



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 and 1 to 5 in our toddler and 1 to 10 in our 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.

Classrooms

Infants “Chicks”

The Infant program has facilities for up to eight children daily. Infants are lovingly cared for by at least one trained infant teacher and one additional teacher’s aide. 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 “Ponies”

The early toddler program has facilities for up to ten children daily. The early toddler curriculum is designed to facilitate social/emotional as well as physical development. This gentle introduction to our toddler classrooms provides children with the opportunity to work through separation anxiety through a consistent routine and set environment. The early toddler classroom accepts early walkers.

Intermediate Toddlers “Bunnies”

The Intermediate toddler classroom has facilities for up to ten children daily. This class introduces children to art, music, science and literature at their own developmental level while being lovingly supervised by one trained teacher and one teacher’s aide. Children work on transitions and spend time outside every day in the playground and/or garden.

Older Toddlers “Lambs”

The older Toddler program has facilities for up to twelve children daily. In this precursor to our Pre-K room, toddlers have daily circle time consisting of bible

verses, songs and books. An emphasis is put on group play, language development and mastering fundamental fine and gross motor skills.

Pre-K: “Bluebirds”

Our oldest Pre-K program has facilities for up to ten children per day and is supervised by one trained teacher. Each day we offer age-appropriate art projects along with music, science, children’s literature, outdoor play and supervised socialization. Our thoughtful curriculum addresses your child’s social, emotional, and developmental needs and places a strong emphasis on phonics (reading.) Children must be potty trained to enter this class.

**Classrooms subject to change depending on enrollment numbers*

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 processed 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 \$280 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 \$280 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. 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)	\$280 (\$140 for each additional child)
Activity/Supply Fee (each semester)	\$75
Tuition (all classes)	\$400 per month

Tuition is due on a monthly basis. Parents will receive an electronic invoice for tuition. Payments are due the first school week 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. 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 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

Please provide First Friends 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 or an exemption waiver affidavit is required for entrance into our 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 pass clearly displayed in their vehicle. First Friends is not responsible for any towing charges obtained due to lack of parking pass. Please see the director for a parking pass.

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.

Snack

Each school day, children in the toddler and pre-k rooms will be served a small snack. If your child has dietary concerns, you may provide your own daily snack.

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.

Health and Wellness

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. (Temperature checks will be conducted at drop off.) 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.

Contagious Illness Notification

Families will be notified if someone in their child's class is diagnosed with a contagious illness. If deemed necessary, the school retains the right to close a class down for up to 2 weeks in order for students and staff to self-quarantine.

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 your 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.

Nap Time

Children are required by state law to rest for at least 30 minutes each day. Infants nap in pack n' plays provided by their parents. All other students in the toddler and pre-k classes rest on cots provided by the school. Parents may bring an optional bed roll to lay out on top of the cot. The bedroll must be one piece with pillow attached. Individual pillows and blankets are not allowed. **If a child will not remain on their cot for at least 30 minutes, parents will be required to either provide an "easy open" pack n' play of our choosing, or pick up their child before nap time.**

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 any time 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

Lunch

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.

Infant parents may send breast milk or formula in an insulated bag. If providing formula, parents should have it pre-scooped into bottles and provide bottled water to mix. By six months, parents need to provide manageable finger foods and/or baby foods. Bottle warming and refrigeration is available in the infant room. Do not send carbonated drinks, candy or glass containers. Infants need plastic bottles, spoons, bibs and feeding instructions.

Bed Roll

Parent's Day out will have a scheduled daily nap or quiet time for all children. 30 minutes of rest time is required. After 30 minutes, non-nappers will be taken to a classroom to do a quiet activity while waiting for classmates to wake.

- Infants: Please provide a pack n' play. Crib sheets/sleep sacks are optional. No other blankets allowed.
- Early Toddler, and Intermediate Toddlers, Pre-K: You may bring an optional bedroll labeled with your child's name. Individual blankets, unattached pillows, or other bedding prohibited.

Pack n' plays and Bed Rolls can remain at First Friends unless needed by parents. Bedding will be sent home monthly for laundering.

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 or underwear (pull-ups not allowed)
- Lunch/ Milk or Formula

All Items (including bedding, pacifiers, and comfort items) Must be Clearly Labeled With Your Child's Name!

At the end of the semester, belongings left behind by parents will be donated at the school's discretion.

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. lovey, pacifier, bear, etc...)