

Welcome to First Steps PDO at First Baptist Church of Benton! We are so excited that your family has chosen to enroll in our Parents Day Out Enrichment Program for the 2022-2023 school year. We want you to know that this center, staff, students, and families have been earnestly prayed over. We hope that your family ends this year feeling that your child's life has been enriched by participating in First Steps PDO.

Staffing

We want to assure you that all of our staff members have been thoroughly vetted and background checked. Those records are kept on file in the office. The center has supplied ample and continuous training to make sure that your child is receiving the best standard of care. All of our employees are First Aid, CPR/ AED certified. We have an AED in the facility with appropriate pediatric supplies. The staff taking care of your children have completed training in the following course areas.

- First Aid/CPR/AED
- Coping With Separation Anxiety
- Purposeful Play
- Essentials of Indoor/Outdoor Safety
- Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma
- Safe Sleep Practices for Infants
- Classroom Management 101
- Taking The Bite Out of Toddler Biting

Our employees are all 18 or older and have at minimum a high school diploma or GED.

Staff Safety Measures:

Random Drug Screening: We implement a random drug screening policy that all staff agree to when hired. All employees are screened at the beginning of employment and then no less than every three months during the program year.

Clear Bag Policy: Staff members are only allowed to bring clear bags into the facility. This policy ensures that no one is bringing unsafe items into the facility.

Walkie-Talkies: Each staff member has a walkie talkie on them at all times. This allows our staff and director to be in almost instant contact at any point during the day.

No Cell Phone Policy: We have a very strict no cell phone policy. Staff are not permitted to bring their cell phones into their classrooms. The focus of each classroom teacher is completely on caring for and interacting with their students.

Teacher Child Ratios: We follow TN state guidelines for teacher to child ratios. Your child will never be in a classroom that is overcrowded. Those ratios are as follows

Age Group	Adult:Child Ratio
9-18 months (Preschool One)	1:6
19-35 months (Preschool Two)	1:7
Preschool 3	1:8
Pre-K (4&5 year olds)	1:10

Facility Safety Measures

Controlled Access Doors: All exterior doors in our facility are controlled access that require a code or key fob to enter. Doors are locked at all times during the day while children are on the premises.

Fire Safety: Fire extinguishers are placed in every room/area of our facility and our staff have been appropriately trained on how to use them. Our facility also does monthly fire drills. Our staff have been well trained for exactly what to do in case of a fire and how to safely evacuate the children.

Weather Safety/Natural Disaster: The facility has a weather radio in the office in case of a weather emergency. We have a weather safety plan in place should our facility ever be placed under a tornado warning.

Intruder Protection: Our facility has a very strict pick-up policy. If anyone other than a parent/guardian is picking up a child they will be required to stop by the office first and present photo identification. Only adults 18 and older listed on the "Child Pick-Up Form" will be allowed to leave the premises with your child. This form can be edited at any time by stopping by the office. This is to ensure that your children are as safe as possible. To further protect our children we have a "code black" system that will include reinforcing classroom doors and moving children to the safest area of the classroom until authorities can arrive and secure the facility.

Camera System: We have cameras throughout our facility that record 24/7. These cameras are also monitored by the director during the program day so we know what is happening in all areas of the facility at all times. Cameras cover all indoor areas.

Food/Choking Safety: In addition to training our staff in CPR, we also have choking prevention devices available. These devices are placed over and in the mouth of a choking child and have a suction effect to help dislodge the foreign object or food.

Tuition Payments

Tuition for the upcoming week is due no later than Thursday at pick-up. If your child's tuition is not paid by 2:30pm on Thursday, it will have a \$10 late fee assessed to it. If your child's tuition is not current by Tuesday, you will not be allowed to drop off your child. Tuition is due even if your child is absent due to sickness or travel. If your family encounters an issue with payment and arrangements need to be made, please contact the office. Tuition can only be paid by the quickbook invoice link sent out for each month. Please watch for the email each month, as it will have the monthly and weekly links in it. Tuition must be paid monthly or weekly. There will be no cash or checks accepted in the facility this year.

Withdrawal/Disenrollment

If your family decides to withdraw your child during the program year, the parent or guardian who signed the enrollment forms must submit a signed "enrollment termination" letter to the office. A two week withdrawal notice is required, and the family is required to pay the two week's tuition. If a parent or guardian withdraws a child without proper notice and payment, they risk not being able to re-enroll the child in the First Steps PDO program or future childcare programs by FBC Benton.

Student Dress Code

Your child will get messy during their day at First Steps PDO! Please do not send them in clothes that are "too nice to play in". We will have various sensory and art projects as well as outdoor play any day it's not raining. Parents are required to have a complete change of clothes in their child's classroom at all times. Please bring these in a gallon ziplock bag labeled with your child's name. Children are required to wear closed toe shoes with an athletic sole. No shoes with heels, wedges, or rain boots. This type of footwear is not suitable for the playground. If the forecasted temperature is below 50 degrees children will need a jacket for outside play. Please make sure jackets are labeled with your child's name.

Supplies

Parents are responsible for providing diapers/pull-ups and wipes as needed for their child. Your child's daily report will be marked with any supplies needed. Parents also must provide a clean crib sheet and blanket at the beginning of each week. These will be used during

nap/quiet time. Sheets and blankets go home each Thursday. Please send a water bottle or water sippy cup each day labeled with the child's name. Parents/Guardians are responsible for keeping two changes of weather appropriate clothes in the classrooms designated storage area. We will send these home for switching at the change of the seasons. Pull-ups must have side closures.

Classroom Specific List:

Preschool One- (1) 6 pack of paper towels

Preschool Two- (1) 3 pack of disinfectant wipes

Preschool Three- (1) pack of construction Paper & (1) pack of 8 ct crayola

markers

own PreK 4 and PreK 5 *Please label all items with your child's name. These are their supplies and they will not be sharing them.

- (1) 8 pack of Crayola Crayons
- (1) composition notebook
- (1) pack of ticonderoga pencils
- (2) glue sticks
- (1) pair of child's scissors
- (1) pencil box

Arrival/Departure Times

In order to keep our building secure, children who are attending must be dropped off by 9:00 am on program days. Pick-up time is 2:30pm. If you need to drop your child off earlier or pick them up later, arrangements must be made by calling the office. After 9:00 am, no one will be able to enter the building without ringing in through the office. Late drop offs are only allowed for things such as medical appointments, car trouble, etc. Late drop offs are not allowed due to scheduling preference.

If a child is not picked up by 2:40 pm there is a \$25 late pick up fee, with an additional \$1 added for each minute you are late. This fee will be due before the next drop off.

Drop-off/Pick-Up

We are going to have two drop-off options this year!

1. Drop-off Line: We will have a drop-off line beginning at 8:30am each morning. This will be like traditional school drop off. Staff will be out front to unload your

child and parents will stay in the car. This is REQUIRED for Pre-K classes to help prepare them for the future. All other classes can choose.

2. Breakfast Drop-off: If you prefer to walk your child into the building, you can drop them off in the dining area between 8:45am and 9:00am each morning.

Pick-Up Procedures

We will be utilizing a pick-up line this year. This saves parents from having to come into the building and helps us keep a closer eye on who is picking each child up. The pick-up line will begin at 2:30 each day and we will have multiple staff members loading children to help it go faster. You will receive a laminated car to display in your window with your child's name. Please have whoever is picking up display the car for easier loading. Please still be prepared to show an ID if a staff member is not familiar with the adult picking up.

Health & Wellness Policies

Fever: If your child has a fever greater than 100.6 they will have to be picked up. Children must be unmedicated fever free for 24 hours before they can return to the facility.

Vomiting: If your child vomits in the center more than once or has vomiting in combination with any other symptom they will have to be picked up. Please do not bring your child to the facility if they have had more than one vomiting episode or vomiting combined with any other symptom in the past 24 hours.

Diarrhea: If a child has more than one episode of diarrhea or diarrhea combined with any other symptom they will have to be picked up. Please do not bring your child to the facility if they have had diarrhea more than once or diarrhea combined with any other symptom in the past 24 hours.

Lice/Bed Bugs/Scabies: If your child is found to have lice/bed bugs/scabies, they will have to be picked up. The child must be appropriately treated and egg/nit/bug free before they can return to the center.

If anyone in your household has symptoms of a contagious illness (stomach virus, COVID, flu, pink-eye, etc.) please do not bring your child into the facility until everyone is well. Illnesses such as these are extremely contagious and will spread to all students and staff.

Nutrition/Dietary/Allergies

We follow the USDA “MyPlate” guidelines when planning the center’s menu. This means each lunch has a grain, protein, fruit, vegetable and milk. Children will be encouraged to try new foods and attempt to eat what is on their plate. We promise to feed your child healthy and nutritious meals. A monthly menu will be posted on the parent information board as well as in the parent facebook group.

If your child has a dietary need or allergy that requires an adaptation to their meal, we will need a doctor’s note on file in the office. If your child has a food allergy, it will be posted in the kitchen and your child’s teacher will be made aware so that we can ensure your child’s safety.

If your child is electing to bring their own lunch, they are not allowed to share with others. Lunch should contain healthy foods. Lunch should not contain cokes, candy, Debbie cakes, etc.

Classroom/Age Transitions

As children age during the program year they will be transitioned up into the age appropriate class as spots are available. If your child is transitioning you will be notified in writing by the program’s director. Staff will work alongside you and your child to make the transition as easy as possible. Children can not transition up in age until after their birthday.

Inclement Weather

In case of inclement weather that requires facility closure, you will be notified by phone, classroom DOJO and the center’s facebook page. We will evaluate weather situations on a case by case basis. If we feel that it’s unsafe for our staff or children to be on the roads or in the building we do have two built in weather days per a year.

Behavior Policies

Below you will find the behavior policy for each classroom. Our center truly believes that most negative behaviors have a cause and we promise to work with your child to fix whatever is bothering them. At First Steps PDO, we believe in discipline over punishment. Discipline is the act of teaching a child to make better choices, whereas punishment is the act of making them suffer for their mistakes. Part of our goal at First Steps PDO is to teach children to make good decisions the first time, instead of making them afraid to make a mistake.

Preschool One	A child’s negative behavior will be redirected to encourage positive behavior. If a child bites/hits another child, the children will be separated and encouraged to play with someone different.
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Preschool Two	A child's negative behavior will first result in redirection/re-education. On the second time the behavior occurs the child will be redirected to the calm down spot and encouraged to participate in a calm down activity for two minutes. If the behavior continues to escalate, the child may "take a break" from the classroom for 5 minutes and spend one on one time with another staff member to reset the situation and figure out what the child needs.
Preschool Three	A child's negative behavior will first result in redirection/re-education. On the second time the behavior occurs the child will be redirected to the calm down spot and encouraged to participate in a calm down activity for three minutes. If the behavior continues to escalate, the child may "take a break" from the classroom for 5 minutes and spend one on one time with another staff member to reset the situation and figure out what the child needs.
Pre-K	A child's negative behavior will first result in redirection/re-education. On the second time the behavior occurs the child will be redirected to the think about it spot and encouraged to think about their behavior for four minutes. If the behavior continues to escalate, the child may "take a break" from the classroom for 5 minutes and spend one on one time with another staff member to reset the situation and figure out what the child needs.

There are two different behavior notes you may receive from your child's teacher.

"Time for Growth"- Our time for growth notes will highlight an area in which your child needs to grow in. These areas include: having self control, being kind, putting more effort behind their work, or being more helpful to others. If your child receives this note, use it as an opportunity to positively approach areas they need to grow in. These aren't "bad behavior" reports, but genuinely an effort to help grow your child into the best they can be.

"The Bright Spot"- Our bright spot notes are used to highlight when your child has shown self-control and kindness to someone. Your child may also receive this note if they have worked hard during the day or been extra helpful to a friend.

If a child is continuously pushing, bullying, or “rough playing” with other children, a parent/director/teacher conference will be scheduled. We understand that some siblings/children play rough at home, but others may not. When this type of activity is executed in the classroom, it can make other children fearful of the learning environment. Teachers will openly communicate about this issue via the communication log in your child’s take home folder.

Expulsion Policy

If a child exhibits behaviors that harm other students or staff on a continual or uncontrollable basis, the child may be expelled from First Steps PDO. If a child injures another child or staff purposefully (biting, shoving, hitting, etc) and it becomes an ongoing issue with a pattern of behaviors, a conference will be called between the parent/guardian and director. A behavior plan will be put in place to protect the staff and children. If the harmful behavior continues the parent/guardian will be given a “pre-expulsion” warning. If the behavior occurs again after the pre-expulsion warning, the child will be expelled from the program.

Incident Reporting

If your child has an accident that results in an injury or mark, you will receive an incident report with the details of the situation at pick-up. If the injury is more than a simple scratch/scrape you will be notified by phone as soon as care has been administered to your child. If you have questions about an event that occurs at the center, please immediately reach out to the director before leaving the facility for the day.

Educational/Developmental Assessments

Each year in April our staff will work to assess your child and present parents/guardians with a report that shows where each child is educationally and developmentally. These are for general information purposes, but may be useful to start a conversation with your child’s healthcare provider if you feel that an intervention may be needed.

Complaints/Grievances

If a parent/guardian has an issue with their child’s teacher or the program please contact director Jennifer Wood. A meeting can be set up to discuss your concerns and we can work to find a solution. Please never attempt to handle these issues in front of the children in our classrooms. Our office is open from 8:00am-3:00 pm Tuesday and Thursday. She can also be reached by emailing director@firststepspdo.com.

The First Steps Parents Day Out program is governed by members of First Baptist Church Benton. If you have sat down with the director and still feel that a resolution has not been reached you can request to be put into contact with the current chairman of the PDO Board and contact information will be provided immediately with no questions asked.

Emergency Procedures

Safety is our top priority. We have multiple procedures and policies in place, but there are things that we have no control over. Below you will find an outline and summary of additional safety policies. It is very important that you are signed up and active on our class Dojo system.

Severe Weather/Tornado: We have a plan in place in the event that First Steps PDO is ever placed under a tornado warning during the program day. This involves having each class move into a designated safe area in the most interior areas of the building. The children will also place their nap mats over their heads to protect from possible falling debris. In the event of a tornado warning, please do not try to enter or exit the building. This will only pull staff from guiding your children.

Fire: We have an extensive fire plan in place with multiple exits planned for each area. Our classrooms are also equipped with fire extinguishers and glass breaking devices. In the event of a fire, children will be evacuated from the building and moved to a safe outdoor area away from the structure. Our facility is equipped with multiple smoke/co2 detectors. In the event of an actual fire, you will be contacted as soon as all children are accounted for.

Intruder/Lockdown: In the event of an unauthorized visitor or person presenting a threat to our facility. We will enter a full lockdown. PARENTS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO ENTER THE BUILDING DURING A LOCKDOWN, UNTIL THE BUILDING IS CLEARED BY LAW ENFORCEMENT. In each classroom we have bars to secure the doors and our teachers have been shown the safest place for the children to shelter in place. In the event of a lockdown situation, parents will be notified as soon as possible. During a situation like this, our top priority is child and staff safety.

Please know that we are taking every precaution possible to protect your children while they are in our care. Our facility is equipped with security cameras covering all child occupied areas. Our exterior doors have controlled access mechanisms, and we follow a very strict pick-up/drop-off routine.

Class DOJO

Class DOJO is a free app that the facility will use to communicate with parents. While you can always contact our office, this app will allow us to send mass text all at once. Important announcements and reminders will be sent as well as alerts in the case

of an emergency. On this app we will also be able to post fun things such as pictures and videos from our day.

Child Abuse Reporting:

Everyone in Tennessee is a mandated reporter under state law. Any person with reasonable cause to believe a child is being abused or neglected must, under the law, immediately report to the Tennessee Department of Children's Services or to local law enforcement. The reporter can remain anonymous.

Call the Child Abuse Hotline to report child abuse or neglect in the State of Tennessee.

877-237-0004

Reports also can be made online on our secure site. <https://apps.tn.gov/carat/>