



Our Mission Statement

“Behold, children are a gift of the Lord...” Psalm 127:3

Faith Based

Individual Goal-Setting

Rounded Curriculum with Emphasis on the Arts

Safe & Secure Environment

Trained and Loving Teachers

First Friends is committed to serving young families by offering an affordable, Christ-centered learning environment for small children in the heart of Houston. A faith-based program teaches young children prayer, Bible stories and songs. An appreciation of Fine Arts is fostered through music, art, dramatic play, and guest speakers. Our trained and loving teachers develop your “whole child” encouraging them to be good Christians, kind friends and independent learners.

Program Highlights

Monthly Chapel - The Pastor and Staff at First Evangelical Lutheran seek for each child to know the love of Jesus Christ. Monthly chapel with Pastor Evan McClanahan provides an opportunity for your child to hear the word of God and discover the beauty of Christian worship.

Small Class Sizes

First Friends maintains a high adult to child ratio in order. The ratio of adults to children is roughly 1 to 3 in our infant room, 1 to 4 in our early toddler room, and 1 to 5 in our intermediate/older toddler and pre-k classes. This helps us ensure every child is receiving ample attention throughout the day. It also allows us to target our curriculum to the needs of each class.

Individual Goal Setting - Children are provided with a loving environment where they can learn at their own pace. Cognitive, language, fine and gross motor, and social-emotional

development is fostered through practices aligned to developmental milestones and learning standards appropriate for young children.

Available Classrooms

Infants: Birth to 12 Months “Chicks”

The Infant program has facilities for up to six children daily. Infants are lovingly cared for by two trained infant teachers. We ask that you provide whatever premade bottles, food, diapers and essentials may be necessary for your child’s comfort for the morning. Our adorable nursery features stimulating and educational toys. Our infant program features the introduction of baby signing to facilitate communication and motor skill development in your child. Parents are encouraged to use the signs at home to further reinforce their application in the classroom.

Early Toddlers: 12 Months to 18 months “Ponies”

The early toddler class has a maximum of 8 students with a certified teacher and a teacher’s aide. Our thoughtful curriculum addresses your child’s social, emotional, and developmental needs and places a strong emphasis on independence. In this small class, children are lovingly introduced to a classroom structure with circle time, Montessori play and movement activities.

Intermediate Toddlers: 18 to 24 Months “Bunnies”

The intermediate toddler program has facilities for up to ten children daily. Toddlers move up from the early toddler room, or join in the class at different ages, based on social and physical development. Toddlers are introduced to art, music, science and literature at their own developmental level while being lovingly supervised by one certified teacher and one teacher’s aide. Weather permitting; we go outside everyday on our toddler playground.

Older Toddlers: 24-36 Months “Lambs”

The older toddler program has facilities for up to ten children daily. In this precursor to our Pre-K room, toddlers have daily circle time (consisting of bible verses, songs and books), art activities, outdoor play, free play, music & movement, and fine motor activities. The two teachers in this class nurture your child’s social emotional development while introducing students to a more structured classroom environment. Teachers assist with potty training and overall independence.

Pre-K 3-4 years “Bluebirds”

This Pre-K program has facilities for up to 10 children per day and is supervised by one certified teacher. Each day we offer age appropriate Montessori works that incorporate art, science, math, practical life, and phonics exercises. Children are exposed to children’s literature, outdoor play and supervised socialization. An emphasis is put on group play, language development and mastering fundamental fine and gross motor skills. Children must be potty trained to enter this class.

Enrollment

Registration

Registration for the following year begins in February for returning students and church members and in March for all other children. Children not placed in class will be placed on a waiting list and will be enrolled in the order they were signed up. Registration forms and fees must be complete for your child to be enrolled. The registration fee is non-refundable. Up-to-date immunizations must be completed by the first day of class. Registration fees and requirements are annual and on a per-child basis.

Withdrawal

30 days written notice is required for withdrawal. You are responsible for all tuition and fees during the final month whether or not your child attends. In addition to the final month's tuition, a \$250 fee will be charged to students who leave before the end of the scheduled school year in May. This means if you give written notice in February that you are leaving, you will still be responsible for the February and March tuition plus the \$250 early withdrawal fee.

Class Schedule

Parent's Day Out provided by First Friends Corporation is open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., year-round. We roughly follow the Houston ISD calendar for holidays and inclement weather closings. Early drop off is not allowed as our teachers need this time to set up and prepare for the day. A late pickup fee of \$1.00 per minute will be due at the time of pickup and can be paid directly to the teacher.

Tuition

Registration Fee (annual)	\$250 (\$125 for each additional child)
Activity Fee (each semester)	\$50
Tuition	\$325 per month

Tuition is due on a monthly basis. Payments are due the first school day of the month and are considered late if they are not received by the second week of the month. A \$10.00 late fee will be charged after the second week. Checks should be made to First Friends Corporation. Exact cash should be placed in a sealed envelope and be clearly marked with your child's name. All payments should be placed in the tuition box located at the front entrance. Please note: tuition rates do not change regardless of the # of school days in the month. No reduction in monthly tuition will be made to compensate periodic teacher training, holidays and Spring Break closings.

Any alternate payment plan must have the Director's approval. There are no refunds or credits for absences or early withdrawal. If an account is not paid in full by the end of the

month, the child will automatically be withdrawn from Parent's Day Out unless other arrangements have been made with the Director.

Discounts

A 10% discount will be offered for active members of First Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Returned Checks

A charge of \$40 is required for any check that is returned to First Friends Corporation for non-sufficient funds.

Day-To-Day Details

Immunizations

Immunizations or a notarized exemption form are required by the state for your child. Please provide First Evangelical Lutheran Church with a copy of your child's immunization record each time it is updated by a health professional. A current copy of your child's immunization record is required for entrance into our Parent's Day Out program.

Parking Pass

First Friends parents are welcome to park in each of the two church parking lots. Parents parking in these lots are required to have a First Friends parking sticker adhered to the back window of their vehicle. First Friends is not responsible for any towing charges obtained due to lack of parking sticker. Please see Amanda for a parking sticker.

Supplies

Daily supplies are included in the child's registration and tuition. However, you may occasionally be asked to donate items for special projects. Donations are not mandatory, but are encouraged and appreciated.

Snacks/Lunch

Each school day, children in the toddler and pre-k room will be served a nutritious morning snack. Parents are responsible for providing a healthy lunch that is kept cool in an insulated lunch box with an ice pack. Lunch food should be ready-to-eat (no microwave heating) finger foods easily managed by your child. Sugary treats and carbonated beverages are not encouraged.

Birthdays

Each child may bring special treats to celebrate their birthday with their classmates. Please inform the teacher in advance if your child plans to share a special treat for that day. Children with summer birthdays may wish to celebrate their "half birthday" at school. Let the teacher help you select a day.

Illness

To ensure the good health of all our children and staff, sick or recuperating children may not be brought to Parent's Day Out. A child should be kept at home if he/she shows any signs of illness such as fever, cough, nausea, diarrhea, rash, pink eye, or sore throat. A child should be free of fever for a minimum of 24 hours prior to attending school. If a child arrives at school with any of these symptoms, the parent will be called and the child sent home. Should a child become ill during school, the parent, designated adult or guardian will be contacted immediately to pick up the child. All emergency numbers should be kept current so our staff may reach you. Please notify our office immediately if your child has a contagious disease so that other parents may be informed.

Allergies/Medications

If your child has any allergies, they need to be listed on the registration form along with the reaction(s) associated with that allergy. If our child has any other conditions (i.e. asthma, seizures, etc...) please note that on the form as well.

If your child is taking an oral medication, please administer the medication before you drop them off. Any special care instructions for over-the-counter topical items (i.e. diaper ointment, teething gel, etc...) need to be in writing.

Discipline

We believe in positive reinforcement. Children are praised for acceptable behavior and are encouraged to stop, think about and correct negative behavior. If needed, the child will be removed from the group activity to redirect their behavior. This "quiet time" will be in the same room. If further action is needed, the child will be brought to the Director for additional discussion and parents will be made aware of the situation. Corporal punishment or any harsh, cruel or unusual treatment is not used or tolerated. In rare cases, if a child is continually disruptive or misbehaving, removal from the program may occur.

Teachers/Staff

First Friends Corporation is proud to employ excellent teachers for our Parent's Day Out program. All of our teachers are Christian, CPR-certified and educated in childhood development. Criminal background checks are performed on all staff. Please feel free to discuss your concerns and joys with your child's teacher. You are also encouraged to talk with the Director at anytime about any concerns you might have.

Safety Concerns

The security and well-being of your child is our top priority. The person dropping off your child will be required to indicate the name of the person picking up your child. Your child will only be released to those you have listed on your registration form. If we do not know the person picking up your child, we will ask for identification.

What to Bring

All Items Must be Clearly Labeled With Your Child's Name!

Lunch

Every child needs to bring a lunch. Please send manageable finger foods and/or baby foods for infants. Heating and refrigeration is only available in the infant room. Do not send carbonated drinks, candy or glass containers. Infants need plastic bottles, spoons, bibs and feeding instructions.

Rest Mat or Pack n' Play

Parent's Day out will have a scheduled daily nap or quiet time for all children. Please bring a rest mat/pack n'play, cover and blanket for your child. The mat/pack n' play can remain at Parent's Day Out while personal items will be sent home daily. Mat covers will be sent home monthly (or as needed) to be laundered.

Complete Change of Clothes

This is advisable for all ages and a must for children not yet potty-trained. Please have weather-appropriate clothing. We often play outside and your child will need appropriate outerwear and sturdy shoes.

Personal Belongings

Each child should have a large bag or backpack for carrying any or all of the following items:

- Sippy Cup/ Bottle
- Diapers
- Lunch/ Milk or Formula

What NOT to Bring

It is best for your child not to bring personal toys to school. Often this leads to problems when other children want to play with that toy. There is also the risk that it could be misplaced or broken. One exception is if your child has a comfort item used as a sleep aide (i.e. blankie, bear, etc...)