, hands-on and authentic when practical. A project may be short term or long term. The Temple Emanu-El Early Childhood Education Center staff believes that experiential, hands-on studies provide the richest opportunities for the development of students' skills, self-confidence, sense of responsibility, and enthusiasm for learning while supporting various learning styles. For this reason, whenever appropriate, the Temple Emanu-El Early Childhood Education Center offers a project based curriculum. All students participate in a variety of projects over the course of a few weeks or months. Math, science, language arts, social studies, and the arts are integrated into

interesting, challenging, student driven projects. Much instruction is done within the contexts of these projects. Other explicit instruction and experiences are provided as well, to introduce, reinforce, complement, and enhance student learning.

Documentation

At Temple Emanu-El ECEC we use multiple forms of documentation – photographs, audio-tape transcripts, video-tapes, note-taking, and the actual product of a child's work create a multi-sensory "memory" of an activity. Posting the documentation throughout the school encourages the children to learn from one another and to appreciate the process of creating. Children's interpretation of experience through the visual media are displayed as a graphic presentation of the dynamics of learning.

Documentation communicates the life of the school to others visiting the school. It also provides opportunities for children to revisit the experience. It is a process that involves observation, reflection, collaboration, interpretation, analysis, and is made a part of the bulletin boards, along with pictures of children engaged in experiences, their words as they discuss what they are doing.

Special Needs

Temple Emanu-El Early Childhood Education Center is committed to providing children with special needs (physical, emotional, social, behavioral) a safe, nurturing, stimulating and developmentally appropriate environment within our regular classroom setting. The Early Childhood Education Center's goal is to be inclusive and accommodate children with special needs which is determined on an individual case-by-case basis.

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Parental involvement

Research tells us that successful schools and successful students have involved parents. We consider this an essential component of our program. Parent involvement takes many forms, including: day-to-day interaction, special events, field trips, celebrations, and parent meetings, among others. Parents and

teachers work in partnership, teachers communicate regularly to build mutual understanding and greater consistency for the children.

Family Programming

Shabbat

An integral part of our children's week occurs on Friday at 9:00 a.m. The entire school joins together to welcome Shabbat each week in song and dance. Each Shabbat service is led by one of our clergy, a song leader and our Early Childhood Education Center Director. Parents are encouraged to attend. All classes are provided challah for snack following the weekly celebration.

Havdalah

The entire school joins together to celebrate Havdalah (the end of Shabbat and the beginning of a new week) on Monday mornings at 9:00 a.m. We sing songs, say blessings and talk about the coming week.

Below are some of the Temple Emanu-El Programs that are offered:

Tot Shabbat

The Parents' Association sponsors a monthly evening of storytelling, prayer and song with one of the Temple Rabbis. Families will enjoy a meal together after the service. The ECEC Parents' Association will provide refreshments and challah. Special programming will be provided for children by our experienced ECEC director. We hope you enjoy this special opportunity to introduce our young children and their families to Shabbat Services and to meet and socialize with other families.

Temple Emanu-El Holiday Celebrations

Temple Emanu-El ECEC families are invited to attend all of the holiday celebrations at Temple Emanu-El. Complimentary tickets to the Children's High Holiday service are offered to non-member families. Sukkot, Hanukkah and Purim celebrations also have programs specially designed for families with young children.

Interfaith Moms' Group

The Interfaith Moms' Group is an opportunity for women in inter-faith families to discuss issues and share ideas about how to navigate an inter-faith family. In the months between our meetings, the group will often meet for a casual dinner to socialize.

Young Adult Programs

The Temple Emanu-El Young Adults group provides meaningful opportunities to explore Jewish tradition and enrich our Jewish experience. We connect young adults in their 20's and 30's to a welcoming, diverse, Reform Jewish community with inspiring social, educational, spiritual, and social justice programming.

Licensing and Accreditation

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

Temple Emanu-El is proud to be accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) for having demonstrated compliance and excellence with nationally recognized criteria for high-quality early childhood programs. The accreditation process requires the highest standards in communication, classroom management and interaction with children, health and safety conditions, developmentally appropriate curriculum and classes with lower teacher/child ratios.

Our Early Childhood Education Center must conduct a self-study each year and every five years it is necessary to go through the process of reaccreditation. Only 8% of early childhood centers in the country reach the high standard needed to be accredited by NAEYC. Temple Emanu-El is committed to providing quality care of for children. More information about NAEYC and its criteria can be found by visiting www.naeyc.org.

State Licensing

Temple Emanu-El Early Childhood Education Center is licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Our school is inspected each year by this agency, the Dallas County Department of Health and Human Services and the Fire Department. The Early Childhood Education Center's policies are guided by the Minimum Standards set forth by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services in coordination with the standards set by NAEYC. Copies of the State's Minimum Standard rules for Licensed Child Care Centers and Temple Emanu-El's most recent licensing inspection are available in the Early Childhood Education Center Office. More information about the Minimum Standards can be obtained at Child Care Licensing 214-951-7902 or www.tdprs.state.tx.us.

National and Local Associations

Temple Emanu-El Early Childhood Education Center actively participates in the Teacher Learning Center of the Jewish Federation of Greater Dallas and the Dallas Area Jewish Early Childhood Education Center Director's Council. Our Early Childhood Education Center Director is an active member of NAEYC, NAREA (North American Reggio Emilia Alliance) and ECE-RJ (Early Childhood Educators of Reform Judaism)

School Day

Arrival

Each child will be walked into the classroom every day; there is no carpool line, as we endeavor to create a strong sense of community. Every child and parent is to be greeted with a cheerful “good morning”.

Children enrolled in the Early Care Program will be brought to their appropriate class by their Early Care teachers at 8:40 a.m.

The following are some important things to remember upon your student’s arrival at the Early Childhood Education Center:

- Immediately prior to entering the classroom, each child and adult must wash his/her hands with soap and water.
- Parents must sign in with the time, every day on the attendance sheet posted next to the classroom door. If the parents have not signed in, it is the teacher’s responsibility to note the arrival time of every student.

Dismissal

Each child must be picked up in the classroom at dismissal time; there is no carpool line. Each child has an emergency card in the Early Childhood Education Center office with a list of people authorized to pick-up their child. Parents must notify the school in writing if someone not on the carpool list is picking up their child. All people who are not known to you must present valid identification and must be on the carpool list. Failure to check identification may result in your immediate dismissal.

Our parents are an integral part of our program and we greet them happily no matter when they arrive.

Pick-up time for the main school day is 12:45 p.m., for After Care - 2:45 p.m. and for Late Care—6:00 p.m. (5:30 p.m. on Fridays).

- Parents must sign out with the time, every day on the attendance sheet posted next to the classroom door. If the parents have not signed out, it is the teacher’s responsibility to note the departure time of every student.
- The office must be notified if someone other than those listed on the emergency form is picking up a child; this person must present a valid identification prior to leaving with the child.
- If a child will be picked up later than their schedule pick-up time, you may bring the child to the Early Childhood Education Center office.
- Children will not be released to adults who appear to be under the influence of alcohol or other substances.

Special Mini-Tot and Toddler Schedule

During the first week of school we feel an optional shorter day may be helpful in getting some Mini-Tots and Toddlers adjusted to their new schedules. If children

have a difficult start and parents are able, parents can pick up their child at 11:00 a.m. during the first week. Teachers will communicate with parents to make this decision based on the needs of each child.

Security/Safety

At Temple Emanu-El Early Childhood Education Center, our children's safety and security are of the utmost concern. There are several security measures in place that will help us to take care of and protect our children. These security measures include:

- **Self-Locking Doors:** All doors inside and out leading to the Early Childhood Education Center are self-locking and entrance is only accessible with the use of a security badge.
- **Badges:** Parents will be issued a security badge. These badges must be worn at all times. If your badge is ever lost or stolen, please report it to the Early Childhood Education Center immediately so that we may have the badge deactivated and it cannot be used by an unauthorized person.
- **Cameras:** Every entrance to the building as well as the playground areas are being monitored by a video surveillance camera.
- **Security:** An armed police officer will be on site during all hours of Early Childhood Education Center operation. This officer will be stationed at the entrance to the ECEC. An additional security guard will move throughout the grounds maintaining high visibility while carrying a radio which affords instant communication with the Early Childhood Education Center office and others.

We are a gang free zone within 1000 feet of the center where criminal offenses related to criminal organized activity are subject to harsher penalty. Parents are informed during parent orientation.

- **Intercom System:** There is an intercom system in all Early Childhood Education Center rooms which allows instantaneous two-way communication between the rooms and the Early Childhood Education Center office.
- **Parking Lot:** We ask that you use extreme caution while driving and walking through the Early Childhood Education Center parking lot to provide safety and security for children and their adults as they enter/leave the Early Childhood Education Center during the day. We ask that you do not leave your vehicle idling in the parking lot (attended/unattended) unless in extreme heat or cold to maintain interior or engine temperatures. Children should always be escorted in and out of the building by an adult. **Cell phone use is not permitted while driving in the parking lot.** The speed limit is **10 mph**.

- **Emergency Backpack:** The Emergency Backpack must be carried with the teachers whenever they leave their classroom with their students to go to places such as specials classes and outdoor areas. Each classroom has an emergency backpack equipped with the following items:
 - Flashlight
 - First Aid Kit
 - Copies of Emergency Cards for your class
 - 2 story books
 - Paper and markers/crayons
 - Wipes
 - Diapers (2s and under)
 - Bottle of water

Visitors

Temple Emanu-El has an open-door policy for all parents to visit their child(ren) at any time. In order to ensure the safety of our children, friends and relatives of the family who drop by the TE-ECEC may visit only with written consent given to the TE-ECEC office from a parent or guardian. All visitors must check-in and check-out in the Temple Emanu-El ECEC office.

School Closings

In case of inclement weather, the decision concerning closing will be made by the Temple Emanu-El Early Childhood Director in coordination with the Executive Director of Temple Emanu-El. When major area public schools close for weather reasons, the TE-ECEC will most likely be closed as well. Parents will NOT be called by teachers or staff. Announcements will be made on KXAS Channel 5, KRLD Radio (1080 AM), Temple Emanu-El website at www.tedallas.org, and through emergency text message system.

Field Trips

During the year, the Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten children will be participating in a number of field trips to further extend their learning experiences.

Parents must sign the Field Trip Permission Form prior to their child(ren) participating in the first field trip.

In order to meet the regulations of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, class field trips are taken by chartered buses only. Although we request a bus with seat belts, there is always the possibility that we will have buses without seat belts. Car seats are not allowed on the buses. Parents may drive their own children on the field trip.

Dress Code

Students should be dressed appropriately for an active day of work and play. Their clothes should be comfortable and easily managed by the child in order to encourage independence and self-help skills. It is strongly suggested that children wear closed-toe shoes for safety. Students have the appropriate clothes to play outdoors. Children do not play outside on rainy days. On colder days, each child should have the appropriate layers of clothes to stay warm. An extra set of seasonal clothing, including socks and underwear, should be stored in the classroom at all times.

Lost and Found

Lost clothing and other items are brought to the TE-ECEC office throughout the year. After a reasonable period of time, the clothing and other items left behind will be donated to charitable organizations.

Health

Sick Child Policy

It is the policy of Temple Emanu-El ECEC that children who have a temperature of 100.0 or higher be sent home and cannot return the next day. A student must be 24 hours fever free (without fever reducing medication) before returning to school. In addition, if your child continues to have symptoms (severe coughing, sore throat, infectious runny nose, body aches, chills and or fatigue) after the 24 hour fever free waiting period, they must remain home until all symptoms are gone. During flu season many students testing positive for Type A flu are being advised to stay home for 7 days. It is extremely important that you follow your health care provider's instructions regarding returning to school, even if your child is feeling 100% well. Please do not send your sick child to school. The children's health is of the utmost importance to us. Children will be sent home if they have 1 episode of vomiting or 2 episodes of diarrhea and they may not return the next day to school. A student must be 24 hours vomiting and/or diarrhea free (without symptom reducing medication) before returning to school. If a child is diagnosed with a contagious illness such as pink eye (conjunctivitis), chicken pox, Fifth's Disease, or any undiagnosed rash, sore, etc. admittance back into school will not be allowed until a pediatrician has confirmed that the child is no longer contagious. A child diagnosed with strep throat may return to school after effective antibiotic treatment for 24 hours as well as being fever free 24 hours without fever 12 reducing medication. A letter will be sent home informing the parents of the existence of the contagious illness in their child's age cluster. Children who become ill in school will be kept in the school nurse's office or TE-ECEC office, if possible and age appropriate, until a parent/guardian or individual on the emergency list can be contacted for pickup. The nurse or office staff will help the child get settled depending on the needs of the sick child. The nurse or office staff will stay with the child to ensure the child is comfortable until they are

picked up by an appropriate adult. All sick children must be picked up within an hour of parent being called and informed of the situation. Children who are well enough to come to school should be well enough to play outdoors. We are unable to accommodate children who must remain indoors. It is possible, however, to be seated outdoors to avoid strenuous activity following an illness.

Lice

Lice can affect children of all ages and socio-economic levels. Lice spreads very easily therefore it is important to treat as soon as possible. Children with lice or nits will be sent home and cannot return until lice/nit-free as confirmed by the ECEC nurse upon return to school. An email will be sent informing the parents of the existence of lice/nits in their child's age cluster.

Biting Policy

We are always upset when we experience biting in our toddler and two year old classrooms. Even though we know that it is entirely developmentally appropriate when toddlers and twos bite, we want any child who bites to learn more appropriate behavior. Biting happens for several reasons:

- when children are crowded in one area
- when children become frustrated because of a lack of appropriate language and resort to biting.
- sometimes it is because of sensory issues

In order to avoid biting we take these reasons into consideration when developing a plan. We watch for overcrowding and redirect children when this occurs. We work with children on language development to help them use their words to express frustration. We also provide many sensory activities such as water play, play dough, and textured materials and such to compensate for any over and under sensory sensations that they may be expressing.

When it comes to biting, here is what you can expect from us:

- We will put children's safety first and provide appropriate first aid as well as comfort to any child who is bitten.
- We will help the children in our program learn not to bite.
- We will have current information and resources on biting for you.
- We have teachers with adequate knowledge and training to deal appropriately and effectively with biting.
- We will tell you what specific steps are being taken to address biting and explain the reasoning behind those steps.
- We will keep your child's identity confidential if he or she bites. This helps avoid labeling or confrontations that will slow the process of learning not to bite.
- We always call the parent of the child who is bitten as well as the biter's parents.

- An incident report will be completed for the bitters parents as well as an accident report for the child that was bitten.

**PLEASE KEEP YOUR CHILD'S EMERGENCY
CARD UPDATED AT ALL TIMES.**

First Aid and Medication

Please bring any medicine that your child will need during school hours (prescription and over-the-counter) to the Early Childhood Education Center nurse's office or front office outside of the nurse's hours. The medication must be in its original container. Dosage cannot exceed the medication's instructions as listed on the label (over-the-counter) or the amount prescribed by a physician. The Early Childhood Education Center nurse or office staff will administer medication to a child only if the required authorization form has been completed and signed by the parent or legal guardian. All medication will be kept in a lock box in the nurse's office.

For those children with life-threatening illnesses requiring the immediate use of epinephrine, parents are asked to supply the school with two doses. One dose will be kept in the emergency backpack in the child's classroom that travels with the class at all times and a second dose will be kept in a locked box in the nurse's office. Each epinephrine injection will contain directions for its use and the proper medical authorization form which must be signed by a parent and physician. Staff will document when medication is administered to the child.

Outdoor Play Protection

Sunscreen or sun block with UVB and UVA protection will be applied by the parent prior to the start of the school day. Alternatively, children may wear sun-protective clothing, if you choose.

Insect Repellent may also be applied no more than once a day. Written parental permission is required for application of sun protection and/or insect repellent.

If the National Weather Service has posted an Air Quality Index Alert of level Orange or Red, children will not be permitted to play outside.

If the outdoor temperature is below 32 degrees or above 102 degrees, children must remain indoors. Be sure that all children are dressed appropriately for the weather.

Immunizations

All children must have a current health statement signed by both parent and physician. In addition to the required Annual Health Statement, *all* children at Temple Emanu-El ECEC must provide proof of immunizations in accordance with the most current immunization schedule adopted by the State of Texas before

the first day of school/camp. A child's enrollment process will only be considered complete once immunization records from a physician or clinic have been reviewed and approved by the school nurse. Immunization records must remain current for a child to attend school.

An exemption from immunizations for medical reasons will require a written and signed statement from your child's physician each year.

An exemption from immunizations for reasons of conscience will not be accepted.

Currently enrolled students who are not in compliance will receive an individual letter. Unless there is a medical exemption, as described above, and approved by the ECEC nurse, every child attending the ECEC must be fully immunized in accordance to the most current immunization schedule adopted by the State of Texas by the start of the school year 2018-2019 and immunization records must remain current for your child(ren) to attend camp or school.

Immunizations are not just for children. Keeping up-to-date on your vaccinations help protect you and the children you work with from vaccine-preventable diseases that can be transmitted in a child care setting, including influenza, pertussis (whooping cough), and varicella.

As a child care provider we provide our staff with a yearly flu shot.

Teachers and staff are required to have a TB test every 10 years.

Vision and Hearing Screening

As mandated by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, each child four years of age by September 1 or older must be professionally screened for vision or hearing. You may have your child screened by your personal pediatrician or through TE-ECEC during a scheduled time each school year. If you choose to have your child screened through your pediatrician, the TE-ECEC must receive a copy of the screening report. These reports are sent to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services each year as proof of our compliance with the Special Senses and Communication Disorders Act, Texas Health and Safety Code.

Classroom and Visiting Pets

All classroom and visiting pets must appear to be in good health. Dogs, cats and ferrets must have documentation that they are fully immunized/vaccinated and are suitable for contact with children. All animals must have a Statement of Health from a local veterinarian. Chickens, ducks or reptiles are okay for exhibit purposes only.

Teaching staff supervise all interactions with the animal. A classroom pet or visiting pet is an opportunity to teach children how to safely approach and care for the animal, how to be respectful to the animal and how to practice safe

hygiene by washing hands after touching the animal or any items used by the animal. Be aware of any animal allergies that your children may have.

Children are exposed to a variety of animals through our Living Science program. All school animals are under the care and supervision of a veterinarian.

Food

Nut Sensitive Policy

The Early Childhood Education Center has implemented a strict nut sensitive environment for the entire school. A number of our children have a life-threatening nut allergy. All food (including snacks and lunches) brought into the classroom will be screened. Please read ingredient labels carefully and do not serve foods containing the following:

- **Traces of nuts, peanuts, tree nuts (almonds, walnuts, etc.)**
- **Peanut or other nut oils**
- **Peanut or other tree nut butters**
- **Hydrolyzed vegetable protein**
- **READ LABELS on any bakery or grocery store muffins, cakes, cookies, etc.**
- **Anything containing “may be assembled in a facility that also processes peanut or other nut products” on a line above or below the ingredient list on a food label**

Any food items that do not adhere to these guidelines cannot be served to the child and will be returned home. The child must be offered an appropriate food item in its place.

Kosher-style Policy

Please do not bring any pork products, shellfish or foods with animal fat content into the Temple building.

Any food items that do not adhere to these guidelines cannot be served to the child and will be returned home. Your child will be offered an appropriate food item in its place.

Unsafe Foods Policy

According to NAEYC the following foods cannot be served to our students at any time:

- Nuts (refer to nut sensitive policy)
- Hot dogs, whole or sliced into rounds (children under 4 years old)
- Whole grapes (children under 4 years old)
- Popcorn (children under 4 years old)
- Raw peas
- Hard pretzels of any size

- Chunks of raw carrots and meat larger than can be swallowed whole.
- Chicken tenders, fish sticks and other foods should be cut into ½" square pieces for toddlers and ¼" for infants.
- Only whole milk can be served to children of ages 12 months to 24 months.

-Staff will not serve expired foods and will discard any foods with expired dates.
 -Staff must thoroughly wash all fruits and vegetables prior to serving.
 -Staff must never use plastic or polystyrene (Styrofoam) containers, plates, bags, or wraps when microwaving children's food or beverages.

Morning Snack

All snacks must strictly adhere to the Nut sensitive policy and Kosher-Style policy as described above. Please be aware of any allergies within the group of children you are caring for. This is imperative for the safety and well-being of the children in our Early Childhood Education Center.

Prior to serving snack, teachers and children should wash their hands according to NAEYC criteria (see appendix). Once children are served, teachers sit with the children during their snack time.

The morning classroom snacks are provided by parents on a rotating weekly schedule. Families are responsible for providing healthy morning snack for the entire class on the weeks assigned to them. We ask that all prepackaged items include 5 or less ingredients. On Fridays, the family only provides 100% juice for the class. Early Childhood Education Center provides a challah, which is delivered to your classroom. Teachers are responsible for serving the snack and water/juice to the children.

Lunch

All lunches must strictly adhere to the Nut-Sensitive policy and Kosher-Style policy as described above. Parents must provide lunch for their children every day in a lunch box or lunch bag labeled with the child's name. All foods and beverages brought from home are labeled with the child's name and the date. The children will be given water to drink if needed.

The following foods must be kept cold prior to serving: meat, poultry, fish, egg, milk, cheese, yogurt, fresh fruit or vegetables, or opened cans of fruit or pudding. These foods should be kept cold by (1) bringing foods in an insulated lunch bag with a frozen gel pack or a frozen juice box; (2) freezing sandwiches overnight (they will thaw by lunchtime, but stay cold until then.); (3) packing foods in a cooler with ice or other cold source.

Food is served at room temperature.

Any food items that do not adhere to the Nut-Sensitive, Kosher-Style or Unsafe Foods policies will not be served to your child. Your child will be offered an appropriate food item in its place.

Afternoon snack

Early Childhood Education Center will provide the snacks for children who stay later than 3:00 p.m. in accordance with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (NAEYC) guidelines

Prior to serving snack, teachers and children should wash their hands according to NAEYC criteria (see appendix). Once children are served, teachers should then sit with the children during their snack time.

Infant Food Program

Infant teachers will feed children based upon schedules submitted by parents.

Temple Emanu-El Early Childhood Education Center actively supports breastfeeding. Mothers may come to the Early Childhood Education Center to feed their babies directly. The rocking chair in the room provides a comfortable place to breastfeed their infant. Mothers may also provide their breast milk in ready-to-feed sanitary containers. The container should be labeled with the infant's name, date and time milk was expressed. It may be stored in the refrigerator for no longer than 48 hours (or no more than 24 hours if the breast milk was previously frozen. Staff will gently mix, not shake the milk, before feeding to the baby.

In addition,

- Bottle feedings should not contain solid foods unless required by the child's health care provider.
- Any formula or breast milk not consumed within one hour will be discarded or refrigerated.
- If requested, staff will warm the formula or breast milk in hot tap water (to no more than 120 degrees) for no more than five minutes.
- Formula or breast milk will not be warmed in the microwave.
- Cow's milk is not served to infants younger than 12 months.
- Infants younger than six months are not offered solid foods or fruit juices unless that practice is recommended by the child's health care provider and approved by the family.
- Sweetened drinks are avoided. If juice (100% fruit juice only) is served the amount is limited to no more than four ounces daily.
- Formula and infant food must be in a factory sealed container and prepared according to the manufacturer's directions.

Birthday Parties

Parents can arrange with the teachers to celebrate their child's birthday at school. Classes will make a special treat to help each child celebrate their special day.

Challah (Braided Bread) on Fridays for Shabbat

Every Friday that school is in session, a fresh challah will be delivered to the classroom for snack.

Communications

Weekly Teacher Letter/Kaymbu

Parents will receive at least a weekly letter from the child's teachers via email. This letter will include information about the classroom activities, upcoming events, and other parent reminders.

Weekly TE-ECEC Newsletter/The Buzz

The TE-ECEC office will issue a weekly newsletter detailing upcoming events and activities, policy and procedure changes and reminders, Parents' Association activities and Temple Emanu-El activities of interest to the TE-ECEC families. Supporting handouts and flyers about child development and Jewish holidays will also be included.

Parent Night

The TE-ECEC hosts this time, at the beginning of the school year in which parents will experience a day in the life of their child modeled after a typical day at TE-ECEC. This will provide parents with an opportunity to understand and see all of the ways learning is embedded into the curriculum.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

There will be two scheduled Parent-Teacher Conferences each year. Refer to the TE-ECEC calendar for the specific dates. A detailed evaluation of your child will be conducted by the teachers and the information will then be shared with you at your conference or another scheduled time. Parents are always welcome to schedule an appointment with their teachers or the TE-ECEC Early Childhood Director at any time to discuss their child's progress.

Staff

The TE-ECEC has a wonderful staff of dedicated classroom teachers, atelier teachers, enrichment teachers and administrative support.

Teachers

Our experienced staff of teachers is sensitive to the needs of young children. All staff have a university degree or a CDA. The staff is also required to participate in a minimum of 24 hours of continuing education throughout the year and certified in CPR and first aid every two years as required by law. Teachers are always available to discuss a child's needs.

Atelieristas and Specialists

The TE-ECEC Main Day program is enhanced by the expertise of our atelierista and specialist teachers. The atelieristas and specialists offer in-depth extension of the curriculum for the teachers and students.

Enrichment classes

Enrichment classes are offered, for an additional fee, to children in the three, Pre-K and Kindergarten clusters after their Main Day program. There are two enrollment sessions to provide an opportunity for a number of children to experience the variety of enrichment programs being offered. The variety of enrichment programs may change each year. Some classes which have been offered include cooking, science, art, physical activities, Spanish, and ballet. Online enrollment for these classes will occur prior to each semester. Spaces are filled on a first come first served basis.

Administrative

The Temple Emanu-El ECEC is led by **Shelly Sender**, Early Childhood Education Director. Shelly has an extensive background in Education, Early Childhood Disorders and Child Psychology. She has a wealth of experience in education administration and directorship. In 2006 Shelly was the recipient of the Grinspoon-Steinhardt Award for Excellence in Jewish Education.

Steering Committee

Temple Emanu-El's ECEC Steering Committee is comprised of Temple members, parents and educators all dedicated to the mission and philosophy of the Temple Emanu-El ECEC. The committee meets on a regular basis to discuss the operations of the school and to plan for its future needs. Policy guidelines and procedures are reviewed by the committee and recommendations are made for implementation to the Board of Directors of Temple Emanu-El.

Financial Policies

Billing

Temple Emanu-El billing statements are mailed on or about the 25th of the preceding month. The total amount is due by the 1st of the month for which it is billed. Unpaid tuition will result in your child not being admitted to class. Tuition payments may be mailed directly to Temple or hand-delivered to the TE-ECEC office. Tuition may be paid by check or credit card. Automatic payments from your checking account may be set up through the financial office (214-706-0000,

ext. 127). If you have any questions concerning the amount due, please do not hesitate to call the TE-ECEC office.

Tuition

TE-ECEC Tuition is billed one month in advance (e.g. September tuition will appear on your August 1 bill). TE-ECEC tuition that has been billed as of the date of withdrawal or enrollment change is non-refundable. Any changes must be made in writing to the Registrar with a minimum of 30 days advance notice. Extended Day options are also billed one month in advance. Early Care (8:00 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.), After Care (12:45 p.m. to 2:45 p.m.) and Late Care (2:45 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., 5:30 on Fridays) are available M-F, MWF, T/TH. Extended Day options are also available on a Daily Drop-in care basis as space permits. Daily reservations are required for Drop-in Care. The Daily Drop-in Care tuition will be billed on your next statement.

Late Payment Policy

If for any reason, you anticipate that your family may fall behind on your tuition payments, please speak to the Registrar immediately. If you are not able to make adequate arrangements to pay your tuition, cannot stay in communication with us and/or cannot stay on a mutually-agreed upon payment schedule, the ECEC reserves the right to suspend services. In the event a family is unable to pay their tuition in a timely manner, children are never made aware of payment status or reason for suspension. A transition experience is created that is respectful of your child's needs.

A late fee of \$50 per family will be incurred for late tuition payments that are 7 calendar days overdue. If tuition payments are two months overdue, absent prior arrangements made with the school, you will forfeit your child(ren)'s place at the ECEC. At that time, the ECEC reserves the right to fill the spot with a child from our waiting list. Your child's spot for the remainder of the school year and for following year is not guaranteed.

If a student's account is not current, that student may not re-enroll for the following school year. The ECEC will withhold acceptance for the following school year if a student's account is delinquent.

School Year Plus

School Year Plus is year-round extended care which includes Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (5:30 on Fridays). School Year Plus includes the day before Thanksgiving, Winter Break, Spring Break and Summer Break. School Year Plus excludes:

- Designated national holidays (Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day and the Fourth of July)
- Designated Jewish holidays (Erev Rosh Hashanah, Rosh Hashanah, Erev Yom Kippur, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Simchat Torah, Erev Passover 1:00 p.m. dismissal, last day of Passover, Shavuot)
- Two Parent/Teacher conference days

- Staff development days
- Snow days
- A late charge of \$1 per minute will be added to you bill for late pickup. Habitual late pick up may result in removal from the late care program.

School Year Plus is a year-long commitment. If you choose to break this agreement and have your child only attend through the month of May and then return at the beginning of the next school year, you will be billed for the prorated days in August at the published School Year Plus rate.

Registration Fee

The annual \$300 registration fee is due with the registration application and is **non-refundable**. May 2019 tuition is due upon acceptance and is **non-refundable**.

Supply Fee

The annual supply fee of \$150 per child is due with May's pre-paid tuition.

Security Fee

The annual security fee of \$250 per child will be added to your August bill.

Financial Support

Tax-deductible donations to the TE-ECEC are always appreciated.

- General TE-ECEC – Supported primarily by tuition and fees. Donations gratefully accepted to ensure continuous improvement of our wonderful school.
- Library – We are proud of our extensive collection of books for TE-ECEC age children, teachers and parents. It is also possible to purchase a book for donation to the library in honor of someone special. Please see our librarian for further details.
- Gan Shalom – Your donations will help defray the costs of curriculum development and on-going maintenance.
- Natural playscapes – Your children enjoy playing on our two developmentally appropriate natural playscapes. Contributions will help to maintain and update these spaces.
- Scholarship – Scholarships are available to families in need.

Scholarships

Scholarships are available to families who are having financial difficulties. Scholarship applications must be submitted to the Early Childhood Director by March 1 for the following school year. Tuition assistance is determined by a committee consisting of the Early Childhood Director, TE-ECEC Administrative Assistant, Director of Education, Temple Executive Director and Temple Membership Director. Specific financial information is requested; forms are available in the office. All scholarship applications are strictly confidential. The WRJ/Sisterhood of Temple Emanu-El and the Helen E. Risch Scholarship Fund contribute financial assistance for TE-ECEC's scholarship program. We are grateful for them and all of their support.

Appendix A: Emergency Action plan

The following emergency action plan includes the following emergency incidents.

Severe Weather Drills

Earthquakes, Tornados, Hurricanes

Severe weather drills are conducted four times a year to make sure that our children are prepared for an emergency and that the building can be vacated within a minimum of amount of time. Temple Emanu-El maintenance and office staff immediately converge on the TE-ECEC area to assist as needed. Children and staff will proceed to hallways adjacent to rooms 136-140 and through the glass doors.

Fire Drills

Fire drills are conducted four times a year to make sure that our children are prepared for an emergency and that the building can be vacated within a minimum of amount of time. The fire alarm will activate when fire is in the building.

The school administrator will:

- notify 9-1-1
- notify operations manager

The school staff will:

- supervise evacuation according to the Emergency Evacuation Plan posted in every classroom.
- close doors upon evacuating
- take roll books and take roll at evacuation site, and
- report missing students to the School Administrator.
- Staff members are assigned to designated classrooms to assist on evacuation children 2 and under or need special assistance. Infants are placed into evacuation cribs and/or carried. Children/Special needs are carried or escorted to safety.

All staff and children will evacuate to the North Field adjacent to the parking lot.

Re-occupy building when ordered to do so by administrative staff.

Bomb Threat

In most cases, threats of a bomb or other explosive device will be received by telephone.

- ☐ Attempt to gain as much information as possible using the “Bomb Threat Checklist” in *Appendix C*. Do not hang up on the caller.
- ☐ Immediately notify the School Administrator and alert them to call 9-1-1 and provide:
 - ☐ Name
 - ☐ Call back phone number
 - ☐ Exact street location with the nearest cross street
 - ☐ Nature of incident
 - ☐ Number and location of people involved and/or injured
- ☐ Instruct all staff to turn off cellular devices and radios.
- ☐ Sound the fire alarm to evacuate all involved buildings.
- ☐ Secure all campus exits to prevent re-entry to buildings.
- ☐ Follow directions from the Dallas Police Department (DPD) and administrative staff.
- ☐ Re-occupy buildings when instructed to do so by the Dallas Police Department.

Gas Leak

The person detecting the odor of natural gas will:

- ☐ Notify the School Administrator
- ☐ Administrator will notify operations manager
- ☐ Determine where the odor of gas is emanating from (a particular room or area, inside or outside the building).

The Operation Manager will:

- ☐ Immediately call 9-1-1 and notify Operations Manager and provide:
 - ☐ building address,
 - ☐ site name,

- ☐ description of the odor, and
- ☐ location of the odor.

- ☐ If ordered to do so, evacuate the building, we will evacuate to the Pecan Grove, which is adjacent to Northwest Highway.

- ☐ If the gas odor emanates from outside the building, close all windows and doors and remain inside. Follow the instructions of the Operations Manager.

- ☐ Notify the gas company

Lockdown: Active Shooter

- ☐ Administrator will announce “our code” over intercom to begin lockdown procedures

- ☐ School staff should move students into classrooms and buildings and call 9-1-1.

- ☐ Lockdown procedures including locking doors, covering windows, turning off lights, and seeking cover under or near furniture and away from windows.

- ☐ Take roll and identify all students and staff in the classroom.

- ☐ When all is clear “our code” will be announced over intercom.

Medical Emergencies

In the event of a medical emergency, school staff should calmly and carefully assess the situation and immediately notify 9-1-1. School staff should follow directions given in the first aid flip chart and only take those measures which they are qualified to do. When handling medical emergencies, latex or rubber gloves must be worn at all times.

Bleeding

- ☐ Apply direct pressure to the wound.

- ☐ Maintain the pressure until the bleeding stops.

- ☐ If bleeding is from an arm or leg, and if the limb is not broken, elevate it above the level of the heart.

- ☐ If limb appears to be broken, minimize the movement, but take appropriate actions to stop the bleeding.

Shock

- ☐ Take necessary actions to keep the individual's body temperature as close to normal as possible.
- ☐ Do not attempt to move the victim unless there is an apparent threat to life.
- ☐ Stay with the victim until 9-1-1 arrives on-scene.

Choking (*American Red Cross, Adult CPR/AED Skills Card*)

- ☐ Stand behind the individual who is choking.
- ☐ Perform CPR
- ☐ Repeat until the object comes out, the person can breathe or cough forcefully, or the person becomes unconscious.

Note: If a child is removed from the site by ambulance, an appropriate staff member should ride along to provide comfort and notify the parents/guardians.

Intruder on Campus

A campus intruder is defined as an individual who loiters or creates disturbances on school property. If an intruder is found on campus:

- ☐ Assess the situation and if it appears safe to approach the intruder, greet the individual in a polite and non-threatening manner.
- ☐ Identify yourself as a school official.
- ☐ Ask them what his/her purpose is for being on campus.
- ☐ Advise the intruder of trespass laws.
- ☐ Ask the intruder to quietly leave the campus or invite him/her to accompany you to the office.
- ☐ If the intruder refuses to respond to your requests, inform him/her of your intention to summon law enforcement officers.
- ☐ If the intruder gives no indication of voluntarily leaving the premises, call 9-1-1 and provide a description and location of the intruder. Notify staff to lock down.

If an intruder appears on school grounds during outdoor play:

- ☐ Outdoor staff should immediately notify the School Administrator and guide all students into the building.

- ☐ Lock all doors and windows.
- ☐ Wait for further instructions from school administrator.

In the event the perpetrator(s) is inside a classroom:

1. Staff should take a leadership role and perform the following actions:

- ☐ Calm, reassure, and quiet others (students/staff).
- ☐ Staff actions will influence others.

2. Staff should attempt to actively diffuse the situation:

- ☐ Attempt to quietly move students away from the perpetrator.
- ☐ If deemed safe to do so, staff should approach the perpetrator in a calm, non-confrontational manner and ask him/her to leave the campus.

3. If the perpetrator leaves the classroom, staff should immediately block the door using whatever is available (desks, file cabinets, books, or other furniture)

We are required by law to inform you of licensing practices as follows:

Appendix B: State of Texas DFPS: Parents' Guide to Day Care



▶ [Versión en Español](#)

▶ More info at your [Child Care Licensing Office](#)

▶ Child Care Information line 1-800-862-5252

[What is day-care licensing?](#)

[It is important for you to know](#)

[Establish a good relationship with the day-care facility](#)

[When your child starts day care](#)

[Talk things over with your child](#)

[Parent responsibilities](#)

[What happens if your child is ill or injured?](#)

[Liability insurance requirements](#)

[Take a good look](#)

[Be seriously concerned when you see](#)

[When things aren't going well](#)

[If you suspect child abuse](#)

[Immunity](#)

Dear Parent:

When you choose licensed day care, you and your family join your child in new experiences and relationships. You, the day-care director, child-care staff, and other people in the day-care center have a responsibility to protect the health, safety, and well being of your child. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Licensing Division, is part of this partnership, too.

Minimum standards require your day-care provider to give you a copy of this pamphlet. You need to sign the receipt form to verify that you have received it and discussed the material with facility staff.

What is day-care licensing?

The Licensing Division was established by law to regulate child-care facilities to help protect the health, safety, and well being of children in care.

With the assistance of child-care providers and experts in areas such as child development, early childhood education, fire safety, health, and sanitation, the Licensing Division develops minimum standards.

Licensing staff inspect day-care centers, private kindergartens and nursery schools, some unaccredited private schools, group day-care homes, and drop-in care centers to be sure that minimum standards are met. The staff also investigates complaints about violations of the minimum standards and the child-care licensing law.

Your day-care facility is responsible for meeting minimum standards. Many day-care programs exceed these requirements. Licensing does not regulate day-care fees, collection policies, or the kind of learning program your day-care facility offers. Each facility has its own special personality and approach to educating and caring for children. Parents can choose the kind of program that best meets the needs of their child and family.

It is important for you to know

When you visit a day-care facility, ask to see the license. The license means that the day-care facility met the minimum licensing standards the last time it was inspected for such things as fire, sanitation, and safety; the number of child-care staff required; staff qualifications; and requirements for special services.

Minimum standards prohibit persons who have been convicted of certain crimes from having contact with children in care.

Compliance with minimum standards does not guarantee high quality child care. They are called "minimum standards" because no one is allowed to operate below these standards.

A copy of the minimum standards is available for you to review at your day-care facility. You can also request a copy of these standards from your local day-care licensing office. A list of these offices may be found on the DFPS website: **www.dfps.state.tx.us** or by calling the Child Care Information Line at 1-800-862-5252.

Establish a good relationship with the day-care facility

Spend time at the day-care facility before you enroll your child. Ask questions about the program and observe the activities. Make sure the day-care facility

has all the information needed about your child and family to provide good care.

Work with the staff of the day-care facility you choose. Parent involvement is an important part of a successful experience with day care.

Read all the material the day-care provider gives you. In addition to material required by licensing standards, each facility has its own policies and requirements. It's important that you understand these requirements before you enroll your child. It's equally important, once your child is in care, to read the notices, special requests, notes, and other materials the day-care provider sends home.

Drop in occasionally during the day to observe how your child interacts with staff and other children, and get a good picture of the day-to-day activities at the center. Be careful not to disrupt activities.

Keep your side of the bargain. Pick up your child on time.

Discuss concerns with the day-care director. Be aware that the teacher's main responsibility is working with the children. Don't be offended if the teacher can't spend much time talking with you when you drop off or pick up your child. If you need more time to talk about your child, set up a conference.

It's important to let the day-care facility know about things at home that may affect how your child is doing in day care.

When your child starts day care

Remember that it's normal for a child to have some fears and misgivings about starting day care. Children need time to get used to new situations. Prepare your children for the change as far in advance as possible. Discuss their concerns. If you're enthusiastic, chances are they soon will be, too.

Depending on their ages, some children will temporarily "act out" their feelings by clinging to you and refusing to let go, forgetting their toilet training, having bad dreams, sucking their thumbs, or other such behavior.

Work with the day-care director and your child's teacher on this.

Talk things over with your child

Make an opportunity each day to gently ask questions when your children are quiet and feeling secure and protected. Share their excitement about new friends, new skills, and new abilities; listen to their concerns; and give them a chance to boast about their achievements.

Parent responsibilities

The day-care facility must get certain information and records from parents to ensure the child's health and safety, handle emergencies, and meet minimum standards. If you do not provide this material, the day-care facility will not be in compliance with the minimum standards.

Complete an enrollment form that includes basic information about your child; telephone numbers where you can be reached during the day; authorization for emergency care for your child; and written permission for swimming, other water activities, and transportation services.

Tell the caregiver about any special concerns or needs, including allergies, medical history, and current medications.

Give the day-care facility a copy of your child's immunization record showing immunizations against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, Haemophilus influenza type b, Hepatitis B and varicella. In some parts of Texas, a tuberculosis test report and Hepatitis A vaccine is also required. For school-age children, you can sign a statement that these records are on file at the school.

Provide a doctor's statement that your preschool child is physically able to participate in the day-care program.

Inform the day-care facility in writing about who is permitted to take your child from the facility. Generally, the day-care facility may only release your child to you or to an adult you designate.

The facility may allow a school-age child to leave the facility alone or allow an older brother or sister to pick up a child if you request this in writing. The facility is only allowed to do this when all safety considerations have been met.

Make sure that child-care staff know the child has arrived. Make sure that staff are aware when you come to pick up your child. Don't leave your child at the front door, and never leave your child at the facility before opening or after closing.

Other requirements must be met if the day-care provider gives medication to your child, if your child is an infant, or if your child needs special care or a special diet.

What happens if your child is ill or injured?

The day-care facility is not allowed to admit a child who seems to be sick unless a doctor or nurse gives approval in writing. This may cause problems

for parents, but it is necessary to prevent a sick child from infecting other children.

If your child has been absent because of a contagious illness, the day-care facility must follow guidelines concerning when the child can return to day care.

If your child appears seriously sick or injured while at the center, the caregiver must call you immediately. It's important that you pick up your child as soon as possible.

If your child needs immediate medical attention, the center must call your child's physician, take the child to the nearest emergency room or minor emergency clinic, or call for an ambulance. This is why the day-care facility must have your authorization for emergency medical care.

Liability insurance requirements

Ask the day-care director whether or not the facility carries liability insurance. Texas law requires day-care facilities to carry liability coverage in the amount of \$300,000 per occurrence to cover a child when the child is in care of the facility.

Liability insurance coverage is not required if the insurance cannot be secured due to financial reasons; if the licensee is unable to locate an underwriter willing to issue a policy; or if the current policy limits have been extended. You are to be notified, in writing, that the coverage is not available.

Take a good look

As you become more familiar with your child's day-care program, you will see many strong points. Almost all day-care facilities strive to provide a warm, loving, safe, and healthy environment for children. Look for these characteristics, but also be aware of warning signals that tell you something is wrong.

Feel secure when you see that:

the facility welcomes you to visit any time, and you are invited to observe the class or participate in activities.

staff are alert and involved with the children.

staff seem warm and interested in the children. There is spontaneous laughter, hugging, and eye-to-eye contact.

staff are gentle, but firm when necessary.

the facility is clean and attractive.

your child is relaxed and happy after the initial adjustment period.

your child seems physically well cared for. Staff inform you of minor accidents and tell you when your child doesn't feel well.

children seem involved with constructive activities, and they get individual attention.

Be seriously concerned when you see that:

parents are not encouraged to visit the facility.

children are left without direct adult supervision.

adults spend much time scolding, ordering, and yelling at children.

adults are physically rough with children or allow rough play.

the building is dirty, or you see unsafe conditions.

your child is unhappy about being left at the facility, and this doesn't improve with time.

a child comes home bruised or injured, and the center can't explain what happened. (The child may not remember minor bruises and scrapes received when playing, however.)

children seem aimless, bored, angry, or frustrated, or there are too many children to supervise.

When things aren't going well

You may find yourself displeased about something that has happened at the facility. Talk about these things with facility staff. There may be a misunderstanding that can easily be resolved.

If the situation isn't resolved and you believe minimum standards are not being met, call the local day-care licensing office. They will handle your call discreetly.

A licensing representative will investigate your complaint. The licensing representative may need to interview you and your child and may also interview other children at the facility.

If the licensing representative finds that a standard has been violated, the facility will be notified and a time set for the facility to correct it.

Licensing staff may revoke a license if a facility doesn't meet minimum standards. The department does not take action to revoke a license unless children are in immediate danger or the licensee refuses to comply with standards.

If you suspect child abuse

Most day-care facilities, like most parents, take good care of children. Child abuse is rare, and it is very unlikely that anything like this will happen to your child.

If you do suspect that your child has been abused or sexually molested, report the situation immediately. Use the toll-free Child Abuse Hotline number 1-800-252-5400 or 1-512-834-3784 to report abuse or neglect that has occurred in Texas. The situation will be investigated immediately, and you will be given referrals or recommendations for help for your child and family.

Should agency staff interview or examine your child during an abuse investigation, a reasonable effort will be made to notify you within 24 hours after the interview or examination.

Parents who suspect or believe that their child has been abused in day care sometimes remove their child from care, but don't report the problem. This leaves other children in danger. State law requires everyone, including day-care providers, to report suspected child abuse or neglect immediately.

Immunity

When people make a report of suspected child abuse in good faith, they are immune from any liability. When the department investigates a complaint, the identity of the complainant is not revealed.