

Parent Handbook



Mrs. Rita's School for Young Children.

607 Jefferson Ave
Seguin, TX 78155
830-379-5327

www.leapaheadlearning.org

Leap Ahead Learning

Leap Ahead Learning's goal is to be Seguin's leading preschool program. Our program gives children ages 6-weeks through 12-years enriching opportunities to develop the whole child. We focus on learning through child-directed play experiences and curriculum time. We believe a balance of play and preschool enhances growth and development in all areas: physically, socially, emotionally, creatively, and intellectually. This is achieved in a safe and loving faith-based environment with caregivers who are dedicated to enriching children's lives.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY:

Leap Ahead Learning does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, religion, or national or ethnic origin in admittance, education, or other administrative policies and extends to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally made available to students at the school.

Leap Ahead Learning is licensed and regulated by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. The follow policies are required by Child Care Licensing per The Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers 746.501.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Leap Ahead Learning is open from 5:30am-6:00pm, Monday-Friday, year round. We close to observe the following holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the following Friday, Good Friday, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Eve. Full tuition is due for holiday weeks.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

Per Texas state laws, parents have a right to access their child at anytime. However, we strongly encourage parents to drop off their children by 8:30am each day so that the child can take part in our full educational program. In the event that a parent is unable to pick up their child, they may authorize another legal adult to pick them up. Children will not be released to a minor. Authorized adults must be listed on the enrollment form to pick up and the authorized adult must bring a picture ID. Children will not be released to adults without a picture ID. A photo copy of the ID will be made, and kept on file for at least 3 months.

ILLNESS AND EXCLUSION POLICY

Children who are ill should not attend preschool. Leap Ahead Learning observes the standards set by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services for ill children. The most common standards for exclusion are:

- Illness that prevents the child from participating in child care activities, ***including outdoor play.***
- The illness results in a greater need for care than caregivers can provide without compromising the health, safety and supervision of the other children.
- Temperature of 100 or more
- Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrollable diarrhea, 2 or more vomiting episodes in 24-hours, rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, behavior changes, or other signs that the child may be severely ill.
- Communicable Diseases need to be reported to the Director as soon as your child is diagnosed.
- Head Lice: If your child contracts head lice, they may not return to school until treated and nits are removed.

If a child becomes ill while in our care, we will contact the parent immediately. We will care for the child apart from the other children with proper supervision and give extra attention to hand washing and sanitation practices.

Parents need to pick up children within 1 hour of notification. In the event of *severe* illness or injury, or if a parent fails to pick up their child within a reasonable amount of time, Leap Ahead Learning may call for an ambulance at the parent's expense.

If a child is sent home sick from our program, they may not return until the child is symptom-free for 24-hours without the aid of fever reducing medicine.

MEDICATION

Please inform your physician that your child is in full-day or part-day preschool and that you prefer to give medications at home, morning and evening. Knowing this, many doctors will order longer acting medications. Limiting medications dispensed away from home prevents medication errors. Please remember, Leap Ahead Learning is designed for **well** children.

If medication needs to be administered at school, the following conditions must be met:

- **Prescription medication will be accepted only if it is in the original container and hasn't reached its expiration date.**
- Nonprescription medication may only be administered by following the manufacturer's recommendation on the label. Medication must be in the original container.
- Before any prescription or nonprescription medication can be administered, we must have permission in writing by the child's parent or guardian. Please fill out the medication form.
- Medication needs to go home after the last date that the medication is administered.

Health forms are required to be completed at the time of enrollment showing any allergies, physical handicaps, a statement of general health, and a current immunization history. These must be updated and kept current.

Medication may be given to children with a signed medical information sheet. These are available in the office.

PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING EMERGENCIES

In case of minor injury or accident, the staff will administer basic first aid. All injuries or illnesses not requiring immediate parental notification will be documented and reported to parents when the child is picked up at the end of the day.

In case of medical injury or illness requiring immediate professional care (emergency), the staff will call 911, giving location and nature of emergency. As appropriate, the staff will administer CPR or first aid measures. Parents will be notified immediately. If parents are unavailable, those individuals designated as emergency phone contacts will be notified. **All children must have an emergency medical release form on file in case of such an emergency.**

If a child ingests or comes in contact with a poisonous substance the staff will contact the Poison Control Center 1.800.222.1222.

PARENT NOTIFICATIONS

Open Communication with parents is very important to children's success. Leap Ahead Learning has multiple ways of communicating with parents. In some situations, parents may be asked to sign documents acknowledging that communication has taken place. Listed below are ways that Leap Ahead Learning may communicate with parents:

- Through email notifications
- Written memos placed in your child's cubby
- Social media site such as Facebook
- Verbal communication with the child's teachers and director
- Notices taped to classroom doors or the entry door window

It is important to inform the Director and teacher of any significant changes in your child's life. Events such as a move, the loss of a family member, or change in the family structure can significantly affect your child. We can work together to help ease the stress of any life event and work together as a team to help create security and support.

BEHAVIOR, DISCIPLINE & GUIDANCE POLICY

Leap Ahead Learning staff members are trained to use a positive method of discipline and guidance that encourages self-esteem, self-control, and self direction. Just a few examples used in this situation are: praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior; reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements and redirecting behaviors. Leap Ahead Learning uses "time out" as a form of managing behavior. Leap Ahead Learning staff will never use corporal punishment or negative discipline that may hurt or humiliate a child.

Research has shown that positive guidance teaches children skills which help them get along in their physical and social environment. This aim is to develop personal standards in self-discipline, not to enforce a set of inflexible rules. Giving children understandable guidelines and redirecting their behavior helps them to develop internal control of their actions and encourages acceptable behavior.

Positive cooperation is required from the family when dealing with disruptive behavior. We feel that consistency and ongoing communication from all parties involved is the best way to handle these issues. At the point when a problem behavior becomes more frequent, severe, results in injury to the child or his/her classmates, reveals a change in the child's self-esteem or forms a pattern, the school will then contact the parents for a conference. The parents and the school will consult to look for possible solutions.

BEHAVIORAL CONFERENCES

During the conference, the parent/staff team will share information and insights about the child and formulate a written plan of action to follow. This agreement will include, but is not limited to, the type of controls and actions that will be implemented when necessary, dates of follow-up conferences, responsibilities of parents and school staff, agreement of desired behavioral changes. The school may seek the advice prior to the conference but cannot proceed further with an intervention without parental consent.

Following the conference, the staff and parents will work closely together as a team to help bring the desired change in behavior during the allotted time, the school's administration will conference again with the child's parents and at that time to offer the following recommendations:

- The parents may be asked to seek outside intervention with a professional who may offer additional recommendations to both the center and family
- The parents may be asked to seek outside intervention with a professional who may offer additional recommendations to both the center and the family
- The parents may be asked to permanently withdraw their child from the facility and place their child in another setting that is more applicable to his/her needs

SEPERATION PROCEDURE

Leap Ahead Learning reserves the right to terminate care for the child at anytime if it determined that the school cannot adequately meet the needs of the child/family or if it is in the best interest of the center, child or other children at the center **with no refund in tuition or registration fee.**

BITING

Leap Ahead Learning recognizes that biting is a developmentally appropriate behavior for children in the infant through 2-year-old classrooms. Parents with children in these classrooms should expect that their children may be bit or will bite another child. The staff understands that parents are concerned and can be upset when their child is involved in a biting incident. We ask that you remember this is a developmentally appropriate behavior, and that the staff is working to identify situations which, provoke, or elicit this behavior so it can be prevented in the future. The staff will not punish, or harshly discipline children in the younger classrooms for biting behavior; they will simply redirect the children to different activities in separate areas of the classroom. Parents are expected to work with staff to identify methods and strategies to curb this behavior. Uncooperative parents will have their child's services terminated. Children older than 3 years of age, may occasionally be involved in a biting incident. For children in this age group who bite, the staff will use the discipline procedures outlined in the discipline section of this handbook, as well as observe the child to determine what provokes or elicits this

Leap Ahead Learning Parent Handbook

inappropriate behavior. Parents are expected to cooperate with staff to help their child control this behavior. Uncooperative parents will have their child's service terminated. Furthermore, children, in the older age groups (4-year old class and older), who bite 3 times in a school year will have their services terminated since, the safety of all the children in the program is of the utmost concern of Leap Ahead Learning. Parents will be notified by phone and an incident/accident report that a biting incident occurred during the course of the day will be sent home. The staff may not discuss with either parent the identity of the other child involved in the incident. This information is considered to be confidential and cannot be disclosed. The staff of Leap Ahead Learning cannot discuss the medical history of any child involved in a biting incident with the other party. It is recommended that any child involved in a biting incident be seen by their family physician if the parents are concerned about communicable diseases possibly resulting from the biting incident.

FOOD SERVICE, PREPARATION & CACFP

Leap Ahead Learning is a participant of the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) administered by the Texas Department of Human Services. Nutritional requirements, serving quantities and approved food safety procedures are regulated by the CACFP. All parents are asked to fill in a family eligibility form for this program with the enrollment packet and update yearly. We do not charge an extra fee for meals or snacks. In accordance with Federal Law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272.

Leap Ahead Learning supplies cereal, baby foods, and iron fortified formula for infants. Parents are asked to complete an "Infant Feeding Sheet" at the beginning of each month. This instructs us on how to feed your baby according to your directions.

All meals are prepared in our center kitchen that is inspected by our Local Health Department. The Health Department report is posted on the Parent's Bulletin Board in the school entry for review. We serve milk, fruits and vegetables with our meals, unless it is stated by a parent that their child cannot have milk, fruits or vegetables. In such case, we will need a Food Allergy Emergency Plan filled out by a physician with recommendations.

Leap Ahead Learning provides breakfast for all children present at 8:30am. Lunch is served at 11:30am. Afternoon snack is served after the rest period around 2:30pm, and again at 4:00pm for the school-age kids as they arrive after school. Menus are posted on the Parent's Bulletin Board in the foyer at the beginning of each month and are available for pick up from the Menu folder. Menu planning is based on CAFPP nutrition guidelines followed by the Nutrition Program for Early Childhood programs. Please advise the center of any food allergies. **All food allergies must be documented by a physician on a Food Allergy Emergency Plan.** These plans are available from the office and will be posted in the office, the child's classroom and the

Leap Ahead Learning Parent Handbook

kitchen. You always have the option of providing breakfast, lunch and/or snack for your child as needed. Please do not send your child to school with sugary foods or foods containing peanut products. We are on a Federal Food Program and must insure all children are eating healthy meals.

HOME LUNCH PRACTICES

If you will be providing a healthy lunch from home, make sure no items need refrigeration. Leap Ahead Learning will not provide refrigerated space for home lunches. Nutrition information, samples of healthy lunches for your child to bring as well as information on foods that might cause allergies is provided and placed in our Parent Information Area in the entry area.

FOOD ALLERGIES

Leap Ahead staff are educated on food allergies and they take precautions to ensure children are protected. Should your child have food allergies please inform teachers and office staff. Food Allergy Emergency Plan from your child doctor is required to be posted in your child's classroom, the office and the kitchen. Please pick up a form from the office or request one from your child's doctor as soon as the Food Allergy is diagnosed.

PROGRAM NUTRITION PRACTICES

- Liquids and food hotter than 110 degrees F are kept out of reach
- All staff are educated on food allergies and they take precautions to ensure children are protected
- On days that providers serve meals, prepared food that is brought into the program to be shared among children is commercially prepared OR prepared in a kitchen that is inspected by local health officials
- Healthy snacks or meals (as listed by the Texas Department of Agriculture) are available for school aged children as children arrive.
- On days that providers serve meals, milk, fresh fruit and vegetables are available for children who bring lunches from home
- Staff is instructed not to reward for good behavior or clean plates with food of any kind

BREASTFEEDING

Leap Ahead Learning will provide a comfortable place with a seat for mothers to breastfeed their child if they choose to do so in our Infant classrooms. Water will be available to mothers at their request. You may also provide breast milk and bottles for your child. Please label all breast milk with the child's name and date pumped. The milk will be stored in the classroom and/or office refrigerator or freezer until needed. Bottles will be warmed gently in a bottle warmer. Caregivers will document all servings of breast milk on the child's daily report. Please update daily feeding schedules as needed.

Breastfeeding resources are available to all families in our Parent Information Area in the school entry. A compilation of resources will be provided to families upon request.

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Immunization records must be current for all children enrolled in the Infant-Toddler and Preschool programs. A copy must be in the child's file. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that your child's immunizations are current. Failure to keep children current on immunizations may lead to disenrollment.

From time to time Leap Ahead Learning may have children enrolled who have not received immunizations due to personal belief. A notarized affidavit must be on file for these children.

TUBERCULIN TESTING REQUIREMENTS

Based on local health department guidelines, proof of TB testing is not required in order to be enrolled in our program.

HEARING AND VISION SCREENING

Hearing and Vision Screening for possible vision and hearing problems is required by the Special Senses and Communication Disorders Act, Texas Health & Safety Code, Chapter 36, for children who are 4-years old. Leap Ahead Learning will schedule annual screenings at our school. Parents may also bring in screening proof from their local pediatrician.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

Upon selecting Leap Ahead Learning to meet your child's educational needs, **all enrollment paperwork is required before the child can start our program.** Incomplete paperwork will not be accepted. Paperwork required for enrollment includes:

- Enrollment Form
- Authorization for Emergency Medical Attention
- Physician's Statement
- Tuition Agreement
- Food Program Enrollment Form
- CACFP Meal Benefit Income Eligibility Form
- CACFP Infant Declaration (if applicable)
- Infant Feeding Preference (if applicable)

Parents will be notified within 30 days of any policy change in writing. Signatures from parents may be required.

TRANSPORTATION

Children will be transported to and from public and/or private school as well as on field trips. Leap Ahead Learning does not transport children under the age of 4, except in emergency situations.

State law requires:

- Vehicles transporting children shall be in safe operating condition and drivers shall have a current Texas Drivers License.
- Children shall be loaded and unloaded at the curbside of the vehicle, or in a protected parking area.
- A child shall not be taken on field trips unless a parent or guardian has signed permission forms.

WATER ACTIVITIES AND SWIMMING POOL

A certified lifeguard will be on duty during swimming pool activities. We also offer group swimming lessons for children 4 and up. Parents will be notified in advance of swimming and other water play activities.

FIELD TRIPS

Our PreK4 class will attend field trips monthly. Summer camp students will have field trips weekly. Transportation for field trips may be by school bus, van or walking. Parents will be notified in writing of any field trips.

ANIMALS

Leap Ahead Learning will have classroom pets that meet the requirements by Texas Child Care Licensing.

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

If parents have questions or concerns about our program, we encourage you to have open communication with your child's teacher and the Center Director. Through open communication, we can ensure that all parties are well informed and working as partners in the child's education. From time to time, the center director may complete a Parent Concern Form. Parents will receive a copy of this form with the appropriate outcome.

CONTACT INFORMATION

It is very important that the parent/guardian keep the information current at all times. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to inform the center staff of any change of address, telephone number, work phone number or emergency contact information. Parents can update contact information any time without staff assistance by emailing us at info@leapaheadlearning.org or by writing a note.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

We welcome parents at any time, in any area of our school. Leap Ahead Learning is a privately owned and operated facility. We have the right to refuse service at anytime to anyone.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

We encourage parent involvement, especially on field trips and helping with class parties. If you would like to volunteer in the classroom or on field trips, you will need to complete a Criminal Background Check and pay a nominal fee. If you have a concern, please schedule a time to meet with the classroom teacher and/or the director of the facility.

EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS

During the school year, Leap Ahead Learning will offer a variety of events and celebrations

- Polar Express Party
- St. Jude Trike A Thon
- Leap Day Celebration
- 100th Day of School
- Valentine's Day Goody Bag Fundraiser
- Valentine's Party
- Dr. Seuss Breakfast
- Week of the Young Child
- Easter Egg Hunt & Party
- Teacher Appreciation Week
- Muffins for Moms
- PreK Graduation
- Donuts for Dads
- Shark Week Celebration
- Grandparents Ice Cream Social
- Halloween Trick or Treating & Party
- Thanksgiving Family Luncheon
- Christmas Parade
- Christmas Program
- Christmas Party

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR CHILD CARE CENTERS

Leap Ahead Learning is licensed and regulated by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and we follow the Texas Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers. Parents may review of a copy of these standards in our front office or view the standards online at www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Child_Care_Standards_and_Regulations/default.asp

COMPLIANCE HISTORY

Leap Ahead Learning encourages parents to view our compliance history with Child Care Licensing. Our most recent inspection is posted on our parent communication board or you may view this at

www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Search_Texas_Child_Care/ppFacilitySearchDayCare.asp

Parents may also contact our local child care licensing office at 210-337-3399.

GANG-FREE ZONE

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a child care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to a harsher penalty. Leap Ahead Learning is a GANG-FREE ZONE.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

Below is the Emergency Preparedness Plan designed for Leap Ahead Learning. Parents are encouraged to read this information carefully. In the event a parent is present in the building during an emergency, Leap Ahead Learning will ask parents to participate accordingly.

During any emergency the best course of action is to BREATHE AND STAY CALM, know how many children you have, and have your sign-in and -out log in your hands.

If you have children of your own in the facility, but in another classroom, trust that their teachers will take care of them just as you are taking care of the children in your care.

In all situations in this Emergency Preparedness Plan, "Director" refers to Rita Medellin. In the Director's absence, the Assistant Director on duty (Tracie Seiler or Brooke Abrameit) assumes the role of Director and then designates another staff member to assume the responsibilities of the Assistant Director. In all situations in this Emergency Preparedness Plan, the Director or designated person in charge will notify Child Care Licensing and/or the Health Department and/or call 911 as each situation dictates. In all situations in this Emergency Preparedness Plan, the Director or designated person in charge may delegate any portion of his/her duties to other staff members, volunteers or emergency personnel as he/she deems necessary.

TORNADO/BAD WEATHER

- Stay calm. Watch the kids, not the situation.
- Get your sign-in/out sheet and grab your flashlight.
- Take all of your children to the gym or hallway. Have the children sit as close together as possible along the walls and have the children duck and cover. This will be familiar to the children since you practice this each time you have a severe weather drill. The infant, toddler and 4-year-old classes will take shelter along the walls in the main hallway. The 2, 3 and School Age classes will take shelter along the walls in the gym.
- Infant classroom: Place your babies in two cribs and cover the top with a mattress from another crib. Place mattress sideways across top of the crib and huddle next to it. Role the cribs to the hallway.
- Stay there until advised that the bad weather has passed.
- It can be helpful to quietly sing songs with the children to help them keep calm.
- The Director in charge will monitor local weather stations for updated information.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE OUTBREAK

- All staff members will vigilantly follow policies and procedures regarding diaper changes, toileting, hand-washing, food preparation and general common-sense measures such as keeping surfaces clean, changing bedding, teaching children how to cover coughs and sneezes, etc., to prevent the spread of germs that cause illness in the first place.
- In the event of an outbreak, the Director, or person in charge, will notify the Health Department and Child Care Licensing to inform them of the situation and ask for instructions and guidelines to follow for specific illness or outbreak.
- The Director, or person in charge, will inform all staff members of instructions and guidelines and require them to follow the same.
- The Director, or person in charge, will also notify all parents about the situation in writing within 48-hours as required by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and Child Care Licensing.
- All staff are to follow the school's confidentiality policies when speaking of the above outbreak. Any violation of the confidentiality policy is grounds for immediate termination.

LOCK DOWN

(INCLUDES WEAPON, HOSTAGE INCIDENT, INTRUDER, TRESPASSING, DISTURBANCE)

- The Director, or person in charge, will announce, "Lock Down" or other discrete code and will call 911. The director, or designated person, will supervise the front desk at all times during the incident, if possible.
- Upon hearing this, or sooner if you are aware that an intruder has entered the building or immediate vicinity, say calmly to the children a discrete phrase, such as "Rabbits in the Hole"; the children will know what to do because you practice this.
- Infant classroom: Place babies in two or three cribs with a few quiet toys. Place another empty crib or two in front of your classroom door. This might cause an intruder to change his/her mind about entering your classroom.
- Get your sign-in/out sheet.
- Close all your classroom doors.
- Turn off the lights.
- If you have reason to believe that no one else in the center is aware of the danger, and you can safely do so, calmly announce the secret code for "Lock Down".
- Whisper and remind the children that "we are to be very quiet."
- Do a name/face check silently.

Leap Ahead Learning Parent Handbook

- Keep the children and yourself safe, in place, and away from all interior and exterior windows.
- Watch the children, not the situation!
- If the intruder enters your classroom, do not argue with him.
- The Director, or person in charge, will ensure that all building entrances and exits are locked and that no unauthorized individuals leave or enter the building.
- Await further instructions from the Director, or person in charge, or emergency personnel.

ACCIDENT

- Breathe and stay calm.
- Make sure all children are supervised. If you are alone, tell them to sit down near you.
- Comfort the child by speaking in a low, quiet voice.
- Apply first aid as needed.
- Call the office if you need further assistance and/or the Director, or person in charge to call 911.
- If the child is bleeding profusely, apply pressure to stop the bleeding. (In an extreme case, take off the child's shirt and use that.)
- If injury is to the head or face, report it to the office immediately - even if it is minor.
- Complete an Accident/Incident Report, have the Director sign it immediately, and have the parent sign it when the child is picked up.
- Turn the Accident/Incident Report in to the Director, or person in charge, before you leave on the same day.
- Keep the Accident/Incident Report confidential.
- In the event of serious illness or injury involving an adult, contact the office and the Director, or the designated person in charge will call 911 and/or the person's emergency contact.

ILLNESS

- Ask the child, "What doesn't feel good?"
- Contact the front office and have the child's temperature taken. If the fever is 100 degrees or over, the Director or person in charge will contact the parent.
- If no fever, make the child comfortable and keep an eye on him.
- If the child complains of pain ask him to point with one finger where it hurts the most and then investigate that spot for injury or discoloration and call the office.
- Light vomiting or mild diarrhea: If no pain, call the office after the second episode.

EXPLOSION, CHEMICAL SPILL OR GAS LEAK

That occurs INSIDE the facility

- See procedures for FIRE and OFF-SITE EVACUATION AND RELOCATION

That occurs OUTSIDE the facility

- Close doors and lock if possible.
- Turn off air conditioner/heater.
- Turn off lights, computers, TV, radio, CD player, aquarium pump or anything else that may cause a spark.
- Keep children seated on the floor and calm. Sing quiet songs or read stories.
- Be prepared to evacuate if told to do so by the Director, person in charge, or emergency personnel.
- If you detect a strong odor, show the children how to lift up and breathe through their shirts.
- If told to evacuate, consider crawling to avoid strong fumes that are floating higher in the air. Ask for clarification if time.

BOMB THREAT OR OTHER THREAT

- Write down everything the person says.
- Ask where the bomb is.
- Ask when the bomb (or other threat) will "go off" or "happen".
- Write that down, too.
- Notify Director, or person in charge, to call 911 immediately.

OFF-SITE EVACUATION AND RELOCATION

- Your primary responsibility is to keep the children safe.
- Keep your sign-in/out sheet and in your hands or stuff them into your clothing.
- If time allows, gather children's diaper bags, bottles, baby formula/food, and coats.
- Children will be evacuated in the center's vans from oldest to youngest so that older children can assist with keeping children seated at the evacuation site. Depending on the situation, the city may also send transportation vehicles. The school will use car seats and infant carriers left by the parents when evacuating applicable children.
- The Director is responsible for keeping a charged cell phone with him/her and overseeing and directing the evacuation process. She/he is the last person to leave the building.
- The Assistant Director is responsible for taking the emergency binder (of permission slips and parent contact information), the first aid kit, emergency medication (i.e. insulin, EPI pens, asthma medications), and a charged cell phone and accompany the first vehicle to the evacuation site so that he/she can be in charge of the evacuation site.
- The Director and Assistant Directors are aware of each other: cell phone number.
- Leap Ahead Learning will evacuate to either the KC Hall or Seguin Events Center unless directed elsewhere by emergency personnel.
- After all children and staff have been relocated to the evacuation site and are safe and have had all needs taken care of, the Director and Assistant Director will designate staff to contact parents and notify them of the situation.
- Staff members will continue to supervise and take care of the children including entertaining them with songs, stories, games, etc. at the evacuation site. Watch the kids, not the situation.
- The Assistant Director will continue to supervise and take care of the needs of the staff.
- The Director will be the contact person for emergency personnel and parents.
- The center's usual verification process for allowing adults to pick up children from the center will be used at the evacuation site. (i.e. only persons listed on the child's enrollment form as authorized to pick up will be allowed to do so after showing photo ID.)

FIRE

- When aware of fire or when the alarm sounds, quietly say, "Fire drill boys and girls; line up at the door, please." This should be familiar to them since you say it every month when you practice monthly fire drills. *Your primary responsibility is to get the children safely out of the building. Do not attempt to put out the fire unless it is between you and a child or preventing exit.*
- Get your sign-in/out sheet and keep it with you.
- Make a quick head count.
- Make sure you have everyone.
- Infants: Place all of the children in two cribs.
- Proceed to the proper fire exit and exterior meeting place as designated on the floor plan in the classroom. This is the same spot you take the children each month during your fire drill.
- Do a name/face check once you are outside and check it against your sign-in/out sheet. If anyone is missing, tell the Director, or person in charge, or a fire fighter immediately, but never leave the children unsupervised.
- The children must be safe (out of the way of emergency vehicles and the fire) and supervised at all times. Watch out for anthills, broken glass and other hazards.
- Watch the kids, not the situation.
- The fire department, Director, or person in charge will tell you when you and the children can re-enter the building or begin the off-site evacuation procedures.

COOK AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- When aware of fire or when alarm sounds, the Director sounds the alarm, if necessary, thus alerting everyone and notifying the fire department.
- She/he then proceeds to each classroom to ensure that everyone is out of the building.
- When aware of fire, or when alarm sounds, the Assistant Director takes possession of the emergency binder and says aloud, "I have the binder!" and then proceeds to assist the infant classrooms to safely exit the building.
- When aware of fire, or when alarm sounds, if the cook is in the building (and not when already counted in child/staff ratio), she will assist the young toddler classroom.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING LAW REQUIREMENTS

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

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

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

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

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

WELL CHECKS

Leap Ahead Learning staff will do a visual check of the children upon arrival each morning. If a staff member notices anything unusual they are required to point this out to the parent at that time. If your child has an accident overnight, please notify staff members when dropping off so that we can assist in watching the child for side effects.

TUITION AND FEES

Tuition is invoiced and due each Monday by 6:30p.m. We accept cash, checks or credit cards.

A \$10 per day late fee will be added for all non-payments. Delinquent accounts may lead to disenrollment.

Families with more than 1 child enrolled will be given a \$10.00 discount off each additional child's tuition.

Leap Ahead Learning Parent Handbook

Parents who choose to pay separately for the same child will need to fill out a Payment Schedule letting us know which parent is responsible for which week's tuition. This form must be filled out and signed by **both** parents.

All families who get tuition assistance through Texas Workforce Commission's CCS Program are responsible for paying all Family Copays as directed by CCS.

EXTRA FEES

A non-refundable **\$30.00** per family annual registration fee is due at the time of enrollment and every June.

Our program is open Monday through Friday from 5:30am to 6:30pm. Leap Ahead Learning is only licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services to care for children during these specified times. If you are late picking up your child, a **\$1.00 PER MINUTE PER CHILD** late penalty will be charged to your account. Late penalties must be paid to Leap Ahead Learning before the child can return to care.

All returned checks and declined credit/debit cards will be charged a **\$35.00** Non-Sufficient Funds fee.

Children may only be in care for a maximum of 50 hours per week. There will be an additional **\$3.00** charge per hour for time in excess of this 50-hour limit.

Parents who fail to notify the center by 2:30p.m. that their school age child does not need to be picked up from school will be charged a **\$5.00** penalty for each occurrence. We are not allowed to leave a school until we have accounted for all the children. When parents do not call to notify us, we must take the children out of the van and go to the office to try and find out where the missing child is. This puts us late to all the other schools.

All PreK students will be charged admission fees for field trips. These fees may include an additional charge to cover the expense of taking extra staff.

ABSENT/VACATION CREDIT

The first time each calendar year your child is absent for five consecutive days (M-F), you will receive an absent/vacation credit equal to one week's tuition. Any additional weeks missed will receive an absent/vacation credit equal to one half your weekly tuition. Absent/Vacation credit must be used for five consecutive days (M-F).

If your child will be absent from school, we ask that you notify the front office by 8:30am each day.

CONFIDENTIALITY

While your child is enrolled in our program, parents may come across confidential information about our program, our staff and sometimes other children. All information received from Leap Ahead Learning must remain confidential at all times. Breaching confidentiality may lead to disenrollment.

PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Please understand, young children are present in our building. Some adult language is not appropriate for young children. Leap Ahead Learning prohibits swearing or cursing on our property.

Threatening staff, children, or other parents will not be tolerated per Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Leap Ahead Learning has the right to terminate care in the event of disruptive behavior from a parent or guardian.

Leap Ahead Learning must follow particular rules on discipline and guidance as outlined in the Texas Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers. All adults, including parents, must follow these rules while on our property.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Children must be signed in and out by the custodial parent or adult person approved by the parent(s). Please understand that due to liability issues, staff of Leap Ahead Learning are not permitted to take children home from our center.

In order not to confuse school toys with a child's personal property, we ask that children not bring playthings from home. Leap Ahead Learning staff cannot be responsible for lost or broken personal toys. The exception to this is for Show & Tell purposes. You will be notified by your child's teacher if and when the class will have Show & Tell.

Leap Ahead Learning Parent Handbook

There are several ways you can help us maintain the best possible teaching atmosphere for your child:

- Communicate any concerns regarding our program or your child immediately to staff.
- Pick up and read the notices and information left for you in your child's folder, cubby, posted outside your child's classroom, at the reception desk, posted on the front door or in e-mail.
- Pick up your child's papers/projects daily. Their work is very important to them and provides another means of communication between parent/child/teacher and helps the parent share in the child's day.
- Please be aware of the scheduled meal times of breakfast and lunch, 8:30 am and 11:30am, and make sure your child arrives in time to be included in those meals. It is very difficult to try and feed a child later than the scheduled meal time, and causes a disruption in the classroom schedule, which affects all of the children in the classroom.
- Please do not allow your child to bring gum or candy to the classroom. We STRONGLY encourage you to allow your child to eat what we are serving that day, unless, of course, food allergies are a concern. In that case, we ask that you have your child's physician fill out the Food Allergy Emergency Plan and return it to school. Any food brought from home will only be served at the same time that the other children are eating and MUST be taken home at the end of the day.
- Periodically check on your child's supply of extra clothing. Please take home soiled clothing promptly.

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services does not allow smoking on the premises, either indoors or outdoors. This included the parking lot.

WITHDRAWAL FROM PROGRAM

A two-week written notice must be given for withdrawing a child from Leap Ahead Learning. If a family fails to give proper notice, Leap Ahead Learning has a right to charge the remaining weeks to the family's account. Refunds will not be made for any tuition paid if a family fails to give proper notice for withdrawing a child. Leap Ahead Learning has a right to refuse service to any family for any reason.

CUSTODY SITUATIONS

Leap Ahead Learning prefers NOT to get involved with custody disputes. Leap Ahead Learning will follow a court order exactly as written. If your family has a court order on file, please provide us with the most recent copy. **PLEASE NOTE: PER STATE LAW, IN THE ABSENCE OF A COURT ORDER, BOTH PARENTS HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS.** With this being said, it is imperative that all enrollment forms are completed with both parents information. In the event that a custody dispute takes place on our property, the local police will be called and asked to handle the dispute. Our staff will not be placed in the middle of such disputes. If a custody issue creates a risk for our facility or staff, Leap Ahead Learning has the right to terminate care.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICIES

Leap Ahead Learning will open most days during inclement weather. Please check local radio stations and web sites for announcement of closing. During inclement weather, we will generally follow Seguin ISD as to closing early or opening late. Full tuition is due during inclement weather times.

In case of serious emergencies such as earthquakes, fire, storms, or loss of power/water, parents will be notified, if possible, and children will be cared for until parents or emergency contacts arrive.

CURRICULUM

Leap Ahead Learning uses Frog Street Early Learners for our infants, toddlers and our 2-year-old class. We use a theme-based curriculum in our 3-year-old class. Our PreK4 class uses a Kindergarten level curriculum. These curriculums believe that children learn best through actively engaging with people and things in their environment. Children are involved in hands-on experiences, real-life adventures, and assisted discovery as they explore concepts through play. Leap Ahead Learning is a place where essential readiness skills are nurtured through play, investigation, and of course, fun! These programs provide developmentally and age-appropriate activities and materials for exciting and wonder filled environments.

We offer field trips to enhance the curriculum. Field trips are a privilege and not a requirement of the curriculum. If for some reason, a student's parent elects not to allow his/her child to participate or arrives after the field trip has departed, the parent must make other arrangements for care. Staff will not be left at school to care for these students. Proper conduct is expected of all students at all time on field trips. The teacher has the right, along with the approval of the Director, to designate whether or not a student may attend a field trip. If discipline is a problem, the student may not be allowed to attend or a parent may be requested to accompany the student on the trip. Chaperones will be assigned proportionately to the size

Leap Ahead Learning Parent Handbook

of the group. Parents and family members are welcome to attend field trips as long as they have a current Criminal Background Check on file with the office.

Report Cards are sent home quarterly during the school year for all students 12 months old and older. Parents of students in our Toddler 1 – PreK4 classes are offered a conference after each report card is sent home. Parents of students in our Infant Classrooms will be offered a Parent/Teacher conference twice a year. These are formal conferences with your child’s teacher to discuss academic and developmental progress in the classroom. Parents will be asked to sign up for a date and time for their conference. Parents will be required to sign acknowledging that they are unable to attend or do not wish to attend a Parent/Teacher conference.

The goals of our curriculum are to help children develop a positive sense of self, to be active and creative explorers, and in the process be enthusiastic learners. Our teachers create and implement lesson plans and follow a daily schedule to meet the developmental needs of the children. The prepared environment is organized with a variety of sensory math and language materials. Our program addresses goals in all areas of development.

- Social / Emotional: To help children feel comfortable at the center, to nurture their sense of trust, autonomy, and belonging. To give them daily opportunities to experience pride and self-confidence, to develop independence and self-control and a positive outlook on life.
- Cognitive: To foster the child’s ability to ask questions, describe their ideas, observations and feelings. To help children acquire problem solving skills and develop a love for learning by providing opportunities through which they can explore and investigate, construct and create, pretend and recreate, discover and document.
- Physical: To help children develop their large and small muscle skills and to fill confident in using them. Children will be able to go outside daily both in the morning and afternoon, weather permitting.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Leap Ahead Learning classrooms follow a daily schedule designed specifically to meet the children’s developmental, social and emotional, and personal needs. All schedules are contingent on the needs of the children and may vary from day to day. Schedules are posted in each classroom and are available from the teacher should you wish one.

SCREEN TIME POLICY

Activities using TV/video, computer, or video games are prohibited for children under the age of 2 years in our school. TV/video, computer or video games may be used to supplement, but may not be used to replace the activities for children ages 2 years and older. If we use screen time as an activity for children, activities are related to the planned activities; are age appropriate; and do not exceed 2 hours per day. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends, for children 2 years and older, limiting children's total media time to not more than 1 to 2 hours of quality programming per 24-hour period.

For children under the age of 2, no media time is used. We follow Licensing standards for screen time.

ATTENDANCE

We strongly encourage children to attend on a daily basis. By the children attending daily they will get the full benefits and development needed when participating in the daily curriculum and activities that are planned. If your child is not at school during meal times, please make sure your child has eaten prior to being dropped off at school.

CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENTS

Classroom assignments are based on each individual child's chronological age, developmental age, emotional age, and physical age. Leap Ahead Learning typically will transition infants and toddlers every 6 months. We transition 2-year old's and older children to new classrooms in June, however from time to time we may request a transition sooner based on the individual child's needs.

CHILD TO STAFF RATIOS

Leap Ahead Learning exceeds state ratios in most classrooms. From time to time, we may follow state ratios, but will never be non-compliant unless under emergency situations.

NAP TIME

Supervised rest periods are provided for all children under five years of age who remain at Leap Ahead Learning for six or more hours a day, and for all other children who show a need for a rest time. Your child will be provided a mat to rest on for naptime. Please provide a clean blanket for naptime and take them home Fridays for washing.

CLOTHING

All children must have a complete change of clothing, **clearly marked with the child's name**, left at Leap Ahead Learning. Children need to be dressed for the weather. Caps, mittens, and warm clothing must be worn during the cooler seasons for the daily outdoor playtime. Accidents can happen, even for the older preschoolers, or if they get wet on the playground. Tennis shoes are best. Boots, sandals and flip flops are allowed as long as they do not create a safety hazard.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Parents must supply all bottles, diapers and wipes for their child. Leap Ahead Learning provides toddler training cups. Please label everything with your child's first and last name.

We use washable crayons, markers and paint during art time, but the children's clothing may get stained from just being kids! Please dress your children in play clothes since PLAY is what we do!!

Please leave all valuable items at home since Leap Ahead Learning cannot be responsible for broken or lost items.

OUTDOOR PLAY

Outdoor play is a regular part of the daily routine. Children should be prepared to play outside some part of every day. Please do not request that your child stay indoors. Per the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, children too sick to go outside should not be at school.

BIRTHDAYS

Most children enjoy celebrating special events with their preschool friends (birthdays, new babies, and holidays). Parents may send a "store bought" treat to share with the class. All food items brought into the center must be commercially prepared / store bought, still in the original factory sealed container. Homemade snacks are not permitted. Please make arrangements with the teacher several days in advance and be aware of class allergies.

SIGN IN & SCHOOL SAFETY POLICIES

Parents need to personally escort their child(ren) inside the building to sign in and out when their children enter and leave the facility. Each classroom has a window for viewing activity from the hallway. Parents are welcome to visit the center any time during the day to observe their child without prior approval. However, if you would like to stay and spend time with your child during activities, please see the office so we can do a proper criminal history check, as required by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

Our facility is equipped with fire extinguishers and fire drills are practiced monthly.

You will be notified of any incidents other than minor scrapes or bumps with a phone call. We will also give you a written report at pick up time. First aid will be applied to minor incidents. In the event medical attention is required, we will notify you immediately. Parents are responsible for all medical fees.

CAMERAS

Leap Ahead Learning has closed circuit cameras in all classrooms. A monitor is located in the office. The privacy of the children is very important to us. For this reason, the cameras are not available over the internet.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Leap Ahead Learning believes in the benefit of using real life pictures in our educational program. Photos taken of the children will be done with a school owned camera and will only be used in our program. If parents choose to take pictures of events held at our program, they may only photograph their child, unless written permission is given by the other parents. Please note: during certain parent events, such as graduation, Christmas programs, and other group events, photographs may be taken. If you wish for your child to not be photographed, you may want to remove them from these events.

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

Employees of Leap Ahead Learning are prohibited from outside employment with parents of the organization. This includes, but is not limited to, babysitting and/or nanny- type jobs.

CYBER IDENTITY/SOCIAL NETWORKING WEB SITES

Cyber identity and social networking is very exciting these days. However, please understand that employees of Leap Ahead Learning are prohibited from participating in social networking with parents and children. This includes, but is not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Snap Chat and Instagram.

CELL PHONES

Proper parent communication is imperative when working with young children. It is difficult to communicate when cell phones are in use. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services passed regulations prohibiting the personal use of cell phones in classrooms. Please end all calls prior to entering the building.

We, at Leap Ahead Learning, know that you trust us with your most valuable treasure, your child, and we strive to serve our families the absolute best in preschool education and childcare. We believe that excellent early childhood development is the foundation for a bright future for our children at Leap Ahead Learning.