

First Steps Mother's Day Out

2026-2027 Handbook



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Operational Policies for Our Families

PHILOSOPHY

Our program is built on Luke 2:52 — *“Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.”*

We strive to help each child grow in these same areas—spiritually, intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically—within a loving, Christ-centered environment.

WHAT IS MDO?

First Steps Mother’s Day Out is a weekday ministry dedicated to providing preschool-aged children with a safe, nurturing space to explore, learn, and grow in a Christian atmosphere. Children experience hands-on learning, social interaction, and spiritual encouragement under the guidance of a dedicated, caring staff.

WHAT WE OFFER

We use the **WEE Learn Curriculum**, which provides age-appropriate opportunities in all areas of development:

- **Social & Emotional Development** – Building friendships, learning to take turns, cooperate, and gain self-confidence in a group setting.
- **Physical Development** – Strengthening fine and gross motor skills through play, movement, and activities, with access to safe and appropriate equipment.
- **Intellectual Development** – Encouraging curiosity, problem-solving, and creativity through activities designed for each age group.
- **Spiritual Development** – Helping children discover the beauty of God’s world, experience His love, and understand that they are uniquely created and deeply valued.

Who Can Attend and Fees

First Steps Mother’s Day Out welcomes children from 18 months old (by September 1st) through Pre-Kindergarten (age 4). Each age group enjoys activities designed specifically for their developmental stage. Children are placed in classes with peers of the same age to encourage learning, socialization, and growth.

FEES

Registration Fee

- \$95.00 per child (non-refundable)
- \$127.50 for ½ of May’s tuition (non-refundable, due at registration)

Supply Fee

- Paid twice a year (September & January)
 - \$100.00 per child
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TUITION

Tuition is calculated for the nine-month school year and divided into equal monthly payments.

Two-Day Program (Mondays & Wednesdays):

\$2,295.00 annually / \$255.00 per month

Please note: Tuition is an annual fee divided monthly. Refunds are not issued for illness, vacation, or absences.

PAYMENT POLICIES

- A child is officially enrolled once the registration form, registration fee, and ½ of May's tuition are received.
- **Due Dates:** Tuition is due on the **first MDO day of each month** (September tuition is due on or before August 2nd).
- **Late Payments:** Payments received after the first MDO day of the month will incur a \$10.00 late fee **per MDO day late**. All tuition must be paid by the end of the month to maintain enrollment.
- **Accepted Payments:** Cash or check (payable to *First Steps Mother's Day Out*).
 - Post-dated checks are not accepted.
 - Cash payments will receive a written receipt.
 - Invoices are sent home before the end of each month; however, it is the parent's responsibility to make payment on time, whether or not an invoice is received.
- **Returned Checks:** A \$25.00 fee will be charged for returned checks. Both the tuition and fee must be paid with certified funds (cash, money order, or cashier's check). After two returned checks, all future tuition must be paid with certified funds.
- **May Tuition:** The remaining ½ of May's tuition (\$127.50) is due on the first MDO day in May for the child to attend that month.
- Failure to pay tuition by the end of the month may result in dismissal from the program. Please communicate with the Director or Assistant Director if special circumstances arise.

OPERATIONAL HOURS

Program Hours

First Steps Mother's Day Out operates on **Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** We follow the **Lamar Consolidated ISD holiday calendar** and **inclement weather policy**. If LCISD has **early dismissal**, First Steps Mother's Day Out will **not hold classes** that day.

Teacher Preparation

Our teachers participate in a devotion and preparation time from **8:40 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.** Please wait to enter classrooms until teachers are present and ready to greet the children. Children should **not** be left unattended in classrooms, hallways, or on the playground.

Drop-Off Procedures

- Drop-off begins at **9:00 a.m.**
- Families must enter through the **glass doors by the Worship Center.**
- **Doors open at 8:55 a.m.** and remain unlocked until **9:15 a.m.**
- A Director will be present at the glass doors while they are unlocked.
- After **9:15 a.m.**, the doors will be locked. If you arrive after that time, please call the number posted on the door, and a Director will come to unlock it for you.
- **Sign-In is mandatory.** Parents must sign in their child and provide a phone number where they can be reached during the day.

Pick-Up Procedures

- **Car Rider Line** begins at **2:00 p.m.** for all classrooms.
- For safety, in order for staff to place a child in a vehicle during car rider dismissal, there **must be an age-appropriate car seat** installed in the vehicle.
 - If there is **no car seat available**, you will be asked to pull forward, park, and come inside to sign your child out.
- Families choosing to **walk in for pick-up** must use the **same entrance as drop-off (glass doors by the Worship Center).**
- **Sign-Out is mandatory** for all walk-ins.
- Please **do not use the carpool doors** for walk-in pick-up, as this area is reserved for car rider dismissal only.

Late Pick-Up Policy

- If you are delayed, call the MDO office to notify the Director.
- **Late fees:**
 - After **2:15 p.m.** – \$10 late fee
 - After **2:30 p.m.** – Additional \$1 per minute
- Late fees are payable immediately to **First Steps Mother's Day Out.** If not paid at pick-up, they will be added to your account.

Authorized Pick-Up

- If someone other than a parent, guardian, or regular caregiver will pick up your child, you must notify **your child's teacher or one of the Directors** ahead of time.
- If you need to **add someone to your child's authorized pick-up list**, please call one of the Directors **and** submit the change **in writing.**
- In emergency situations, phone authorization may be accepted if appropriate identification information is already on file.
- The person picking up your child must present a valid **photo ID** (preferably a driver's license).
- We verify the name against the child's **authorized pick-up list** to ensure safety.

Policy Changes

Parents will be informed of any changes to operational policies in writing through our monthly newsletter and/or special memos. These notices will be sent home with each child and/or mailed to the child's home address.

We encourage parents to reach out to the Director directly with any questions, comments, or concerns regarding MDO policies or procedures.

Withdrawals from MDO

A **two-week written notice** to the Director is required to withdraw your child from MDO. If proper notice is not provided, full payment for the month will still be required.

Food at Mother's Day Out

Please inform your child's teachers of any food allergies or dietary restrictions.

We encourage you to send a **well-balanced lunch** that includes protein, bread, dairy, fruits and/or vegetables, and water. Please note that **we do not have a microwave to warm food or a refrigerator to keep items cold**, so lunches should not require reheating or refrigeration.

Please do not send:

- Red or dark-colored drinks
- Candy or soda

For safety, grapes and hot dogs must be cut lengthwise in half. Please include any utensils your child may need.

Mother's Day Out will provide a **daily afternoon snack** for all children.

Pizza Lunch Day

On the **second and last Wednesday** of each month, we offer an optional pizza lunch for students. The cost is **\$5.00 per pizza lunch**, totaling **\$10.00 per month**. This includes pizza, fruit, and a drink.

Please note:

- If your child is absent on a pizza lunch day, **no refunds** will be given.
- The pizza lunch fee will be **added to your monthly tuition**.
- Participation is entirely optional. If you prefer that your child not take part, please send a lunch from home on those days.

What to Bring Each Day

1. **Backpack:**

Each child should bring a backpack large enough to fit inside their cubby (mini-storage locker size). Please check your child's backpack daily for important papers and belongings.

2. **Diapers:**

Children who are not yet potty-trained need to bring **three labeled disposable diapers** for each school day. Mother's Day Out will provide wet wipes.

3. **Extra Clothes:**

Please pack a complete **extra set of clothes** in your child's backpack. Label all clothing, including sweaters, jackets, and accessories used for outdoor play.

4. **Feeding Items:**

If needed, you may send a **spill-proof cup** and a **bib**, both labeled with your child's name.

5. **Nap Supplies:**

Kinder mats for naptime are provided. Please supply a **labeled mat cover** (50" x 24"). Avoid crib sheets with elastic all around, as they cause bunching on the mats. You may also send a **blanket** and/or a small comfort item ("lovie") to help your child rest.

6. **Toys and Personal Items:**

Except for comfort items during rest time, **toys, games, candy, and gum should not be brought to class**. This policy helps maintain a safe and happy environment for all children.

Rest Time

All classes have a daily rest period. Children will lie quietly on kinder mats during this time. While children are not required to sleep, they are expected to remain calm and restful.

Discipline

Our primary goal is to love and support your child. We recognize that all children need clear boundaries to feel safe and learn appropriate behavior. When necessary, your child will be guided and corrected with gentle discipline.

If behavior issues arise, your child may be asked to take a brief quiet time to reflect and calm down. This is different from a traditional "time out," as it is meant to help rather than punish. You will be informed at the end of the day if this occurs.

Biting Policy:

1. The child who bites will be given quiet time to calm down.
2. Parents of both the child who bit and the child who was bitten will be contacted.
3. If age-appropriate, the child who bit may be encouraged to help comfort the other child, such as holding an ice pack on the injury.

We view difficult moments as valuable learning opportunities. We encourage children to care for their friends and take responsibility for making amends.

If a child bites twice in one day, they will spend time separated from the class with the Director, and both sets of parents will be notified.

If biting occurs a third time in one day or within a week, parents will be asked to pick up their child. The child may return the next school day with a clean slate.

Chronic Behavior Problems

In rare cases, if a child's behavior consistently disrupts the class and quiet time is no longer effective, the child's parents will be contacted to pick up their child.

If disruptive behavior becomes a recurring pattern, parents may be asked to withdraw their child from the program to ensure a positive environment for all children.

Illness

To protect the health and safety of all children at Mother's Day Out, children **may not attend** if they exhibit any of the following symptoms at arrival or within the past 24 hours:

- Fever of 100°F or higher
- Diarrhea (defined as two or more loose stools within a short period)
- Vomiting
- Rash or ringworm
- Heavy nasal discharge
- Any discharge from eyes or ears (such as pinkeye)

Please use caution and keep your child home if they show any other unusual symptoms. This helps keep all children safe and healthy.

If a child becomes ill during the school day with any of the above symptoms, they will be separated from the other children, and you will be contacted immediately. Please arrange to pick up your child within **30 minutes**.

Children must be well enough to participate in outdoor activities before returning to the program.

Communicable Diseases

Please notify us promptly if your child has been exposed to or diagnosed with any contagious illness, including but not limited to pinworms, viral infections, measles, mumps, chickenpox, scarlet fever, flu, or COVID-19.

For the safety of all, a **written doctor's release** is required before your child can return to MDO following any communicable disease.

If your child has had a fever, they must be **fever-free for 24 hours without medication** before returning to school.

Medication Policy

All medication should be administered by parents upon arrival whenever possible. If medication is needed during the school day, a **Medication Request Form** must be completed.

For children with chronic illnesses, a care plan will be developed and managed in coordination with the Director.

Certain first aid medications can be administered only with written parental consent; these are listed on the consent forms included in the registration packet.

MDO Procedures for Handling Medical Emergencies

In the event of a medical emergency involving a child, the following procedures will be followed:

- The teacher nearest to the child will stay with and provide immediate care.
 - A teacher trained in CPR or First Aid will assist or take over as needed.
 - The Director will evaluate the situation to determine if emergency medical care is necessary.
 - If emergency care is required, the Director will call 911.
 - The child's physician listed on their medical records will be contacted.
 - Parents or guardians will be notified as soon as possible.
 - All other children in the group will be supervised and cared for by staff members during the emergency.
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First Aid Procedures

At the start of the school year, you will be asked to authorize or decline specific first aid treatments for your child. We will make every effort to contact you before administering any first aid.

Immunization Requirements

Parents are responsible for providing and updating First Steps MDO with their child's current immunization records.

Up-to-date immunization documentation must be kept on file at the center.

Please refer to the **Minimum State Vaccine Requirements for Texas Child-Care Facilities** for a complete list of required immunizations as mandated by the Texas Department of Public Health.

Insurance

First Steps Mother's Day Out maintains insurance coverage for bodily injury and property damage for all participants in its programs.

If you have any questions regarding insurance coverage, please direct them to the Director.

Field Trip Requirements:

1. Parents must sign permission forms granting First Steps MDO authorization to take their child on the field trip, including permission for transportation.
2. Teachers will carry emergency medical consent forms and contact information for every child attending the trip.
3. A written list of all children will be maintained and frequently checked during the trip to ensure everyone's safety.
4. A first-aid kit will be available to teachers at all times.
5. Each child will wear identification that includes the phone number for the Director at First Steps Mother's Day Out.
6. Teachers will wear clearly identifiable clothing to be easily recognized by the children.
7. Supervising teachers will have transportation and a communication device, such as a cell phone, for emergencies.
8. At least one teacher trained in CPR and First Aid will be present on every field trip.
9. At least one Director from First Steps Mother's Day Out will be present on each field trip to oversee and support the event.

Volunteers

We welcome and appreciate volunteers for our field trips! Information about volunteering and how to sign up will be sent home prior to each trip.

Group and Individual Pictures

A professional photographer visits twice a year—in the Fall and Spring—to take individual and group photos of the children. You will receive advance notice of the exact date and time of the photo sessions.

T-Shirts

Orders for First Steps MDO T-shirts are taken each Fall. All children are required to wear their MDO T-shirts on field trip days. For younger children who do not attend field trips, we have a special MDO T-shirt day once a month. Order forms are available from the Director, and orders are placed in September.

Birthday Celebrations

Teachers will recognize each child's birthday on the Monday or Wednesday closest to their special day. Children with summer birthdays are encouraged to celebrate their **half birthdays** during the MDO school year.

Parents are welcome to provide a **store-bought snack** for the class on that day; cookies are preferred. Please coordinate with your child's teacher ahead of time if you plan to bring snacks or refreshments. If you wish to bring lunch for the class, please contact the Director in advance for approval.

Parental Involvement

At First Steps Mother's Day Out, we want you to feel connected and engaged with our program. We warmly encourage you to get involved in some way during the year.

Throughout the year, we will share opportunities for you to participate, and we invite you to ask your child's teacher or the Director about how you can contribute.

We look forward to partnering with you and growing together in God's love.

MDO Fundraisers

Our program operates on a nonprofit basis and depends on fundraising efforts to support improvements and enhancements.

We are continually working to upgrade our facilities and grounds to provide a safe and enjoyable environment for every child.

Your involvement and participation in fundraising activities are greatly appreciated and vital to our success.

