

Parent's Handbook & Operational Policies and Procedures



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Philosophy:

At First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool, we believe that children learn best through active participation in a variety of developmentally appropriate experiences. Our approach supports cognitive, physical, social-emotional, and language development, with a focus on the whole child. We recognize that children construct knowledge through hands-on exploration and meaningful interactions, which fosters confidence, independence, and a positive disposition toward learning.

Our micro childcare center is designed to provide a warm, supportive, and stimulating environment where each child feels safe, secure, and valued. The learning space is intentionally arranged with developmentally appropriate interest areas, including creative arts, literacy, dramatic play, and fine motor development. These areas are designed to promote curiosity, creativity, problem-solving, and active engagement in learning.

In partnership with families, we strive to create a responsive and inclusive environment that supports each child's individual development. Through a balance of teacher-guided and child-initiated activities, we ensure that learning experiences are purposeful, engaging, and aligned with developmental best practices, laying a strong foundation for future academic success.

Curriculum Goals Statement:

At First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool, we implement a comprehensive, developmentally appropriate curriculum that integrates teacher-designed learning experiences inspired by *Moments at Home* with a structured homeschooling program aligned with Pre-K 3 standards, developmental milestones, school readiness goals, and early STEM concepts. Our curriculum is designed to support individualized learning, recognizing that children develop at different rates and in unique ways.

The primary goal of our curriculum is to prepare children for kindergarten readiness by fostering growth across all developmental domains, including social-emotional development, early literacy and language, cognitive skills, physical development, and executive functioning. Through planning, ongoing observation, and responsive teaching practices, we promote critical thinking, creativity, independence, and a lifelong love of learning.

We are proud to offer care for children from birth to three years of age and look forward to being a part of their early learning journey.

Open Door & Breastfeeding Policy:

First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool maintains an open-door policy and welcomes parents and guardians to visit their child at any time during operating hours. We are committed to supporting breastfeeding families by providing a comfortable and accommodating environment for parents who wish to nurse their child on-site at any time.

To minimize disruption to the daily schedule and maintain a consistent, calm learning environment for all children, we respectfully ask that visits be brief and occur in a way that supports ongoing classroom routines. We appreciate families' cooperation in helping us provide a nurturing and developmentally appropriate setting for every child.

Hours of Operation and Arrival Policy:

Our licensed childcare center operates year-round, Monday through Friday, from 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM.

To support a consistent daily routine and ensure full participation in scheduled learning activities, all children are expected to arrive by 9:30 AM. If a child has not arrived by this time, they will be considered absent for the day unless prior notification has been provided.

Child Sign-In & Release Policy:

Complies with Section §746.631 of the Minimum Standard for Licensed Child-Care Centers

To ensure the safety and security of all children, First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool utilizes Brightwheel childcare management software for all sign-in and sign-out procedures.

- At the time of enrollment, a valid photo identification must be uploaded for each authorized pick-up individual, as well as for the enrolled child. Children will only be released to individuals whose identity matches the photo and authorization on file. Each parent or guardian is required to create a secure, unique PIN within the Brightwheel system. This PIN is used to verify identity and must be entered when signing a child in and out each day.

Parent Information Updates:

Parents and guardians are responsible for maintaining accurate and up-to-date information in their Brightwheel parent portal. This includes contact information such as phone numbers, email addresses, emergency contacts, and authorized pick-up individuals.

Updates may be made directly by parents at any time through their Brightwheel profile page without the need for staff assistance or prior approval. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure all information remains current to support effective communication and the safety of each child.

Alternative Pickup Procedures:

If an authorized pick-up individual does not have a photo on file, the following requirements must be met:

- A minimum of two (2) hours' notice must be provided by the parent or legal guardian listed on file.
- The full legal name of the individual picking up the child must be provided in advance.
- A valid, government-issued photo ID must be presented at the time of pick-up before the child's release.

Safety Precaution:

For the safety and protection of all children, if at any time staff at First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool feel uncertain or uncomfortable releasing a child to an individual, local law enforcement (Hays Police Department) will be contacted immediately for assistance.

Custody and Child Release Policy

At First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool, the safety and well-being of every child are our highest priorities. To ensure proper procedures are followed regarding custody and release, the following policies are in place:

- Certified custody orders must be provided at the time of enrollment.
- Any changes to custody arrangements must be submitted immediately to ensure records remain current and accurate.
- Enrollment records must always reflect the most recent and valid custody documentation on file.
- Children will only be released to parents or legal guardians listed on the enrollment record, or as specifically authorized in a certified custody order.

First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool cannot restrict a parent's right to pick up their child unless one of the following legal documents is on file:

- A certified custody order that limits or restricts pick-up rights
- A valid restraining order that prohibits contact or pick-up for a specified or permanent duration

Daily Health Check & Illness Exclusion Policy:

The **health and well-being** of each child is our top priority. To maintain a safe and healthy environment, a **daily health check** will be conducted **before parents leave** each day.

- The results of this health check will be **determined by the center's staff**, not the parent.
- If a child does not meet the health requirements, they will **not be permitted to stay** for the day.

Illness Exclusion Criteria

Complies with Section §746.3601 of the Minimum Standard for Licensed Child-Care Centers

A child may be excluded from care based on the following factors:

1. **Ability to Participate** – If the child is unable to fully engage in daily activities appropriate for their classroom and age group.
2. **Staffing Considerations** – If the child requires more care than staff can provide **without compromising the well-being of other children**.
3. **Risk to Others** – If keeping the child in care poses a **potential health risk** to other children or staff members.

If a child is diagnosed with a **contagious condition**, parents must notify First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool **immediately** so we can inform other families while maintaining **confidentiality**.

Return to Care

- A child must be **fever-free and symptom-free for at least 24 hours without the use of medication** before returning to the center.

Our goal is to maintain a safe and healthy environment for all children. Thank you for your cooperation in following these guidelines.

Sick Child Pick-Up Policy

If a child becomes ill while in care, a parent or authorized emergency contact must pick up the child within 30 minutes of being notified.

- If the child is not picked up within this timeframe, a \$50 sick pick-up fee will be applied. This fee reflects the additional supervision required while the child remains on-site after illness has been identified, as First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool does not provide sick care services.

Dispensing and Handling Medication:

Complies with Section §746.3811 of the Minimum Standard for Licensed Child-Care Centers

- We **will only** administer **emergency medications** related to **food allergies or asthma**. If required, medications will be kept in a **locked box** within a designated cabinet area.
- We **will not** administer any **over-the-counter (OTC) medications** or **prescription medications**, unless they are deemed **life-threatening**. For safety reasons, parents must inform us of **any medications** their child has received **before arriving** at First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool.

Sunscreen & Bug Spray:

These products will be applied before each outdoor play session to support child comfort and protection. Parents may choose to provide an alternative brand; however, all items must be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name and remain in their original packaging when possible.

Handling medical emergencies:

Complies with Section §746.3607 of the Minimum Standard for Licensed Child-Care Centers

In the event of a medical emergency, First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool will prioritize the child's safety and well-being by taking the following steps:

1. The child will be provided with immediate care and, if necessary, transported to the nearest emergency room for further medical attention.
2. Once emergency care has been administered, both parents will be notified of the situation and informed of the actions taken.
3. The director and parents will then communicate to determine the appropriate next steps following the initial care.
4. A full incident report will be completed in Brightwheel by staff, the director, and any witnesses. This report must be signed and dated by all involved parties.

Our priority is ensuring the safety and well-being of every child in our care. Please ensure that your emergency contact information is up to date. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to reach out to us.

Parental Notifications:

Complies with Section §746.505 of the Minimum Standard for Licensed Child-Care Centers

Operational Policies and Procedures Updates:

From time to time, First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool may update its Operational Policies and Procedures to reflect best practices, licensing requirements, and program improvements. The most current version will be available for parents and guardians to view or download through Brightwheel, as well as upon request.

Parent Information Updates:

Parents and guardians are responsible for maintaining accurate and up-to-date information in their Brightwheel parent portal. This includes contact information such as phone numbers, email addresses, emergency contacts, and authorized pick-up individuals. Updates may be made directly by parents at any time through their Brightwheel profile without the need for staff assistance or prior approval. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure all information remains current to support effective communication and the safety of each child.

Parent-Teacher Conferences & Developmental Monitoring:

Parent-teacher conferences will be held at a minimum of twice per year. During these conferences, staff will review each child's growth and development using age-appropriate developmental milestone checklists for children ages birth through five (0–5). Conferences will provide an opportunity to discuss your child's progress across all developmental domains, including cognitive, social-emotional, language, and physical development.

Staff may also share observations and recommend consideration of early intervention supports when appropriate, such as speech and language services or developmental evaluations through the child's primary care physician or qualified specialists. Please note that First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool staff are not medical professionals and do not provide diagnoses. We are only able to share observations based on daily interactions and developmental progress within the classroom setting.

Communication with Administration:

Parents and guardians are welcome to contact the Director of First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool with any questions or concerns regarding their child's care, program policies and procedures, or general center operations.

The Director is typically available during regular business hours and may also be reached via email at Hello@firststepsbigdreams.com or through the Brightwheel private messaging system (admin-to-parent communication). Every effort will be made to respond promptly during operating hours.

Policy Updates and Acknowledgment:

Parents and guardians will be notified of any policy changes on the same day updates are implemented. Revised Operational Policies and Procedures will be made available for review, and all parents are required to acknowledge receipt and understanding by signing the updated policy form.

The parent handbook is formally reviewed and revised annually at the beginning of each year. If updates are made outside of the annual review period, notice will be provided the same day changes are implemented, and updated documentation will be made available for review and acknowledgment.

Accident and Injury Policy:

Complies with Section §746.701 of the Minimum Standard for Licensed Child-Care Centers

At First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool, every effort is made to maintain a safe environment and minimize the risk of accidents through active supervision and appropriate safety precautions. However, minor injuries may still occur as part of normal childhood development and play.

We are not responsible for incidents that occur as a result of normal childhood behavior or play, including but not limited to:

- Interactions between children, such as biting, hitting, pushing, or throwing objects
- Contact with furniture, equipment, or classroom materials
- Injuries to fingers from doors, containers, or similar objects
- Accidents occurring during indoor or outdoor play, including falls or trips

These types of incidents are considered typical in early childhood environments and are not necessarily the result of negligence or wrongdoing.

Injury Notification and Documentation:

If an injury occurs, staff will provide immediate care and notify the parent or guardian based on the severity of the incident. All injuries, regardless of severity, will be documented in an incident report.

Incident reports will be shared with parents through Brightwheel messaging and will also be documented in the child's Brightwheel profile under the incident reporting section. Parents are required to review and sign all incident reports at pick-up.

In situations involving child-to-child incidents, specific identifying information about other children involved will not be disclosed in accordance with confidentiality policies.

Discipline and Guidance Policy:

Complies with Section §746.2803 of the Minimum Standard for Licensed Child-Care Centers

We believe in using positive methods of discipline and guidance to support children's emotional, social, and behavioral development.

Guiding Principles

Discipline is individualized and consistent, based on each child's developmental level and understanding. Our goal is to help children develop self-control, problem-solving skills, and appropriate social behaviors in a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment.

Positive Discipline Methods

Caregivers will use only positive discipline techniques that promote self-esteem, self-control, and independence, including:

- ✓ **Praise & Encouragement** – Reinforcing positive behavior through specific, supportive feedback
- ✓ **Clear, Positive Communication** – Providing simple, consistent reminders of expectations
- ✓ **Redirection** – Guiding children toward appropriate choices and activities
- ✓ **Supervised Separation (Time-Outs)** – When developmentally appropriate, brief separation may be used, limited to one minute per year of the child's age

Prohibited Disciplinary Actions

First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool strictly prohibits any form of harsh, cruel, or unusual discipline, including but not limited to:

- ✗ Physical punishment of any kind
- ✗ Threats, humiliation, or verbal abuse
- ✗ Withholding food, naps, or bathroom access as a form of discipline

We are committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and nurturing environment where all children can learn and grow. Parents are encouraged to discuss any questions or concerns regarding behavior guidance at any time.

Challenging Behaviors Policy and Process:

We strive to support every child's social and emotional development through positive guidance, redirection, and developmentally appropriate strategies.

Policy for Addressing Challenging Behaviors:

In alignment with early learning program requirements, First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool maintains a structured process for addressing challenging behaviors. Teachers and/or the Director will engage in ongoing communication with parents to ensure consistent support for the child across home and school environments.

This process includes:

- Communicating concerns related to a child's challenging behaviors in a timely, professional, and respectful manner
- Collaborating with parents to develop and implement consistent, developmentally appropriate behavior support strategies
- Providing ongoing updates to parents regarding the child's progress and response to interventions
- Framing all discussions, strategies, and interventions around the program's objectives, which include promoting school readiness, supporting social-emotional development, and fostering positive behavior skills in a developmentally appropriate learning environment

Suspension and Expulsion Policy:

We are committed to supporting each child's development and success within our program. However, if a child's behavior consistently disrupts the learning environment or poses a safety risk to themselves or others, the following steps will be taken:

- A parent conference will be scheduled to discuss concerns and develop collaborative strategies
- Staff will implement individualized behavior support strategies and, when appropriate, provide referrals to outside resources
 - Ongoing communication will be maintained with families regarding progress and outcomes

If, after all reasonable supports and interventions have been implemented, the behavior does not improve and continues to impact the safety or well-being of others, alternative care arrangements may be required.

Rest Time Policy

Following **state regulations**, First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool provides a **designated rest period** for all children. Rest time is scheduled **daily from 12:30 PM to 2:30 PM**, following lunch.

- All children present during this time will be **encouraged to rest quietly** on their mats.
- If a child does not fall asleep, they will be provided with **quiet activities** to enjoy while remaining on their mat.

Mats & Bedding

Each child will have a **labeled mat**, which is **disinfected regularly**.

Parents are responsible for providing: A **blanket and a crib sheet**

All bedding must be **clearly labeled** with your child's name using a **black permanent marker**. Bedding should be taken home **every Friday** for laundering and returned **on Monday**.

First Steps to Big Dreams Preschool **does not provide backup bedding** if it is forgotten.

Infant Sleep Policy

Complies with Section §746.2427 of the Minimum Standard for Licensed Child-Care Centers

In alignment with the **American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)** safe sleep guidelines:

- Infants will be placed on their **backs to sleep** in an **empty crib** labeled with their name.
- No **restrictive devices**, such as swaddles or sleep sacks with Velcro across the chest, will be allowed.
- Any exceptions to this policy must be submitted **in writing by the child's healthcare provider**.

Rolling Infants

If an infant is developmentally able to roll from back to stomach and stomach to back independently, the infant will still be placed on their back at the start of sleep. Once the infant rolls on their own, they may remain in that position.

Maintaining Infant Temperature

To help regulate temperature during sleep, Families may provide appropriate sleep clothing and/or a **sleeveless sleep sack** that does not restrict the infant's movement.

Any **modifications to this policy** must be made **in writing** and signed by the child's healthcare provider.

Screen Time Policy:

Complies with Section §746.2207 of the Minimum Standard for Licensed Child-Care Centers

First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool is a primarily screen-free program. We believe young children learn best through hands-on, active, and developmentally appropriate experiences that promote exploration, interaction, and engagement.

On rare and special occasions, educational or age-appropriate films may be shown in the preschool classroom for children ages 2 years and older only. Any media used will be selected intentionally and will align with childcare licensing standards and minimum requirements for early childhood programs.

All screen use is limited, supervised, and incorporated in a manner that supports program goals and complies with applicable childcare regulations and minimum standards.

Meals and Food Service Practices:

Complies with Section §746.3309 of the Minimum Standard for Licensed Child-Care Centers

Meals and Snacks Policy:

Parents have the option to either provide their child's meals and snacks or enroll in the center's snack provision option included in tuition. First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool provides **snacks only** and does not provide full meals.

Parent-Provided Meals and Snacks:

If parents choose to provide food for their child, they are responsible for supplying all meals and snacks required during the child's care day, in accordance with their child's attendance schedule.

All food items must be provided in a ready-to-serve condition, as First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool does not heat, cook, or refrigerate meals. The center is not responsible for maintaining food temperature or ensuring the nutritional balance of parent-provided meals.

We recommend including a variety of foods from the following groups when applicable:

- ✓ Dairy or dairy alternative
- ✓ Protein or meat substitute
- ✓ Fruits and vegetables
- ✓ Whole grains

Food Allergies & Nut Policy:

Parents must provide written documentation for any diagnosed food allergies at the time of enrollment.

If a child has a severe peanut or tree nut allergy, parents must notify staff immediately and provide all required medical documentation and action plans.

First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool does not knowingly serve nut products; however, we cannot guarantee that food brought from home is free from cross-contamination. Parents are strongly encouraged to avoid sending nut-containing foods to help maintain a safe environment for all children.

Allergy Action Plan:

Written allergy documentation must be provided by the parent/guardian. Staff are trained to recognize and respond to signs of allergic reactions.

If required, emergency medication (such as an EpiPen) will be stored in a clearly labeled and secured location. Staff will follow the child's individualized allergy action plan in the event of a reaction, and parents will be notified immediately.

Immunization Requirements:

Complies with Section §746.613 of the Minimum Standard for Licensed Child-Care Centers

In compliance with the **Texas Department of State Health Services (25 TAC 97, Subchapter B)**, First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool **must obtain a copy of each child's immunization record** before enrollment.

Required Immunization Documentation

All immunization records must include the following:

- ✓ **Child's full name** and **date of birth**
- ✓ **Number of doses** received and **vaccine type**
- ✓ **Exact dates** (month, day, and year) for each vaccination
- ✓ **Signature or stamp** of the physician or healthcare provider who administered the vaccine

Parents are responsible for keeping their child's immunization records **up to date** and providing updated documentation as necessary.

Tuberculin testing requirements:

Complies with Section §746.627 of the Minimum Standard for Licensed Child-Care Centers

First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool **does not require a tuberculin (TB) test** for enrollment. However, we **recommend** that parents discuss this test with their child's healthcare provider to determine if it is necessary based on individual health factors or exposure risks.

Hearing and vision screening:

Complies with Section §746.629 of the Minimum Standard for Licensed Child-Care Centers

Vision and hearing screening tests are not required by First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool since we don't offer services to children over 3 years of age. However, this is required for children 4 years old by September in the state of Texas.

Enrollment procedures:

Complies with Section §746.605 of the Minimum Standard for Licensed Child-Care Centers

To enroll your child at First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool, parents may complete the **registration forms** through the following options:

Online on the **Brightwheel** app

Upon your child's **first visit**, parents must complete the **full registration process**, which includes:

Providing all necessary documentation and
Paying a **\$150 non-refundable enrollment fee**

Tuition and Attendance Policy

To maintain enrollment at First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool, tuition must be paid in full and on time according to the selected payment schedule (weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly). All payments are due on the Monday of each billing cycle by the end of the business day. Payments received after this time are considered late and will be subject to applicable late fees as outlined in the tuition agreement.

No deductions, credits, or refunds will be issued for absences due to illness, vacation, holidays, or other missed attendance days.

If a child will be absent for an entire week (such as for vacation or extended illness), parents are encouraged to notify the center in advance whenever possible.

If a child is absent for two (2) or more consecutive weeks without communication from the parent or guardian, the enrollment will be considered withdrawn from the program.

Re-enrollment will require payment of all applicable registration fees, and placement will be subject to availability at the time of reapplication.

Payment Dispute Policy

All payments made to First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool are considered **authorized transactions** unless otherwise documented.

Any attempt to **dispute or halt payment** on an authorized transaction will be considered a **fraudulent claim**. In such cases, First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool reserves the right to pursue **legal action** to recover the owed funds.

All **legal fees, court costs, and associated expenses** incurred during the recovery process will be the **responsibility of the parent or legal guardian** of the enrolled child.

To avoid misunderstandings, we encourage families to **communicate directly with the Director** regarding any billing concerns before initiating a payment dispute.

No Refund Policy

All tuition payments, registration fees, and any other program-related fees paid to First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool are non-refundable.

This policy applies regardless of:

- Early withdrawal from the program
- Absences due to illness, vacation, or personal reasons
- Temporary suspension or removal from care in accordance with center policies

Program Termination

First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool reserves the right to terminate enrollment when necessary to maintain the safety, well-being, and integrity of the program. When possible, notice will be provided in advance; however, immediate termination may occur in situations involving safety concerns, policy violations, or failure to comply with enrollment agreements.

Payment Methods

Tuition payments are processed exclusively through **Brightwheel** and can be made via credit card, debit card, or ACH transfer.

Credit card transactions incur a **2.95% processing fee per transaction**.
ACH payments incur a **0.6% processing fee per transaction**.

Late Payments

Tuition must be paid in full and on time according to the selected payment schedule (weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly). All payments are due on Monday of each billing cycle by the end of the business day.

Payments received after the due date and time are considered late and will be subject to late fees as outlined below:

- A \$20 late fee will be applied beginning at 5:30 PM on Monday if payment has not been received.
- An additional \$20 late fee will be applied daily at 7:00 AM until the balance is paid in full.

In the event a payment is returned or fails to process, a \$60 returned payment (NSF) fee will be charged per failed transaction, per invoice, per child enrolled.

Withdrawal Policy

No refunds will be issued for any tuition payments or registration fees.

If you choose to withdraw your child(ren) from First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool, a minimum of two (2) weeks' written notice is required. Notice may be provided through text message, email, phone call, or direct communication with the Director.

Upon providing notice, two (2) weeks of tuition is required and due on the date notice is given, regardless of attendance during the notice period. This payment is separate from any previously paid tuition and is required to complete the withdrawal process and secure the child's enrollment end date.

Any tuition payments made prior to submitting a withdrawal notice (including weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly payments already processed) are not applied toward the required two-week withdrawal notice period and are considered separate from the final withdrawal balance.

For example, if tuition is paid on a Monday and a withdrawal notice is given the same day or at any time after payment has been processed, the required two-week withdrawal tuition is still due in full at the time the notice is submitted.

If the required two-week withdrawal payment is not received at the time of notice, a \$20 late fee may be applied until the balance is paid in full.

This policy ensures adequate time for staffing adjustments, classroom planning, and transition preparation for all children in care.

Late Pick-Up Policy:

Our center closes promptly at 5:30 PM. Late pick-ups disrupt staff schedules and daily operations; therefore, the following fees will apply:

- A \$10 late fee will be charged for the first five (5) minutes after closing (5:30 PM–5:35 PM).
- After 5:35 PM, an additional \$1 per minute will be charged until the child is picked up.

All late pick-up fees must be paid in full prior to the child returning to care the following business day. If payment is not received, a \$20 late fee will be applied in addition to the outstanding balance.

Repeated late pick-ups may result in further review of enrollment status.

Discussing Policies and Procedures:

Parents are welcome to contact First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool's Director with any questions that they have regarding their children's care at our center or about the center's policies, procedures, or in general about how the center operates.

The Director is typically available during regular business hours and may also be reached via email at Hello@firststepsbigdreams.com or through the Brightwheel private messaging system (admin-to-parent communication). Every effort will be made to respond promptly during operating hours.

Parents will be notified of policy changes the same day changes are made to them, and all parents are required to sign the new form as acknowledgment of the new Operational Policies and Procedures.

Indoor and outdoor physical activity:

Complies with Section §746.2206 of the Minimum Standard for Licensed Child-Care Centers

At First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool, we believe that regular physical activity is essential for healthy growth and development. Weather permitting, we provide **daily outdoor play** for all children.

Outdoor time is divided into **two 30-minute sessions**, totaling **60 minutes** of play each day.

When Outdoor Play Isn't Possible

In cases of **extreme weather**, such as rain or temperatures exceeding a **heat index of 100°F**, outdoor play will be limited or canceled. During these times, we offer fun and engaging **indoor physical activities** in the main playroom, such as:

- Freeze dance battles
- Jumping jacks or a dinosaur stomping game
- Yoga and stretching
- Bear hunts (pretend play with movement)
- Foam ball toss

We will monitor local weather reports and **check the temperature of outdoor equipment**, such as slides. If surfaces are over **100°F**, they will be considered **unsafe** for play.

Clothing & Footwear Guidelines

To help your child enjoy physical activity comfortably and safely, we ask parents to dress their children appropriately for the weather:

- **90°F and above:** Shorts and a short-sleeved shirt
- **Below 70°F:** Long sleeves, pants, and a light jacket
- **Footwear:** Always **closed-toe shoes** like sneakers. Please avoid sandals, even in warm weather, to prevent injuries and keep gravel or rocks out of shoes.

Physical Activity Benefits

Children benefit from both **structured** and **unstructured** play. These activities help improve:

- Physical strength
- Motor skills, coordination, and balance
- Focus, creativity, and problem-solving
- Overall health and reduced risk of obesity

Examples of Structured Play (goal-oriented):

- Yoga or stretching
- Freeze tag
- Races
- Ball toss

Examples of Unstructured Play (free play):

- Recess
- Painting or coloring
- Playing with blocks

Diaper Changing and Potty Training:

Diaper Changing

First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool is happy to change all types of diapers, whether disposable or cloth. For families using cloth diapers, we kindly ask that you provide a sealable bag to store soiled diapers.

Our staff follows the guidelines outlined in **Division 2: Diaper Changing** of the *Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers*. Parents will receive documentation of each diaper change that occurs while their child is in our care.

Potty Training

At First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool, we're happy to support your child through the potty training process. Our staff will take potty-training children to the restroom **twice every hour** to encourage consistency and routine.

We will document each restroom visit, and reports will be available upon request for your review.

To help us support your child's success, we ask parents to provide **extra clothes and any necessary training materials** each day.

Firearms and Other Weapons:

Complies with Section §746.3707 of the Minimum Standard for Licensed Child-Care Centers

Per §2.12 of the *Texas Code of Criminal Procedure*, **peace officers** and **security officers commissioned by the Texas Private Security Board** who are trained and certified to carry a firearm on duty may have firearms and ammunition on the premises of First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool.

For **all other individuals**, the possession of **firearms, hunting knives, bows and arrows, or any other weapons** is strictly prohibited on the premises of the child-care center.

Texas Penal Code:

Complies with Section 746.501 Subchapter B, Administration and Communication

First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool will inform parents **verbally** that, under the **Texas Penal Code**, any area **within 1,000 feet of a child-care center** is designated as a **gang-free zone**. Criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity that occur within this zone are subject to **enhanced penalties**.

Emergency Preparedness Plan:

Complies with Section 746.5201 Subchapter W, Fire Safety and Emergency Practices

Evacuation routes and relocation plans are **posted at the entrance** of First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool for easy reference.

- If relocation **within the facility** is necessary, children and staff will move to the **hall near the restroom**, which has no windows, is near the interior of the building, and provides safe and easy access.
- If relocation **outside the facility** is required, we will follow our emergency evacuation plan and relocate to the **end of the building's parking lot**.

Routine emergency drills will be conducted following **licensing requirements** to ensure preparedness and safety for all children and staff. All plans align with **Minimum Standards** and will be reviewed during the **Licensing Inspection Report** process.

Licensing inspection report and minimum standards:

A copy of the Minimum Standards for Child-care Centers is available for review at First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool upon request. In addition, parents can find it online by going to:
http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/documents/Child_Care/Child_Care_Standards_and_Regulations/746_Centers.pdf

A copy of the most recent inspection report is available for review by going to:
<https://childcare.hhs.texas.gov/Public/childcaresearch>

Provider Name: First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool

Provider Number: #1828828

**Provider Location: 715 W Hopkins St, Unit 709
San Marcos, TX 78666**

Local Licensing Office, PRS Child Abuse Hotline, and the PRS Website Information Licensing Office

http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/About_Child_Care_Licensing/

**1901 Dutton Dr # C,
San Marcos, TX 78666
(512) 753-2201**

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse:

For information from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services on reporting abuse, neglect, or exploitation, [visit: http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Contact_Us/report_abuse.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Contact_Us/report_abuse.asp)

Abuse Hotline and Website:

- Call the Texas Abuse Hotline toll-free at 1-800-252-5400 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, nationwide
- Make your report through their secure website, and you will receive a response within 24 hours:
www.txabusehotline.org

Preventing and responding to abuse and neglect of children:

First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool will ensure that annual training is completed by employees to prevent and respond to the abuse and neglect of children.

Child Protective Services (CPS) Access Policy

Please be advised that, under Texas law, **Child Protective Services (CPS)** has the legal authority to **interview children without parental consent** if there is a concern or report regarding the child's safety or well-being.

At First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool, we are required to **comply fully with CPS** and allow them access to speak with any child in our care when legally mandated to do so.

This policy exists to ensure the protection and welfare of all children and to support state efforts to investigate and prevent abuse or neglect.

Recognizing the Signs of Child Abuse:

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is defined as any **physical injury** that results in **substantial harm** to a child or a **genuine threat** of such harm. This includes a wide range of actions that can cause injury, whether **intentional or not**.

Examples of physical abuse include, but are not limited to:

- Punching
- Beating
- Shaking
- Kicking
- Biting
- Throwing
- Stabbing
- Hitting
- Burning
- Choking
- Any other act that results in harm

Physical abuse can result in injuries ranging from **minor bruises to severe fractures** or even **death**. Importantly, an injury is considered abuse **regardless of the caretaker's intent** to cause harm.

Neglect

Neglect is the **failure to provide for a child's basic needs** that are essential for sustaining the child's **life, health, or well-being**. This does **not include** situations where the failure is primarily due to **financial hardship, unless** relief services have been offered and **refused**.

Signs That May Indicate Neglect:

- Obvious **malnourishment** or underweight appearance
- **Lack of personal hygiene** or cleanliness
- Consistently **torn, dirty, or inappropriate clothing**
- **Stealing or begging for food**
- Being **left unattended** for extended periods
- **Unmet medical or dental needs**, including the need for glasses
- **Frequent absences or chronic tardiness** from school

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves any **sexual conduct** with a child that is **harmful or exploitative**, whether through physical contact or non-contact acts. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Fondling a child's genitals
- Penetration (vaginal or anal)
- Incest
- Rape or sodomy
- Indecent exposure
- Exploitation through prostitution
- Creating or distributing **pornographic materials** involving children

Signs That May Indicate Sexual Abuse:

- Physical signs of **sexually transmitted diseases**
- **Injury** or trauma to the genital area
- **Pregnancy** in a young girl
- **Difficulty walking or sitting**
- **Extreme fear or anxiety** around adults of a specific sex
- **Sexualized behavior**, language, or play that is not age-appropriate
- **Unusual knowledge** of sexual topics for the child's age
- **Sexually aggressive behavior** toward other children

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is defined as a **mental or emotional injury** that results in an **observable and substantial impairment** in a child's growth, development, or psychological functioning. This type of abuse may not leave visible marks but can have strong and lasting effects.

Examples of emotional abuse include:

- **Extreme or inappropriate punishment**, such as confining a child in a dark space
- **Habitual scapegoating** or blaming
Belittling, shaming, or constant criticism
- **Rejecting** or withholding emotional support and love
- Failing to seek or follow through with treatment for a child's **mental or emotional needs**

Signs That May Indicate Emotional Abuse:

- **Over-compliance** or fearfulness
- **Low self-esteem**
- **Severe depression**, anxiety, or signs of aggression
- Trouble **making friends** or interacting with peers
- Noticeable **delays** in physical, emotional, or intellectual development
- A caregiver who **belittles the child**, shows **little affection**, or appears **disinterested** in the child's well-being

Inclusive services to children with special care needs:

Complies with section 746.2202 Subchapter F, Developmental Activities and Activity Plan

At First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool, we welcome and support children who receive **early intervention** or **special education services**. With **parental approval**, qualified service providers may deliver these services **on-site** in one of our **private rooms**.

Please note: During these service sessions, First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool **is not responsible for the well-being of the child**, as they are under the care of the external provider.

Additionally, we recognize that some children may become overstimulated throughout the day. To support their emotional and sensory needs, we offer **sensory cool-down time** in a quiet, calming space when needed.

Family and Cultural Inclusion Statement:

First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool provides documentation and supports to demonstrate that accommodations can be made to support families and children with diverse home languages, abilities, and cultural backgrounds. First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool is committed to fostering an inclusive, respectful, and developmentally appropriate environment where all children and families feel welcomed, valued, and supported.

Daily Schedule

Note: This schedule serves as a general guideline of daily activities. Times and activities may vary slightly based on classroom needs, developmental needs of the children, and program adjustments.

- ☀ Outdoor play will occur twice daily for a total of approximately 60 minutes, weather permitting.
- ☁ During inclement weather (rain, extreme heat, or cold), gross motor activities will be provided indoors during structured group time.
- 💧 Sunscreen and insect repellent will be applied before outdoor play sessions, as needed and with parental authorization.

7:00–9:00 AM | Arrival / Free Play / Small Group Centers

Children will participate in self-selected and teacher-guided center activities designed to support development across multiple domains, including:

- Gross Motor Skills
- Fine Motor Skills
- Cognitive Development
- Early Literacy
- STEM Exploration
- Arts & Crafts / Creative Expression

9:00–9:20 AM | Diapering & Potty Training Routine

9:30–9:45 AM | Circle Time / Music & Movement / Group Learning Activities

10:00–11:00 AM | AM Snack & Outdoor Play (Gross Motor Activities)

11:00–11:30 AM | Curriculum-Based Learning Activities (colors, shapes, numbers, letters, STEM)

11:30–11:45 AM | Clean-Up for Lunch / Handwashing

11:50–12:00 PM | Diapering & Potty Training Routine

12:00–12:30 PM | Lunch / Transition to Rest

12:30–2:30 PM | Rest / Quiet Time (nap and quiet activities)

2:30–2:50 PM | Wake-Up / Diapering & Potty Training Routine

3:00–3:20 PM | PM Snack

3:20–4:00 PM | Outdoor Play (Gross Motor Activities)

4:00–4:30 PM | Independent Play / Learning Centers

4:30–5:00 PM | Clean-Up / Diapering & Potty Training Routine

5:00–5:30 PM | Parent Pick-Up / Departure

Parent and Guardian Rights Acknowledgment

Complies with Section §746.521 of the Minimum Standard for Licensed Child-Care Centers

A parent or guardian of a child enrolled at First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool has the right to:

1. Enter and examine the child care facility during normal operating hours without prior notice
 2. Review publicly accessible records of the child care facility
 3. Receive inspection reports and information regarding the facility's online compliance history
 4. Obtain a copy of the facility's policies and procedures
 5. Review, upon request, staff training records and any in-house staff training curriculum used by the facility
 6. Review the written records maintained by the facility concerning their child
 7. Inspect video recordings of an alleged incident of abuse or neglect involving their child, when available, with the understanding that:
 - Video recordings must be available
 - No portion of a recording containing other children may be retained
 - Parents/guardians of other children in the recording will be notified before viewing
 8. Have the facility comply with any valid court order restricting another parent or guardian's access to or removal of their child
 9. Be provided with contact information for the local Child Care Regulation office
 10. File a complaint with the local Child Care Regulation office
 11. Be free from retaliatory action for exercising any of these rights
-

Parent Acknowledgment:

I acknowledge that I have received and understand my rights as a parent or guardian of a child enrolled at First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool.

I hereby represent that I am the **legal guardian** of:

(Child/Children's Full Name)

Parent or Legal Guardian Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Director's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent Acknowledgment and Agreement

I hereby represent that I am the **legal guardian** of:

(Child/Children's Full Name)

I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to **keep all information and authorizations** on my child **accurate and up to date**.

I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the **policies and conditions** outlined in the **First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool Parent Handbook**.

I understand and accept that, **at the discretion of the Director**, my child **may be unenrolled** from the daycare at **any time**, for **any reason**, and **without prior notice**.

By signing below, I confirm my acceptance of First Steps To Big Dreams Preschool's policies as written.

Parent or Legal Guardian Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Director's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____