



Stepping Stones exists to provide a safe, developmentally appropriate environment for children 6 weeks to 12 years of age. Our focus is to provide a stimulating early care and education experience which promotes each child's social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. Our goal is to support children's desire to be life-long learners.

Our center is a licensed facility and we are licensed to care for children 6 weeks to 12 years of age. We offer a before and after school program during the regular school year and a fun filled summer program. The state requires all daycare centers to follow minimum standards but we feel like we go over and above the word minimum. The minimum standards are always available in the office for your viewing or you may visit the website at <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/doing-business-with-hhs/provider-portal/protective-services/ccl/min-standards/chapter-746-centers.pdf>. Our most recent Licensing Inspection and all other official documents are posted on a board next to the front door for your viewing.

We have an open door policy at our Center. Parents are welcome to come at any time of the day and observe their child in their classroom. The cut off time for parents to drop off their children is 9:00 am, after which the doors will be locked and no one will be allowed except for any advance notice provided by parents about the late arrival. The parents or approved pick up persons can pick up the child at any time during our hours of operation and an advance notice of early pick up will help us to make the child ready.

We welcome you and your child to our school and we list our policies as relating to the following subjects:

WE ARE A PEANUT FREE SCHOOL  
NO PEANUTS PLEASE

WE DO NOT PRACTICE DISCRIMINATORY ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES



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ACCOUNTS/CHILD CARE TUITION

The accepted forms of payment include cash, check, and through our Bright wheel software app. We charge a flat, weekly rate regardless of attendance. Tuition is due on Fridays, in advance for the upcoming week and considered late on Wednesdays by 6:30 pm. There will be a late charge fees \$3/day after 3 days of grace period. Our rates are computed by the week. Accounts more than one week past due will be considered delinquent and your child's spot will not be held if balance is not paid immediately. There will be a \$25.00 charge on all returned checks and failed online payments.

AGE RANGE

We are licensed to care for children 6 weeks to 12 years of age

BIRTHDAYS



Birthdays are special and we allow children to have parties at the center with their class. Gifts cannot be exchanged at these parties. Arrangements should be made in advance with the front office before bringing special treats into the building. The City Health Department requires that any food brought into the center must be purchased from a bakery or store. No home baked items are allowed. It is not necessary that you are present for the party, but you are always welcome.

### CHILD ABUSE AWARENESS

What is Child Abuse? To help prevent child abuse, you need to understand what it is. It's any mistreatment of a child that results in harm or injury. There are four basic types of child abuse, though children often experience more than one kind of abuse.

*Physical abuse* includes actions such as beating, burning, or punching a child.

Signs of Physical Abuse- Unexplained burns, bruises, black eyes, or other injuries. Apparent fear of a parent or caretaker. Faded bruises or healing injuries after missing school.

*Emotional abuse* may involve criticizing, insulting, rejecting, or withholding love from a child. Signs of Emotional Abuse- Acting overly mature or immature for the child's age. Extreme changes in behavior. Delays in physical or emotional development. Attempted suicide. Lack of emotional attachment to the parent.

*Sexual abuse* includes rape, touching or fondling, or involving a child in pornography. Signs of Sexual Abuse- Difficulty walking or sitting, or other indications of injury in the genital area. Sexual knowledge or behavior beyond what is normal for the child's age. Running away from home.

*Neglect* includes failure to provide for a child's basic physical, medical, or emotional needs. Leaving a young child home alone or failing to provide needed medical care may also be considered neglect. Signs of Neglect-Missing school a lot. Begging for food, stealing food, or stealing money for food. Lacking needed medical or dental care. Being frequently dirty. Using alcohol or other drugs. Saying there is no one at home to take care of them.

Children who are abused might show physical signs or sudden changes in their behavior or school performance. These signs don't prove that children are being abused, but they could be a signal that the children or their families need help. When children talk about being abused, take them seriously. Take steps to get help!



In Texas, you have two ways to report child abuse or neglect.

1-800-252-5400/www.txabusehotline.org

## DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE

Discipline must be:

- (1) Individualized and consistent for each child;
- (2) Appropriate to the child's level of understanding; and
- (3) Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.

A caregiver may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include at least the following:

- (1) Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
- (2) Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
- (3) Redirecting behavior using positive statements; and
- (4) Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.

There must be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:

- (1) Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment;
- (2) Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training;
- (3) Pinching, shaking, or biting a child;
- (4) Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;
- (5) Putting anything in or on a child's mouth;
- (6) Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child;
- (7) Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language;
- (8) Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed; and
- (9) Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.



## E-MAIL

Our e-mail address is [steppingstones@sbcglobal.net](mailto:steppingstones@sbcglobal.net)

## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

We practice monthly drills in case of an emergency. In the event of an emergency, managers keep a binder with all of our enrolled children's contact information in the office. In the case of a fire, storm/tornado all staff and children practice monthly drills. Everyone has a designated area to go to and sit. We train to sing songs and have snacks to keep children calm. For Infants we use evacuation cribs which are located at the back exit door. We lay infants on their back and push the cribs outside of the fenced area in a designated area. Toddlers (ages 18 months to 24 months) have an evacuation rope with handles. The children hold on and walk as a group to the designated area outside of the fence.

In the case of an evacuation all children will be transported to:

Massey Ranch Elementary school

3900 Manvel Road

Pearland, Texas 77584

281-727-1700

Parents will be notified in the event of any of these emergencies.

## ENROLLMENT FEES

\$150.00 per family due upon enrollment and every August thereafter at the start of the new academic year. These fees are non-refundable.

## ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

On the first day of enrollment, bring the enrollment forms filled out completely, with your doctor's signature and a copy of all updated immunizations. After being enrolled for 6 months we will ask you to update any changes of addresses, telephone numbers, emergency contacts, etc. On the first day, you may want to stay with your child until they get adjusted. You can call us anytime during the day to check on your child's progress or you may come by anytime to see your child.



## GANG FREE ZONES

Stepping Stones Learning Center is in a Gang-Free Zone.

New Requirements Regarding Gang-Free Zones for Child Care Centers;

*What is a gang-free zone?*

A gang-free zone is a designated area around a specific location where prohibited gang related activity is subject to increased penalty under Texas law. The specific locations include day care centers. The gang-free zone is within 1000 feet of your child care center. For more information about what constitutes a gang-free zone, please consult sections 71.028 and 71.029 of the Texas Penal Code.

*How do parents know where the gang-free zone ends?*

The area that falls within a gang-free zone can vary depending on the type of location. The local municipal or county engineer may produce and update maps for the purposes of prosecution. Parents may contact their local municipality or court house for information about obtaining a copy of a map if they choose to do so.

*What is the purpose of gang-free zones?*

Similar to the motivation behind establishing drug-free zones, the purpose of gang-free zones is to deter certain types of criminal activity in areas where children gather by enforcing tougher penalties.

*What does this mean for my day care center?*

A child care center must inform parents or guardians of children attending the center about the new gang-free zone designation. This means parents or guardians need to be informed that certain gang-related criminal activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of your center is a violation of this law and is therefore subject to increased penalty under state law.

## HEALTH CHECKS

We do not do health checks on the children at Stepping Stones.



HOLIDAYS

Our center will be closed on the following holidays:

NEW YEAR'S DAY	GOOD FRIDAY	MEMORIAL DAY
MARTIN LUTHER KING Jr DAY	JUNETEENTH	PRESIDENTS DAY
CHRISTMAS EVE & CHRISTMAS DAY	JULY 4TH	
THANKSGIVING DAY & THE DAY AFTER	LABOR DAY	

We have four (4) floating holidays. If New Year’s Day, July 4<sup>th</sup>, Christmas Day and Christmas Eve fall on a weekend, we have the option to be closed on a Monday or Friday depending on what day of the weekend the holiday falls.

HOURS, DAYS AND MONTHS

We are open Monday through Friday, 6:30a.m. - 6:30 p.m., January through December. Overtime charges of \$10.00 per child begins at 6:35 p.m.; then an additional \$10.00 per child will be added every 10 minutes thereafter. Please be considerate of our staff; as they want to go home and be with their families, so please pick up the child on time.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Our Licensing Board requires complete immunizations and physicals within 30 days of your child's enrollment. A statement by your doctor must evidence this. Preschool children (4 and 5 years old's) are required to have a Hearing and Vision Test on file at the center as well. We do not require any of our employees to have any preventable disease vaccinations.

MEALS AND FOOD SERVICES

Breakfast is served starting at 7:45 a.m. **Outside breakfast is not allowed.**

Lunch is served at 11:00 a.m.

Snacks are served at 2:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m.

Our lunches and snacks meet all the nutritional requirements for your child. Our menu is posted on our office bulletin board for your review or you may request a copy at any time. If your child has allergies



to certain types of foods or drinks, you must provide a medical statement from their doctor stating what they are allergic to. We will accommodate for religious practices. **Outside food is not allowed** with the exception of posted sack lunch days. Due to the severity of peanut allergies we do not allow peanut products. For infant feeding, breast feeding is welcome and encouraged. We have rocking chairs in the classroom for your convenience and comfort. You must provide baby food for your infant until they eat table food. All caregivers and cooks must wear a hairnet or hat and gloves anytime they are serving food. Hand washing procedures for all caregivers are practiced thoroughly at our center. All children must wash their hands with soap and running water before and after meals and after use of the bathroom.

#### MEDICAL AND SICK CHILD POLICY

In the case of illness, you will be notified immediately to come and pick up your child as soon as possible from the center. The following symptoms will result in a call to you and will require exclusion from daycare, unless a written medical evaluation by a health-care professional indicates differently:

Oral temperature of 100.4

Armpit temperature of 99.4

Uncontrolled diarrhea (not contained in diaper)

Vomiting (2 or more episodes in 24 hours)

Rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, behavior changes, or signs that the child may be severely ill or child is diagnosed with a communicable disease.

Please remember your child must be symptom free for 24 hours before they can be brought back to daycare. In the event of a medical emergency which requires immediate attention by a physician, we will contact emergency medical service and you will be notified immediately. In the event of a questionable injury we will call the parent to make the decision. *Any child that is ill will stay in the office until parents pick them up.*

All caregivers at our center are trained in CPR and First Aid.

If you have to provide your child a lunch due to medical reasons, please leave your child's lunch at the





front office with a manager with the child's name on the lunch.

### MEDICATION

All medication must be prescribed by a physician, in its original container and clearly labeled with the child's name, parent's signature and full instructions. All medication must be left in the office where we will provide the labels for you and administer all medication. No over-the-counter medications will be administered unless accompanied by a doctor's note or has the dosing information on the bottle for your child's age group. If the medication is not properly labeled, the medication cannot be given to the child.

### NAP AND REST TIME

Each child attending our center must have a rest/nap time each day. Each child will have a cot or mat assigned to them that will be provided by our center. Blankets and pillows may be brought to school for rest time. They need to be small enough to fit into your child's cubby and taken home every Friday to be laundered weekly. We do not force children to take naps but we do require them to rest.

### PARENT CONFERENCES

The Director/Manager is available to address any questions or concerns you may have. You may call any time to set up a telephone conference or meeting at your convenience. Parents will be advised of any problems your child might have while attending our center. We will contact you by telephone or in person and set up a time to talk with you and your child concerning the issues at hand.

### PARENTAL NOTIFICATIONS

If any changes are needed to be made for the entire center, a note will be posted on the front door and check in/out counter. If a change is made in your child's classroom a note will be posted on the entrance/exit door. A letter will be sent home with your child as well.

### PERSONAL ITEMS

Please make sure that all items brought into the school are clearly labeled with your child's name.



Please use a permanent marker. We ask that children bring toys to school only on Fridays, which is designated as personal toy day. Books are always welcome. Our school is not responsible for lost or broken items. Thank you for your cooperation.

### NO TOY GUNS OR WEAPONS OF ANY KIND ALLOWED

### PEST CONTROL

We have a pest control company that treats our facility each month. The treatment is usually done in the evening hours after the hours of operation or on weekends. We also have, upon request, a Consumer Information Sheet that you can view if you have any questions or concerns.

### POLICY CHANGES

If there are any changes in our school policies, we will notify you with the changes.

### PRESCHOOL CLASSES

We offer Preschool Classes from ages 12 months of age to 5 years of age. Our curriculum is age appropriate. We send out monthly calendars for each age group highlighting what they will be doing on a daily basis. Their paperwork is sent home weekly and we encourage you to talk with your child about their work and their crafts. Our mission statement is to support children's desire to be life-long learners. Our five year olds (that will be starting to Kindergarten) have a graduation ceremony (with caps and gowns) in May of each year. They will receive their Preschool Diplomas. The parents are invited and it's a fun time for this age group.

### RELEASE OF CHILDREN

All children must be checked in and out of our center, using the check-in kiosk at the front office. Our Center will only release children to the parent or approved pick up person 18 years or older that is designated by the parent. The approved pick-up person must provide their valid ID and a copy of it will be saved on records in the office.



No child will be released under any circumstances unless the parent has authorized their release. It is so important to let the office know if someone other than the parents will be picking up the child.

Release of a child from our school buses: If the driver does not know the person or has not been told by the Director or Manager that someone else will be picking up your child at public school, the driver is instructed to tell the person to follow them back to the center and see someone at the office. All the drivers carry cell phones to be able to communicate with the office.

All parents may be asked for their driver's license if office personnel have not had the chance to meet both parents. Please be understanding with us as we are keeping your child safe.

### STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

Everyone employed at Stepping Stones is First Aid/CPR certified. All of our staff are trained annually with 24 hours of continuing education courses in Child Development. Our Director is trained annually with 30 hours of continuing education and management. Our caregivers also have an orientation on preventing and responding to Abuse and Neglect of Children, Brain Development, Shaken Baby Syndrome and SIDS. All staff members have their fingerprints and background checked with Texas Health and Human Services and are only hired once they are eligible to be present at our facility.

### SUMMER ACTIVITIES

During the summer months of June, July and August, we do not participate in field trips. We do have fun activities that are planned. We hire entertainers on a weekly basis and plan fun activities every day. We do not allow animals in the facility which may include: pets, petting zoo, etc. We do not have swimming pools at any time. The summer activities will include a monthly fee which may range up to \$20.00 a month.

### TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is offered to and from our Center to the following public schools:



Lawhon Elementary

C.J. Harris Elementary

Carleston Elementary

Massey Ranch Elementary

Magnolia Elementary

Cockrell Elementary

Jamison Middle School

Parents of school age children- Please call our Center and let us know if your child is absent or if you had to pick up your child early from public school. This is very important information that our Center needs to know.

### UNSAFE CHILDREN'S PRODUCT

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is committed to protecting consumers and families from products that pose a fire, electrical, chemical or mechanical hazard. When a recall occurs, the commission alerts the media; however, no further action is required to ensure that use of the product is discontinued. This means that dangerous children's products can unknowingly end up in homes, child care facilities, or anywhere children's products are used. The Texas Legislature enacted a new law during the 81<sup>st</sup> regular session that requires child care providers to regularly check the CPSC recall list and ensure there are no unsafe children's products in the center or home.

What are “children's products”?

Any product designed or intended to be used by a child younger than 13 years of age or used by a caregiver during the care of a child under 13 years of age. This does not include clothing or items meant to be swallowed such as medications, drugs or food.

How do I know if a “children’s product” is unsafe?

A children's product is considered to be unsafe if it has been recalled by the CPSC. View a list of current recalls and notices on the CPSC Internet website at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov). You may sign up to receive email notifications from the CPSC by going to <https://www.cpsc.gov/cpsclist.aspx>. There are several types of notifications that you may sign up for.



Licensing recommends that you sign up for recalls involving infant/child products (list name; child). You may also want to sign up for recalls involving products used for sports and recreation (list name; recreation), particularly if you serve school-age children.

### WEATHER PREPAREDNESS

Upon receipt of a weather alert, we announce on our intercom system to alert all classes to take their assigned drill spots, according to the Emergency Preparedness Plan. We will turn on TV or radio for weather alerts.

All staff is trained to calm the children, assuring them of their safety. When all is clear, we say “drill is over” and “please go back to your classrooms”.

Stepping Stones will follow Pearland School District in the event of school closures due to weather related issues.