



Parent's Handbook of Policies and Procedures

**The Patch Learning Center
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Centerville TX 75833**

**Director:
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Matthew 19:14

"But Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.'"

PHILOSOPHY

Our philosophy is that children should be allowed and encouraged to grow/learn at their own pace and to learn in ways that help them to become confident in themselves as learners. We provide exciting, unique learning opportunities that will meet the intellectual, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual needs of each child as an individual. Every child will be given the opportunity to learn through differentiated instruction.

OUR MISSION

The Patch Learning Center. exists to meet the Christian, cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development of young, impressionable children. We provide a warm and secure environment. We provide care and curriculum for children 8 weeks through 5 years. We recognize the value of parental engagement in the educational process and seek to foster a partnership with each family.

OUR CURRICULUM

The Patch Learning Center implements daily activities based on the classroom needs. In addition to cognitive learning, we focus on choices, self-esteem, decision making, social, and interaction skills giving them the skills they need.

POLICIES/PROCEDURES

We comply with all rules and regulations contained in the Minimum Standards and Guidelines Handbook for Child-Care Centers:

Chapters 744 -

(http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/documents/Child_Care/Child_Care_Standards_and_Regulations/2012-03_744_School-age.pdf)

Chapter 746 -(http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/documents/Child_Care/Child_Care_Standards_and_Regulations/2012-03_746_Centers.pdf) .

If you do not have access to the web, we have a copy of this handbook on hand for your review.

We will post a copy of the most recent Licensing inspection reports for your review at any time at The Parent's Board.

DFPS website is www.Dfps.state.tx.us

Self-Reporting licensing phone number is 1-512-834-3195

The phone number to the Child Abuse Hotline is 1-800-252-5400.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Our program is designed to help children feel comfortable in school by trusting their environment, making friends, learning to share, and being able to express themselves openly, honestly, and in a positive manner, i.e. "using our words rather than acting out".

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We strive to help children experience optimism, pride, and confidence by encouraging independence and self-control. We reinforce unconditional love and guide each child in paths of success.

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

We want to help children become enthusiastic learners by encouraging them to think independently and assisting them to acquire the skills necessary to be successful young men and women of our future.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

We provide a curriculum which encourages daily exercise, large motor activities, outside exposure, and provide nutritional meals / snacks to all children. We go outside for a minimum of 60 minutes a day. Outdoor play benefits the children in many areas, just some examples are:

Boosted immune function, increased ability to prevent disease, improved mood, reduced risk of childhood obesity, gaining independence and building self esteem.

If we are unable to go outside we will do activities indoors to still promote movement such as: Simon says, exercise videos, dance parties, etc. to be sure the kids are able to be active for the same amount of time as we would if we were to be outside.

DAILY INTEREST AREAS

Children work cooperatively in small groups to reach developmental milestones and school readiness through exploring, experimenting, and repetition. These centers are:

Creative Arts:

Teaches your child texture, color, design, and fine and gross motor control.

Reading, Library and Language:

Enhances communication, listening, and self-control. Literacy and early reading skills start here.

Math and Manipulative:

Helps your child learn about numbers, problem solving, order, sequencing, and coordination.

Block Building:

Teaches your child about shapes, dimensions, sizes, construction, balance and cooperation.

Music and Movement:

Helps your child experience creativity, patterns, and melody as well as building large motor skills. Children will learn the basics and get to express their unique preference in music. If we are unable to go outside we will do fun exercise videos or other movement games to help stay active.

Science and Discovery:

Is all about weights, plants, gardening, pets, magnets, measurements, and the world around us. Children will be learning the basics of plants and their life cycle. Children will be involved in cooking activities where they make measurements. The activities planned are fun ways to teach very simple aspects of plants, animals, and the world in which we live.

Dramatic Play / Life Skills:

Is all about the world of pretend, self-identification, family and community. Specific life skills are presented and practiced. Examples of life skills are nutrition, cooking, healthy living, safety and family unity.

We will incorporate sensory items, and other learning activities to help accommodate any children that may have special needs. If necessary we will work with local therapists and families to accommodate these children however needed.

REGISTRATION & ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

The Patch Learning Center provides care to children without regard to race, religion, color, creed, gender, cultural heritage, parent/guardian marital status, parent/guardian political beliefs, parent/guardian sexual orientation, disability or special needs, medical condition, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state, or local laws.

The Patch Learning Center does retain the right to deny admission if available slots for a particular child's age group are filled and/or if we feel that admission of your child(ren) would not be a good fit for your child(ren) or the currently enrolled children in our care.

For any child to be enrolled and attend The Patch Learning Center the following documents must be on file in the Director's office:

1. Admission Information Form– Due prior to the first day of attendance
2. Addendum to Texas Dept. of Family and Protective Services Form
3. CACFP Meal Benefit Income Eligibility Form (Child Care)
4. Hearing & Vision screening results for 4-year olds and older.
5. A written statement signed by a licensed physician who has examined your child(ren) within the past year stating that your child(ren) is able to participate in our program – if your child is not currently enrolled in school – Due within two weeks of admission.
6. Parent / Guardian Signed handbook Form – Due prior to the first day of attendance
7. Copy of your child's immunization record or Letter of Conscience from the State of Texas for all children not currently enrolled in school – Due prior to the first day of attendance
8. Copy of Parent / Guardian driver's license
9. Authorization for photos of your child to be posted on our Facebook page and website – if you authorize - Due prior to the first day of attendance.

Classes are filled on a first come / first served basis. Siblings of currently enrolled students have priority in pre-registration. Parents of children on the waiting list will be contacted when an opening arises. Please follow us on Facebook for postings of openings as they arise.

TUITION / SUPPLY / REGISTRATION AND OTHER FEES SCHEDULE

Tuition payments are due on Monday of the week of care for which you are paying for. Tuition is considered delinquent if not received on this date. Late fees will be assessed on your account beginning Tuesday morning at 10:00 a.m. at the rate of \$15.00 per day. Late fees are assessed on ALL delinquent accounts whether or not prior financial arrangements are made. If your account is not paid in full by Friday, your child's enrollment will be denied on Monday. This policy is strictly enforced. If your child is a part-time student, then your tuition is due on the first day your child is scheduled for the week.

Full tuition payment is expected regardless of attendance. Summer tuition will be conditional on enrollment numbers. Requests to change contracted days must be made in writing, in advance and be approved, in writing prior to the change becoming effective. Due to capacity limitations, The Patch Learning Center may not be able to accommodate changes to your contracted days. We offer a \$10.00 discount for the first child and \$5.00 discount for the second child enrolled after the first child per week, per family. We cannot grant discounts for sickness, vacations, or

other temporary absences. We will however offer ONE WEEK at no cost for your family to use as a vacation. This will be granted in writing to the director and the child cannot be at the center during this week. If your child will not be attending the summer session, two weeks' tuition will still be due for the months of June and July in order to hold their place for the fall session. A tuition discount will be available with a written request and approval by management. Current enrolled families have first priority for registration followed by siblings, followed by our waiting list, and finally the community at large. All payments will be electronic. If this is a problem you may speak to the director and each case will be handled at the owner's discretion.

There is a \$30.00 insufficient funds fee on all returned checks, regardless of the reason(s) for why it was returned. In addition to the \$30.00 insufficient check fee, you will incur a late fee at the rate of \$5.00 per day for each day that these funds were not paid due to insufficient funds. All returned checks must be picked up immediately and the amount of the check plus the \$30.00 insufficient fund fee must be paid in cash at that time. Failure to do so will result in termination of services and the NSF will be turned over to the Leon County District Attorney's office for theft of services and collected. After presenting one insufficient check for payment, you will be required to pay in cash, money order, or cashier checks for the remainder of your child's enrollment.

Payment obligation is based on the time slot that you contract for childcare, not on actual hours of attendance. Full-time fees will be charged based on contracted days including missed days due to illness, holidays, parent vacations, child absence due to custody situations, or bad weather days. No refunds, deductions, or proration will be made for days your child is absent.

A \$50.00 pre-registration fee is due at the time your child is registered in our program. This is a yearly fee for as long as your child(ren) is/are enrolled in our program.

The Patch Learning Center

Tuition Fee

8 weeks to 18 months- \$200.00 (weekly)

19 months to 5 years- \$185.00 (weekly)

Daily Rate/Part-Time Rate-\$45 per day

7:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Each child will receive breakfast, lunch and a snack.

A monthly menu will be posted so you are aware of what they will be eating each day.

Late pick up: \$3.00 per minute, per child the first 5 minutes then \$5.00 per minute after that.

HOURS OF OPERATIONS / HOLIDAYS

The Patch Learning Center days and hours of operation are:
Monday – Friday 7:00a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

We will be closed on the following holidays:

New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Friday after Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day. You will be made aware of this date at least a month ahead of time.

We will follow Centerville ISD school closings for bad weather. This is also something you will be made aware of ahead of time, either by phone or app message.

WITHDRAWAL FROM OUR PROGRAM

The Patch Learning Center requires a two-week **written** notice to withdraw your child(ren) from the center. This allows us to fill your child(rens) place with a child from the waiting list. If you fail to give this two-week **written** notice, you will leave owing two weeks on your account which will be turned over to a collection service. This pertains to all enrolled families.

PARENT COMMUNICATION AND VISITS

Parents will be notified of policy changes and upcoming events through Brightwheel message, and/or via email to the email on file for you. The director will contact you under special circumstances. As always, please contact the director and/or owner with any concerns or questions about the policies and/or procedures.

Parent/Caregiver conferences may be held as needed to better communicate your child's needs. It is best NOT to discuss any problems or potential problems concerning your child or other children in the presence of any child, including yours. Conferences are scheduled at an arranged time that is mutually agreeable to the parent, caregiver, and director. Conferences may never be during drop off or pick up times as the caregiver's first responsibility is to her class. This is strictly enforced.

Parents are welcome and encouraged to visit the school anytime during the hours of operation without having to secure prior approval. However, please be aware that the doors will be locked during the hours of 12-2 (naptime) as a safety precaution. If you need to stop by during these hours, please come to the backdoor.

You are not allowed to photograph children other than your own at any time. If we suspect that you have taken photos of other children, your photography device will be subject to search.

Breastfeeding mothers are welcome to come to the daycare and feed their children at any time. We have a designated comfortable area for all who are interested.

STAFF/ CHILD RATIOS

The Patch Learning Center is proud to offer smaller classrooms. We believe that the guideline for the staff/child ratios found in the Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers would create too much of a burden on a caretaker, consequently creating a -non-productive, non-cooperative environment for our staff and children. For this reason, we have deviated from the minimum standards and have set our standards higher with your child's safety and success at the core of this decision.

LOST AND FOUND

All items without names will be put in the Lost & Found. All items will be donated every three months. All blankets and extra clothes of children who have left our program will be included in these items.

EXPULSION FROM OUR PROGRAM

In the event The Patch Learning Center should ever find it necessary to end our personal relationship and business agreement, The Patch Learning Center will make every effort possible to give the parent a two-week written notice with the exception, but not limited to, the following:

1. Destructive, uncontrollable or violent behaviors
2. Habitual tardiness in pick-up of a child
3. Lateness of payment or non-payment of either tuition or supply fees
4. Lack of parental cooperation in any situation
5. Failure to comply with and of The Department of Family and Protective Services requirements and/or their required enrollment and health forms

HEALTH

Requirements for tuberculosis screening and testing vary across the state. Currently, Leon County is NOT requiring tuberculosis screening; however, in the event that this changes, we will require this screening and will adhere to the requirements of Texas Department of Family and Protective Services while getting in compliance.

MEDICAL AND IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Several medical records **MUST** be provided for your child's file by the first day of attendance.

In lieu of a shot record, you may log on <https://webds.dshs.state.tx.us/immco/> and request that the state send you an "Affidavit for Exemption from Immunizations for Reasons of Conscience." This is a very simple process, free and is your right.

OR

Immunization records with month/day/year demonstrating the adherence of following immunizations is required:

1. Oral Polio vaccine (OPV)
2. DTP vaccine
3. Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) vaccine

4. Varicella vaccine (Chicken Pox)
5. Hepatitis A
6. Hepatitis B
7. Hib
8. Pneumococcal conjugate (PCV7 or Prevnar)

AND

A written statement signed by a licensed physician who has examined your child(ren) within the past year stating that your child(ren) is able to participate in our program is required within two weeks of admission.

***We do not require COVID, or Flu shots for our staff. We also do not require any other vaccinations, we leave it up to our staff to follow their personal beliefs on vaccinations.**

HEARING/VISION

A hearing/vision screening for all four-year old's by September 1, or any other first time entrants 4 years through 5 years old must be documented in the child(rens) file within the first 120 days of your child(rens) enrollment.

HEALTH AND ILLNESS GUIDELINES

Children are to be kept at home when they show signs of any of the following:

Fever of 100° or higher

Pink Eye (must be treated before entering the school)

Ringworm

Diarrhea or Vomiting

Chicken Pox

Measles

For the protection of all children, no ill child will be admitted to school.

- Any child with 3 or more runny stools in one day will be sent home from the center.
- Any child with one vomiting episode in a 24-hour period will not be allowed in the daycare.

Children should be free of fever (without the aid of fever-reducing medicines) and/or diarrhea and any other for at least 24 hours prior to returning to school. For the remaining illnesses listed above, you must have a doctor's release prior to returning your child back to school (Pink eye, ringworm, chicken pox and measles). When a child becomes ill at school, they will be separated from the other children, while still supervised by staff, until they are picked up. Parents will be contacted and required to pick-up your child within 30 minutes. Please note that you are required to pick up your ill child as quickly as possible once notified. **The only exception for your child returning to the Center before a 24-hour period is with a physician's release.** You will be notified if your child has been exposed to a contagious disease while attending school. Likewise, please notify the director if your child has been anywhere that may have exposed them to, or has contracted a contagious disease such as pink eye (conjunctivitis), head lice, chicken pox, etc.

REPORTABLE COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

When The Patch Learning Center is notified that a child enrolled in our center or an employee has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the appropriate agencies. Authorities may require further information, testing, or preventive measures. The Patch Learning Center will follow all recommendations made by these entities in order to promote the health and safety of staff members and the children and families we serve. We believe it is extremely important to notify families about exposure so their children can receive preventive treatment if available.

- Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:
 - o Bacterial meningitis
 - o Chicken pox
 - o Diarrhea (for certain conditions)
 - o Hepatitis
 - o Measles (including suspected)
 - o Meningococcal infection (invasive)
 - o Mumps
 - o Pertussis (Whooping Cough)
 - o Rubella (German Measles)
 - o Tuberculosis
 - o Any cluster/outbreak of illness
- Please refer to <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/investigation/conditions/> for a complete listing.

MEDICATION POLICY

In order for The Patch Learning Center staff to administer ANY medication, prescription or over the counter medication, we must have a signed Authorization for Dispensing Medication form from the parent/guardian and a written order from the child's physician.

All prescription and non-prescription medications are kept in a designated area.

All medication must be signed in. All prescriptions must be in the original container labeled with your child's name, date, directions, and the physician's name. Non-prescription medications must be in the original container, labeled with your child's name and the date the medication was brought in.

No medicine, vitamins, or cereal may be mixed in a bottle unless medically indicated by the child's health care provider.

Medicine that has expired will not be given to a child. All medication must be removed from your child's backpack and lunch box.

SUNSCREEN

The Patch Learning Center strongly encourages the use of sunscreen every time we go outside and encourages parents to apply sunscreen to their child prior to coming to school.

Parents are asked to provide one bottle of sunscreen each year labeled with the child's name. The Patch Learning Center staff will individually tend to each child's specific needs on these matters and will follow all product directions and precautions.

If a child is sensitive or allergic to these types of prevention, parents must notify The Patch Learning Center staff in writing.

INSECT REPELLANT

For parents/guardians who wish to protect their child with insect repellent, we encourage them to spray their child with bug spray prior to coming to school. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, insect repellents should not be applied to children under 2 months of age.

If they wish, parents may also provide one bottle of child safe insect repellent labeled with the child's name. The Patch Learning Center staff will individually tend to each child's specific needs on these matters and will follow all product directions and precautions. There will be a form in your packet to sign and return for permission for us to use these on your children.

If a child is sensitive or allergic to these types of prevention, parents must notify The Patch Learning Center staff in writing.

SAFETY

The Patch Learning Center will release your child(ren) **ONLY** to those persons authorized on your enrollment form. No child will be allowed to leave with any unauthorized person, **NO EXCEPTION**. A valid, unexpired ID will be required of any authorized individual not known to the staff member releasing the child. **Please be understanding and gracious while complying with this rule as it is for the safety and well-being of your child(ren).**

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PREPAREDNESS

In the case of acute illness, injury or trauma, the parent will be notified immediately per the emergency contact phone number provided for each child and emergency medical care will be obtained as quickly as possible. In the instance where The Patch Learning Center must be evacuated, we will contact each child's emergency contact to notify them we are at the designated evacuation area (High School Gymnasium) and each child must be picked up promptly

Lockdown

(Stranger in building, gunfire, civil disruption, community emergency)

Move student from outside to classroom or designated area in the infant room

Check roll and make sure all students are accounted for

Stay calm, keep students quiet

Have students play quietly and wait for further instructions (songs/finger plays, etc)

Close doors, windows and close blinds (do not open windows or doors for any reason)

Remain in lockdown until otherwise notified by designated staff person or professional or medical personnel.

PETS AT THE CENTER

No pets are allowed at the center.

DISCIPLINE

The purpose of discipline is to teach a child and assist them in becoming self-managing, socially responsible, and most importantly to maintain their ultimate safety. At the Patch Learning Center, we will never ridicule or bully your child. Our discipline shall include positive guidance and re-direction that is based on an understanding of individual needs and the developmental level of the child. Discipline will be directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior, recognizing

cause and effect and will always be used as a positive learning experience and will always be with love, compassion, and respect for your child. The children are taught to respect authority and the rights of others. We will use time-out in extreme cases when redirection is not effective.

We will never use physical punishment to discipline a child. Alternative measures such as redirection or restricting the child from certain activities in which misbehavior has occurred is our first alternative. Down time may be used to let the child think about his/her actions and the effect on others if not corrected.

If, after discussion and coaching the child is still not able to maintain appropriate behavior, the parent will be called. It is very important that the parents share with the director any unusual events that may be affecting the child and may be causing behavioral changes.

Toy guns, knives, swords or any toy that promotes violence are not permitted.

Children are expected to behave and respect their surroundings, their peers, their teachers and mostly themselves. If for any reason the teacher believes that the child is a threat to any of the above, the parents will be called for a consultation over the phone. If the child continues to behave inappropriately, then the parents will be called to come to the center to handle the situation.

The Patch Learning Center will follow the following tiered system to address inappropriate behavior that is excessive and beyond age expected behavior.

- o **Incident 1:** The child will be disciplined using methods described in this handbook. Parents will receive written documentation to include the action taken by the teacher/director to discontinue the behavior. If another child is affected, their parents will also be notified and given appropriate information.
- o **Incident 2:** The child will be disciplined using methods described in this handbook. Parents will receive written documentation to include the action taken by the teacher/director to discontinue the behavior. **The child will be suspended from attending the center for 2 school days.** If another child is affected, their parents will also be notified and given appropriate information.
- o **Incident 3:** The child will be disciplined using methods described in this handbook. Parents will receive written documentation to include the action taken by the teacher/director to discontinue the behavior. **The child will be unenrolled in the center and no longer allowed to attend.** If another child is affected, their parents will also be notified and given appropriate information.

BITING

Biting is a very serious and dangerous occurrence with little children. Our staff is trained on how to handle this very specific problem. Staff will work with the children and the family to stop the biting. If biting continues a child will be subject to dismissal from The Patch Learning Center all biting will be addressed with both families. Patience is asked of all families involved when biting in the classroom occurs. Please understand we will do everything in our power to ensure your child's safety. This is an age-appropriate behavior that with consistency will usually stop.

FOOD

1. We provide breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack with milk and water. We will make available water to drink throughout the day so be sure to bring a labeled cup to remain at the center. Soft drinks of any kind are not allowed at The Patch Learning Center
2. Our meals are nutritional meals, prepared by our cook. We strive to make your child's daycare experience one that closely mirrors a home, loving, and nurturing environment which is why we prefer and provide this family serving style. These meals are at no additional charge to you.
3. In addition to a nutritional breakfast and snack, they will be served in a family style setting. We will teach manners and have discussions at the lunch table and during all snack and meal settings. We will allow your child time to comfortably eat their snack / meal without being rushed.
4. On your child's birthday you may bring a special treat. Please keep it simple and check with the director in advance for allergies that other children may have.
5. Parents are always welcome to eat with their child(ren).
6. Please do not bring food for your child unless there is enough for the entire class and only with prior approval from the director. Keep in mind that other children may have allergies and **any food brought in must be approved prior to bringing it.**

INFANT FEEDING

Infants' digestion benefits from consistency between home and The Patch Learning Center, so infant feeding requires special instructions. For an infant who is not yet ready for table food, The Patch Learning Center must obtain and follow written feeding instructions that are signed and dated by the infant's parent or health-care professional. **(See the Infant Feeding Plan at the back of this handbook.)**

Parents must provide all infant bottles (with lids), bottle contents, and baby food, including regular snacks and meals for infants who eat table food.

Our program supports breast feeding by accepting, storing, and serving expressed milk for feedings. Any mother who is nursing may utilize the Center's lactation space with a rocking chair to breastfeed her baby during the day.

The following guidelines apply to bottle-feeding:

- o All bottles and training cups must be labeled by the parent/guardian with a permanent marker and the infant's first name and initial of last name. All bottles must have covers. They must be relabeled by the parent/guardian when the name wears off.
- o It is strongly recommended that parents/guardians provide premade bottles. Premade bottles must be labeled as formula or breast milk. *Note: Formula or breast milk will be the only milk product served to children younger than 12 months of age unless medically indicated by the child's health care giver.* If the bottle contains formula, then the label should include the date the bottle was prepared; if the bottle contains breast milk, then the label should include the date the milk was expressed.
- o Expressed breast milk may be brought from home in bottles or breast milk bags. Breast milk will be refrigerated or frozen as soon as it arrives. Refrigerated breast milk must be used within 48 hours. Breast milk first frozen then thawed in the refrigerator must be used within 24 hours of thawing. If bottles are not premade, caregivers will prepare them while

the child is in care. If the caregiver is asked to prepare breast milk bottles, the parent/guardian must provide a sufficient amount of bagged breast milk and the number of bottles the child needs for a day.

- o If the caregiver is asked to prepare bottles with formula, then the parent/guardian must provide unmixed formula in a factory sealed container, the number of bottles the child needs for a day, and any bottled water (sterilized or fortified) required to mix the formula. If bottled water is not provided, the caregiver will use tap water. Manufacturer's instructions will be followed when mixing the formula.
- o For safety reasons, bottles may not contain anything other than breast milk or mixed formula. No medicine, vitamins or cereal may be mixed in a bottle unless medically indicated by the child's health care provider.
- o Both prepared and provided bottles must be cleaned and sanitized by the parent/guardian before being filled. Bottles with a strong 'sour' odor indicate bacteria are present and the bottle(s) will not be given to the child. If there are no other bottles available, parents/guardians will be contacted to either pick up the child or provide a clean bottle(s).
- o Frozen breast milk will be thawed under cold water or in the refrigerator. Before feeding, bottles will be placed under warm, running tap water or in a container of water no warmer than 120 degrees Fahrenheit. The temperature will be tested before giving the bottle to an infant.
- o Infants will be held or fed sitting up. State regulations require that staff members hold infants birth through six months while feeding them. Bottle propping, feeding in cribs, car seats, or swings, or carrying of bottles by children will not be permitted. As older infants develop the ability to hold their own bottles, they will be allowed to do so in order to make the transition to a sippy cup easier.
- o Infants may not walk around with or sleep with a bottle or training cup.
- o Any contents remaining in a bottle after feeding will be discarded. If the feeding has taken over 1 hour to complete or the bottle has been unrefrigerated for 1 hour, the milk shall be discarded.
- o Once used, bottles will not be refilled at The Patch Learning Center, so the parent/guardian must provide the number of bottles needed for the day. Bottles will be rinsed after use throughout the day and provided at pick up.

The following guidelines apply to the feeding of pureed, semi-solid, and solid foods:

Beginning between 4-6 months of age, staff members will work with parents to begin introducing spoon-fed pureed foods as indicated by the child's nutritional and developmental needs, unless medically indicated by the child's health care provider. Beginning at 6 months of age, staff members will work with parents to begin introducing developmentally appropriate solid foods in age appropriate portion sizes, unless medically indicated by the child's health care provider. All semi-solid and solid foods for infants must be age-appropriate and be cut the size of a pea (one-quarter inch) or smaller.

The Patch Learning Center is committed to feeding safety because choking is a leading cause of morbidity and mortality among children, especially those aged 3 years or younger. Specific characteristics, including shape, size, and consistency of certain foods increase their potential to cause choking among children. Staff will not serve any foods that might present a choking hazard, including but not limited to:

- Uncut cherry or grape tomatoes;
- Pieces of hard raw fruit or vegetables;
- Tough or large chunks of meat;
- Hot dogs, meat sticks, or meatballs;
- Large chunks of cheese, especially string cheese;

ALLERGIES

If a child's physician has identified an allergy, an Allergy Emergency Plan must be completed by the child's physician and kept on file prior to enrollment. All staff are trained annually (or upon admission) on any specific child allergies and any child's Allergy Management Plan.

Any allergy management/response medications prescribed by the child's health care provider must be provided by the parent/guardian.

Food Allergies: Per DFPS regulation §746.3819, The Patch Learning Center must have a food allergy emergency plan for each child with a known food allergy that has been diagnosed by a health-care professional.

o A food allergy emergency plan is an individualized plan prepared by the child's health care professional that includes:

- 1) a list of each food the child is allergic to;
- 2) possible symptoms if exposed to a food on the list; and
- 3) the steps to take if the child has an allergic reaction.

The child's health care professional and parent must sign and date the plan.

Insect Allergies: The Patch Learning Center staff members take normal precautions to prevent through environmental controls, such as limiting freestanding water. In the event a child does sustain an insect bite, basic first aid is provided. In the event a child has a known reaction, his/her individual Allergy Management Plan will be followed. If the allergy needs of a child extend

CLOTHING

Children should wear sturdy, comfortable, washable play clothes appropriate for indoor and outdoor play. All children ages 2-4, need at all times, a change of clothes at the center without regard to his/her potty-training status. In the event that we must change your child into his/her spare set of clothes, you **MUST** bring another spare set the following day of care. Tennis shoes are preferred for comfort and safety reasons, no flip flops are allowed. All shoes must have a back. Children go outside to play every day unless there is rain and/or lightning or if the temperature is 40° or less or 92° or higher, so please dress your child accordingly. As cooler weather approaches, if you have a spare jacket, please leave one at The Patch Learning Center for your child's comfort. Children's names must be placed on all extra clothing with a permanent marker. Toddlers in pull ups/diapers need an ample supply of pull ups/diapers and wipes. It is

your responsibility to keep your child's cubby stocked with these necessities. You will be called to immediately bring more to the daycare if we run out.

TOYS/JEWELRY AND OTHER MISC. FROM HOME

Please do not allow your child to bring toys, jewelry, and money to school, except if a teacher has requested it. Absolutely no guns, knives, matches or unsuitable items may be brought at any time. Should prohibited and/or dangerous items be brought to school, we will notify the police immediately and your child will be dismissed from our care instantly with no future chance of re-enrollment. The Patch Learning Center will not be responsible for items that get lost, stolen, or broken. Please use discretion when sending items to daycare with your child.

REST TIME

As required in the State Minimum Standards and Guidelines, *"You must provide a supervised sleep or rest period after the noon meal for all children 18 months of age or older who are in care five or more consecutive hours, or according to the child's individual physical needs"*. The Patch Learning Center rest time will be from noon – 2:30. We use Regalo nap cots. These may be purchased by the parent, as well as a cot cover, or \$35 can be given to the director for purchase. Your child's name will be put on the cot, and you may take the cot with you upon completion of the child's time at The Patch Learning Center. Additionally, it is preferred that if you do purchase your own cot, you choose either the grey or pink option. You may bring a labeled blanket or a towel and pillow will be provided by The Patch Learning Center, and washed once a week.

In order to minimize disruption during the children's rest time, we ask that you refrain from picking your child up during these hours (noon – 2:30 p.m.). Should you need to pick your child up for a doctor's appointment, please make sure that you are here either at or before noon or at or after 2:30, but not during this rest time.

FIELD TRIPS

At this time, we are not licensed to provide field trips. We are going to work on this for the near future. In the instance we decide to provide field trips we will require signed permission by the caregiver of each child.

DROP OFF, PICK UP & RELEASE

All children must be walked and signed in by an adult. In order to minimize disruption and interruption you must have your child dropped off by no later than 9:00 a.m. each morning. In the event that you are having a late morning and will not make this 9:00 a.m. deadline, call the center prior to 8:30 a.m. and speak with the director. This should be the exception, not the rule.

The Patch Learning Center has NO legal authority to refuse either parent / guardian the right to take custody of their child(ren) unless this is COURT ORDERED and The Patch Learning Center has a CURRENT, SIGNED COPY OF THE ORDER. It is requested that custodial parents arrange visitation pick-up and return during times other than when their child(ren) are in our care.

AUTHORIZATION TO PICK-UP CHILD RELEASE

At the time of enrollment, the parent will provide the names of those authorized persons to pick up their child(ren). No child will be released to a person not authorized by the parent. The authorization must be in writing and be located in the child's file. If anyone other than the parent will be picking up the child, we must know in advance, in writing, so that we are aware of the change.

SEVERE WEATHER, FIRE OR OTHER EMERGENCIES

Fire and severe weather drills are conducted monthly. Emergency exit plans are posted in every room of the facility. The daily record of children's arrivals and departures is used as an attendance checklist during safety drills. All classroom staff are trained in First Aid and CPR. If there is an emergency situation and it becomes necessary to close the center, parents will be notified to make early pickups. Please read and sign the attached Emergency Preparedness Plan so you will be familiar with our policies in an emergency situation.

LATE PICK-UP POLICY

The Patch Learning Center closes promptly at 5:30 p.m. We understand that emergencies arise periodically that would prevent you from picking your child up at the scheduled closing time. In any and all events of tardiness you must notify the center, prior to your pick-up, that you will be late and the approximate time that you will arrive. Habitual late pick-ups will result in termination of services and denial of future re-enrollment.

ABSENCES

If your child will be absent for the week, payment must still be received the Monday prior to the scheduled absence in order to secure your child's space.

DAILY ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURES

It is a requirement by The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services that you sign your child in and out each day. It is critical that you remember to sign your child in and out of The Patch Learning Center. In the event of an emergency, we will use the register to take roll so it is imperative to your child's safety that the register be current at all times.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If a problem exists, we want it corrected as quickly as possible. This can only be achieved if it is identified immediately. Parents with concerns should discuss the matter with the Director, Sevea Hines, as soon as possible and if you do not have immediate relief / answers, please contact the owner Lauren Tuxen.

+MINIMUM STANDARDS AND LICENSING

The Patch Learning Center is licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). A full-text copy of the Minimum Standard Rules for Licensed Centers is available for review at www.txchildcaresearch.org

A copy of the centers minimum standards and most recent licensing inspection report are also available upon request in the daycare. A parent or legal guardian with a child enrolled in The Patch Learning Center has the right to review the minimum standards, licensing report, and all current inspections conducted by the Texas Department of Family & Protective Services.

If a parent or legal guardian wishes to review the standards or the licensing report, he/she may request this information from The Patch Learning Center Director at any time.

Contacting the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

The Patch Learning Center operates under the guidelines of the Texas Protective and Regulatory Services.

Texas DFPS child care licensing offices are open Monday through Friday. To contact the Central Texas - Austin office, see the information below:

14000 Summit Drive, Suite 100

Austin, Texas 78728

(512) 834-3426

GANG FREE ZONES

House Bill 2086 of the 81st Legislature, Regular Session, 2009: Under the Texas Penal Code any area within 1,000 feet of a child-care center is considered a gang-free zone. Where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.

ABUSE AND NEGLECT POLICY

The Patch Learning Center employees receive annual training on preventing and responding to abuse and neglect of children. Texas law states that anyone who suspects a child is being abused, neglected, or exploited must report it to The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) at 1-800-252-5400.

For more resources please visit <https://www.txabusehotline.org>

The Patch Learning Center 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. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services involved will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It is the agency's role to determine if the report of abuse or neglect is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. The NISD Daycare Center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect. Our foremost concern is always the protection of the child.