



## Welcome!

We are honored you have chosen Trinity Child Development Center (TCDC) for your child's preschool experience. We offer one of the finest programs available for children 12 months through 5 years. Our center was originated in September of 1964, when interested church members saw a need for a special kind of nurturing, educational opportunity for preschool children in Northeast Austin. Since that time, the Board of Directors and Staff have continued to uphold that same mission of providing quality, affordable early care and education to children within our economically and ethnically diverse community. We strive to provide stability and support to the children in our care and to their families, so that together we can truly impact future generations.

Trinity Child Development Center is licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services for forty-eight children. For over fifteen years TCDC has been a Texas Rising Star 4 Star Provider with Texas Workforce Child Care Solutions. We are also accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAYEC). We follow the stringent standards established by this national organization for educational excellence. TCDC is an independent, non-profit, 501(C)(3) corporation. We admit applicants without

discrimination in favor of or against any child on the basis of race, national origin, religion, or challenging conditions.

For the sake of simplicity, we've chosen to use "parents" within this handbook to refer to parents and guardians alike.

## **Mission**

The mission of Trinity Child Development Center is to provide quality, affordable early care and education to children within our economically and ethnically diverse community. We strive to provide stability and support to the children in our care and to their families, so that together we can truly impact future generations.

## **Philosophy**

Trinity Child Development Center purposefully focuses on the developmental levels and needs of young children. We recognize the essential connection between social, emotional, physical, cognitive, language, creative and spiritual development as parts of each individual. We honor and celebrate diversity and the uniqueness of each individual, and plan for differences in abilities, interests, learning styles and experience.

We believe:

- ❖ the early years are critical learning years which offer the opportunity to maximize potential brain development in young children

- ❖ responsive, nurturing relationships are key to quality early education and care
- ❖ safe, predictable environments help children to develop trust
- ❖ positive guidance methods build competence and self confidence
- ❖ children learn through active play
- ❖ parents and families are important teachers of children
- ❖ learning must be tied to positive emotions
- ❖ all children need advocates

Therefore we offer:

- ❖ experienced staff with extensive training in early care and education
- ❖ consistent, comforting and fun routines that meet the needs of each age group
- ❖ positive guidance methods including clear limits, redirection, modeling, opportunities to make choices, and positive expectations of each child
- ❖ planned activities and experiences to develop self-help skills and independence
- ❖ extensive opportunities to actively use all five senses
- ❖ a myriad of experiences to explore and discover our world and how it works
- ❖ an environment that fosters the ability to work cooperatively within a climate of unity and interdependence
- ❖ support of parents and staff for the important work that they are doing

- ❖ opportunities for everyone to develop, practice, and model happy, healthy behaviors
- ❖ small classes and low child to teacher ratios
- ❖ community building activities which lead to an extended family atmosphere where children feel at home

## Goals

To appreciate the individuality of oneself and others

To be self-confident in one's abilities

To develop and demonstrate self-regulation

To develop positive relationships with others

To develop and demonstrate pro-social attitudes

To develop and demonstrate conflict resolution skills

To develop and demonstrate independence skills

To develop and demonstrate gross and fine motor physical skills

To develop a healthy lifestyle

To nurture creativity

To develop and demonstrate communication skills

To acquire academic skills

## WHAT MATTERS TO US

### *Background*

Trinity CDC has always been more than just a child development center; it is a community of people from many generations devoted to learning and growing together. We value our history. In the mid-1960s the school was started by a Presbyterian church. In addition to the children's instruction, the founders felt physical, spiritual, and social-emotional development was instrumental to the holistic growth of a child. In 2001, when the Presbyterian Church could no longer support the center, the leaders decided it should become a stand-alone non-profit center. In 2015, the leadership worked to develop a statement of values to replace the original religious statement. They felt it was important to continue the legacy and state what is important to Trinity CDC.

## *Values*

### **THE WHOLE CHILD**

- We work to build a strong foundation for every child's body, mind, and spirit.
- We strive to build a child's self-esteem by developing competence and confidence.
- We provide and teach unconditional love.

### **COMMUNITY**

- Trinity CDC is an extension of a loving family.
- We care for one another: the children, the parents, the alumni, the teachers, the administrators, and the supporters.
- We stay small to keep a sense of family.
- We work as a team for the benefit of the families in our care.

### **INTEGRITY**

- We are honest with one another and with the children.

- We celebrate each person’s contributions and listen to all points of view.

## **QUALITY**

- We hire teachers of the highest quality who seek new ways to grow in their profession.
- We strive to be the best child development center by maintaining the highest standards.

## **RESPECT FOR THE WORLD**

- We care for the earth and are aware of the ways we can affect our environment.
- We teach the love of and curiosity about our natural world through hands on learning experiences.

## **HEALTHY BEHAVIORS**

- We appreciate who we are and take care of ourselves.
- We work to develop our physical skills and take part in daily, joyful physical activity.
- We practice good nutrition because we understand that what we put in our bodies affects our health.
- We practice resolving conflict by listening to each other and by using our words to share feelings and ideas.

## **SPIRITUALITY**

- We value connections with people, with animals, and with nature.
- We believe that gratefulness is important every day.
- We believe in the power of love.

## **DIVERSITY**

- We know that Trinity CDC is better because our families, staff, and supporters are diverse racially,

economically, and spiritually. We value all of these differences and work to be inclusive.

- We strive to maintain racial and economic diversity.
- We rejoice in each person's uniqueness.

**These values permeate what we do every day and reflect who we are.**

## **Curriculum**

The curriculum is what is taught and learned at Trinity CDC, both formal and informal. The major focus is to help each child acquire a healthy self-concept and to reach his/her potential more fully. This is accomplished by exposing him/her to many interesting things to explore and discover. Learning takes place when it is relevant, integrated, and offered through "hands-on" experiences with a combination of child initiated and teacher guided activities.

When planning formal weekly lessons, TCDC teachers first remember the philosophy, goals, and objectives of the center. They structure the curriculum by changing the environment and by listening to the children's interests. These "emergent curriculum" ideas, which come from the children and the adults who know them, vary from year to year dependent on the particular children. The ideas also come from events and experiences, and cultural and community happenings. They are tied to children's real-life experiences, and can be translated into hands-on activities. All of these

elements are woven together using a theme for weekly lesson plans and flexibly adapted as the need arises.

The curriculum planning focuses on all areas of a child's development (physical, emotional, social, cognitive, communicative, self-help, creative, and spiritual) through the integrated approach. Children are encouraged to explore, create, and learn at their own pace.

Teachers' plans, therefore, are based on regular observation and assessment of children's activities, interests, needs, and developmental levels. Materials are selected that seem to match those particular children's interests and needs. The teachers recognize the fact that individual children are our program and with each group of children come different needs, challenges, and strengths. We make every effort to communicate our observations with parents at conference times and throughout the year.

The classrooms include centers such as home living and creative dramatics, blocks, science, manipulatives, listening, art, library, language arts, sensory, and discovery. This environment in the individual centers is changed regularly to hold the children's interests and to offer them different ways to explore and experiment. Group activities include music and movement education, food preparation and enjoyment, transition activities (finger plays, songs, and creative dramatics); visitors in the classroom, trips to the library next door, and story time.

Children learn throughout the day from everything they do. Learning experiences are not isolated to one period

of the day. Children are encouraged to make choices, practice self-help skills, express their feelings, and respect others. Over our forty years of existence, Trinity CDC has provided a strong foundation to hundreds of children's future learning experiences.

Every classroom has a Parent Corner, where parents can check for lost and found, and may read such things as daily schedules, lesson plans, and other important information.

We strive to work together with families so that when a child leaves our facility, they are ready emotionally, socially, physically, and intellectually to thrive in their next endeavor.

### **Daily Schedules**

Each class has a slightly different daily schedule, which is posted in each room. These schedules are planned with the different age groups in mind and to balance indoor and outdoor, quiet and active, individual and small group, large and small muscle movement, and child and adult initiated activities.

### **Walking Trips and Visitors**

Teachers often plan for visitors to share their expertise in different areas. They may play an instrument, read a book, share a pet, help children with an art project, tell a story, or share a hobby or skill. In this way, the curriculum is enriched.

The older classes may go on walking field trips planned in conjunction with a curriculum unit. Because we do not transport children, we try to go on walking trips around

the neighborhood. Parents must sign the Trips Permission box on the Application Information Form and will be notified 48 hours in advance of the trip by reading the classroom door notes. When we are away from the facility, teachers carry cell phones, first aid equipment, and emergency information at all times and have discussed specific potential problems before they leave. At all times, we will ensure the utmost safety of the children.

### **Animals in the Classroom**

Currently, Trinity CDC has a guinea pig on the premises. She is in a cage, although at times the children and staff get her out to pet and feed. Good hygiene practices are followed and children are always asked to wash their hands after touching her.

We are not able to have contact with chickens, ducks, reptiles, and amphibians due to the danger of salmonellosis. Occasionally, someone brings a cat, rabbit, rodent, or dog. We always require that visiting animals have statements from a veterinarian stating that they are in good health and have the necessary vaccinations. We will inform you of special visits. There is a generic permission statement on the admission information form.

### **Rest and Nap Times**

All children are required to rest during the day. TCDC provides a sleeping mat for each child. This mat is cleaned and secured in a bag. We are very interested in the schedules of individual families and will do our best to accommodate individual rest habits. Usually soft

music is played in the background. Parents provide a clean sheet and blanket every Monday. After one hour of resting on their mats, children are allowed to do quiet activities until everyone in the classroom is awake.

## **Assessment of and Planning for Children**

Teachers treat each individual child as a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth and development. Teachers acknowledge individual interests, culture, and experiences when planning the weekly theme activities and remember that each class is also unique. Different levels of ability, development, and learning styles are expected, accepted, and used to design appropriate activities.

Teachers always take into account: self-help and practical skills, social-emotional skills, physical skills (both large and small muscle), healthy habits, language skills, cognitive skills, and creative skills. Teachers and families together are encouraged to think in terms of strengths, areas of focus, and action steps for school and home.

Teachers will work in concert with family members when they offer them the opportunity to share observations from home and discuss regularly observations from school. Teachers will remember that information regarding specific children is to be considered confidential. **This means that it will only be discussed with staff that “needs to know” about the particular child and that before information is**

**shared with any professional, families will give consent.**

The purposes of assessment are to:

- ❖ Use all of the gathered information to ensure that each child is making progress in all areas of their development and to describe such progress
- ❖ Identify children's interests and needs
- ❖ Improve our curriculum and to adapt our teaching practices and environment to the particular individual and collective group of children
- ❖ Plan for program improvement
- ❖ Communicate specific information about children to their families
- ❖ Address serious concerns about a child's development or behavior. If there are such, we work as a team to help find solutions for the child's behavior or developmental delays. This teamwork includes conferring with the families, with any specialists with whom we have access (such as the ACGC Family Consultant), or referral to ECI, pediatricians, etc.

Each child will have an individual portfolio that will include these things at a minimum:

- ❖ The Developmental History of each child filled out by a parent and a yearly updated development sheet.
- ❖ Progress Checklists
- ❖ Samples of each child's scribbling, writing, &/or drawing

- ❖ Photos of children accomplishing a milestone or participating in daily activities
- ❖ Anecdotal records especially those that document developmental milestones
- ❖ Summary and dates of formal teacher-parent conferences

We do not discriminate and will attempt to meet the requirements of children with special needs by being in conversation with parents at all times. This includes initial visits and once enrolled, we will create an individual plan with appropriate strategies.

## **Communication**

We believe that home-school communication is one of the most important aspects of a good relationship. Trinity CDC has created several avenues for to facilitate effective two-way communication. Additionally, we are committed to providing information through each family's home language and will work with you for needed translations, both verbal and written.

## **Parent's Knowledge of their Children**

At registration time, families are asked to fill out developmental histories of their children and will be asked to update this information yearly. We also ask that you share information about important events and changes in your child's life, as this is critical to our understanding.

## **Teacher Conferences**

Teacher conferences may be scheduled by parents or teachers to discuss the progress of each child. Twice a  
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year, in the fall and spring, we have a sign-up procedure to ensure that every family has a chance to speak with the teacher in a non-hurried atmosphere. The fall conference will focus more on the parent telling the teacher about their child. The spring conference will focus more on the teacher telling the parent how the child is doing at school.

### **Daily Notes via Tadpoles**

Morning teachers of our one and two year olds provide daily notes through Tadpoles to inform parents of children's eating styles, physical well-being, activities, and growth, via tadpoles. The logistics of extra notices and paperwork are handled somewhat differently for each class, but they are usually placed in the child's lunchbox or cubby.

### **Tadpoles**

Trinity uses a daily check in software called **Tadpoles**. This helps us cut down on paper usage, but paper copies can be given to parents upon request. Tadpoles will provide parents to instant access to children's schedule, meals, potty breaks, pictures, and daily activities on a daily basis. Please download the app for your phone, emails will also be sent.

### **Classroom Cubbies**

Important messages for parents such as receipts and newsletters are placed in the children's cubbies. Please check them regularly.

## Informal Chats

We welcome your questions and input at any time. We only ask you not disrupt class time to talk. Drop off time is an important time to spend a couple of minutes orienting a teacher to the child's moods and needs. Please don't be offended if the teacher can't spend more than five minutes talking with you when you bring your child or pick him/her up. Our primary concern is to supervise the children in our care. If you want or need more time to talk, please ask for a conference time or give the director a message. Important information that you have to share should be written.

## Observations and Visits

You are welcome to come observe, eat lunch, join us for chapel, etc. We encourage you to share your talents with our class - sing, read a book, show us about your work, or just play and talk with your child's friends. Sometimes young children have a difficult time when their parent is at the center at a different than normal time. Please check with your teacher for your particular child's needs and a good time to visit.

## Telephone Calls

Many times we are with the children and cannot answer the phone. Please leave a message and we will get back to you as soon as possible. If you really need to talk to a person and yet get our voice mail, you may hang up and try again. We do try and listen for persistent ringing and will attempt to return those calls sooner rather than later. The school phone 512-928-2212 goes directly to the Director's cell phone, so someone will always be available.

## Email

For those of you who have access to email, we will gladly send our newsletters and other important notes electronically if you will let the office know that you prefer information in this fashion. You may also choose to use our WEB site for the calendar and various other information ([www.trinitycdc.org](http://www.trinitycdc.org)).

## School Schedule

The Center operates year-round and is open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. We do close for certain holidays and workdays at different times of the year. You will be notified of days closed on the Enrollment Agreement and reminded in an email and on notes posted on the door. Please mark these dates on your calendar so there are no surprises.

## Inclement Weather

Trinity CDC will close for inclement weather if Austin ISD announces so before 7 a.m. When listening to the news media, if AISD announces closure or late start for the day, Trinity CDC will also be closed. Parents will also be notified via tadpoles and Facebook as soon as any closures are announced. In case of closure announced once the school day has started, parents will be called and arrangements made for safe, prompt pick up.

## Transportation

You may park in the circular drive but we do ask that **you pull up in front of the church door and do not**

**block the entrance of the drive.** We want staff and other parents to be able to enter the circular drive at all times. Please follow the path from the circular drive to TCDC's entrance. Parking in the shopping area is fine as long as you do not park in front of the businesses. You may also park in the street as long as you do not do so in front of a no-parking sign. We realize that our parking situation is not the best, so please be considerate.

Do not leave children, purses or other belongings in unlocked cars, even if you run in for only a moment. Please help by watching out for other children who may also be coming and going from our center, as well as the library and activities across the street. Children will not be allowed to cross the street alone, nor will they be allowed to enter cars that are double parked.

If the TCDC door is ever locked, please come around to the playground and use the inner courtyard door.

**Please, always keep the chain on both gates.**

Children can run toward the street faster than we can!

Transportation is not provided by the center.

### **Arrival, Attendance, and Absence Policy**

Upon arrival, each child will be asked to wash their hands and be given a daily health check by the teacher in charge. (See Health section) We know parents are often in a hurry in the mornings, but we encourage all family members bringing children to take a few minutes and let the teachers know important information about their children. **Please do not use cell phones when picking up and dropping off**, this allows teachers to

communicate with you about your child and the day. It is helpful for us to know what kind of a night they had, their general mood in the morning, and if there are any special circumstances that might help us understand their feelings (e.g. fell asleep much later than usual; death in family, moving, scared of thunderstorm, etc.)

Children may come any time after 7:00 a.m. and before 9:30. We are unable to care for your children before 7:00 a.m. Children benefit most from our program if they arrive before 9:30 as late arrivals miss out on an important socialization time. In order to bring your child between 9:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., you must first check with the director by phone or in person.

Please notify us if your child will be absent. Calls may be made to our answering machine any time night or day. Email is also an easy way to communicate. We must keep accurate records for other agencies regarding illnesses and other absences, so please always let us know if your child is ill.

## **Release Policy**

Children shall be picked up in the classroom or from the playground by a parent, guardian, or designated adult and signed out using Tadpoles. The child will be released only to persons properly designated on the Application Information form. If someone other than the designated person(s) is to pick-up a child, please notify the teacher and/or director, preferably in writing. Photo IDs will be checked and copies may be made if we do not know the person.

Under the laws of Texas, both parents have the right to pick up their child, unless a court document restricts that right. An enrolling parent who chooses not to include the child's other parent on the authorized pick-up list must file an official court document (for example, current restraining order, sole custody decree, etc.) with the center. Absent that document, the center may release the child to either parent, provided that parent documents his paternity/her maternity of the child.

If your child is part-time, please pick him/her promptly in order to allow our afternoon schedule to go smoothly.

If you are unavoidably detained, please telephone us and let us know when we may expect you.

### **Money Matters/Registration Fee**

A \$100 Registration Fee insures your child a place in our program. It must be paid annually at the time of registration and is non-refundable.

### **Tuition**

Tuition is based on the number of days and the hours per day a child is at the center. A 10% discount is given for each additional child from the same family.

**Pink Room:** For children 12 months through 18 months

<b>Pick-Up Time</b>	<b>Mon through Fri</b>	<b>Mon-Wed-Fri</b>	<b>Tues-Thurs</b>
<b>6:00</b>	\$1010.00	\$760.00	\$655.00

**Pink Room:** For children 19 months – 3 years

<b>Pick-Up Time</b>	<b>Mon through Fri</b>	<b>Mon-Wed-Fri</b>	<b>Tues-Thurs</b>
<b>6:00</b>	\$875.00	\$655.00	\$570.00

**Purple Room:** For children in middle multi-age room (older 2s and 3 year olds)

<b>Pick-Up Time</b>	<b>Mon through Fri</b>	<b>Mon-Wed-Fri</b>	<b>Tues-Thurs</b>
<b>6:00</b>	\$845.00	\$635.00	\$550.00

**Orange and Blue Room:** For children in oldest multi-age room (older 3s, 4s, and 5 year olds)

<b>Pick-Up Time</b>	<b>Mon through Fri</b>	<b>Mon-Wed-Fri</b>	<b>Tues-Thurs</b>
<b>6:00</b>	\$800.00	\$600.00	\$520.00

**\*Yearly Supply fee is \$100\***

**Late Tuition Fee** Tuition is due in advance at the first of each month. There is a five day grace period. On the 6th day of the month, there will be a \$10.00 late fee plus \$5.00 per working day until the amount is paid in full. We prefer that parents pay tuition by check or money order, although cash will be accepted as long as the right change is given.

**Exception** Special payment arrangements may be made with the director in writing by the 1st of the month. A late fee will not be charged if payment is made according

to the agreement. The Center will not carry any account for more than one month.

**Checks** All checks may be made payable to Trinity Child Development Center. They may be given to the director or left in the grey box on the wall in the director's office. A \$40.00 fee will be charged for returned checks due to insufficient funds. If more than two prior checks have been returned for insufficient funds, then only a money order or cash will be accepted. PayPal can also be used, the PayPal fee is the parent's responsibility.

**Notification of Tuition Due** To help parents remember when tuition is due, a sign will be posted on the front door. On the 6th of every month, parents who do not have a written agreement will sent a reminder.

**Refunds and Cancellation** Neither credit nor refund can be granted for a child's absence from school. Absences from school or holidays observed shall cause no exception in the amount of tuition due. If your child normally comes only two or three days a week, you must pay for days attended if other than the regular days. Days cannot be traded for part time children. When withdrawing, parents must give a two weeks' notice or the full month's tuition will be due whether or not the child is in attendance.

**Late Pick-up Fee** Children who are normally picked up before Noon or 3:00 p.m., and who stay past their designated pick-up time will be assessed an additional fee based on an hourly rate of \$5 per hour. Our hours of operation are 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM. We do give a 5 minute grace period to allow for unforeseen circumstances that will occur from time to time. We need for all children and parents to leave the building by 6:00 PM, so that the staff may close the CDC. Parents in the Center past 6:05 p.m. will be charged a late fee of \$10.00 plus \$1.00 for each minute the child stays past 6:05 p.m. This charge will be collected at the time of each occurrence and is in accord with policies enforced at other facilities throughout the city. Parents are asked to call the school if they know they will be late so that we may help to comfort your child in case he/she is worried.

**Workforce Child Care Services** If you receive tuition subsidies, you are required to report changes of your status (change of address, employment, household information, etc.) to Workforce within 10 days. **You are required to swipe your attendance card daily.** Do not get behind in your attendance reporting, it's difficult to catch up. If you lose your attendance card, you must report that to Workforce immediately and inform our director. Payment of parent fees is due by the 5th of each month or the 5th and 20th of each month if your payment is split in two. The Workforce telephone number is (512) 597-7191.

## Health Practices

### Admission Requirements

Upon enrollment, all students must have the following health information on site:

1. A wellness statement signed by your child's physician (must be updated annually)
2. A record of current immunizations required by the Texas Department of Health. Currently, TB tests are not required in Travis County.
3. Four year olds are required to have a vision and hearing screening, provided at Trinity.
4. Emergency contact information for each child (must be kept up to date throughout the year). At the beginning of each new school year, parents will be asked to fill out new enrollment information for their children. Current information about any health insurance coverage required by treatment in an emergency (insurance company, subscriber's name & policy number)
5. Names of individuals authorized by the family to have access to the child's health information
6. Written instructions from a physician for any of the child's special health needs such as allergies, asthma, or other chronic illness

## Daily Health Check

Every day when your child comes to school, teachers are to do a health check of him/her. This consists of checking for signs of illness, injury, or evidence of possible abuse or neglect. You can help by telling us important things about your child's well-being. (For instance, if your child coughed and was awake most of the night, let us know. If she fell down and cut her eye, tell us.) Daily health checks are a sign of quality care and are for the protection of all the children.

We are not allowed to admit a child who seems to be sick unless a health care professional has given approval in writing. This may cause problems for parents, but is necessary for the well-being of the other children. If the child has been absent because of a contagious illness, we must follow guidelines concerning when the child can return to our care.

## Illness and Exclusion Criteria

Because we are not licensed for get-well care, we may not admit a child if one or more of the following exists:

1. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities, including outdoor play
2. The illness results in a greater need for care than we can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children

3. The child has one of the following, unless medical evaluation by a health care professional indicates that we can include the child in our activities:
  - a. The child has an oral temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher (armpit temperature of 99.4) accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness

Or

  - b. symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, two or more vomiting episodes in 24 hours, rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, behavior changes, or other signs that the child may be severely ill
4. A health care professional has diagnosed the child with a communicable disease, and the child does not have medical documentation to indicate that the child is no longer contagious.

If the child becomes ill while at school, he will be isolated so as not to expose new individuals and a parent or guardian will be called to pick-up the child as quickly as possible. If a critical illness requires the immediate attention of a physician, we will contact EMS.

Children with contagious or infectious diseases will be re-admitted according to the guidelines on the

Communicable Disease Chart published by the State of Texas. Parents are encouraged to report any communicable diseases to us for the safety of the other children. Anytime you take a child to a doctor for illness, you should bring a note from that physician which states when the child may return to school.

### **Policy on handling and notifying parents about medical emergencies**

In case of an accidental injury that may require medical attention, we will make an immediate attempt to contact a parent or guardian. If we can't reach anyone, we will call the name listed as your emergency contact. If we still cannot reach anyone, we will call the child's physician. It is to your child's benefit that you keep the school informed of current telephone numbers and emergency numbers.

In case of a critical illness or injury requiring immediate attention of a physician, we will call EMS, then give the child first aid or CPR if needed, contact the physician and then the parents while ensuring supervision of the other children.

Licensing standards say that we must notify parents after a child:

- ✱ Is injured and the injury requires medical attention by a health care professional
- ✱ Has a sign or symptom requiring exclusion from the center as specified on the

Communicable Disease Chart that is posted in the office

- \* Has been involved in any situation that places the child at risk
- \* Has been involved in a situation that renders the center unsafe (such as a fire, flood, severe weather damage)

Parents will be notified of less serious injuries such as minor cuts, scratches, and bites requiring first-aid treatment at time of pick up.

We will notify parents in writing and within 48 hours when aware that your child has been exposed to a communicable disease that the law requires us to report to the Texas Department of Health. We will do this by posting a note on the front door that tells the type, signs and symptoms, mode of transmission, period of communicability, and control measures.

We will also provide written notification within 48 hours to the children in a classroom when an outbreak of lice occurs.

### **Procedures for Dispensing Medicine**

We prefer that families give medicine at home whenever possible. When you absolutely must ask us to administer a dosage or two, please remember the following:

Medicine can be administered only when:

- \* A licensed health provider who has prescribed or recommended the medication has written instructions for administering the medication
- \* It is brought in the original container
- \* It is clearly labeled with the child's first and last name and dosage
- \* The medicine is placed in the locked medication cupboard or refrigerator. (Do not leave any medication in diaper bags.)
- \* The parent or guardian signs a medication authorization for each medication
- \* If there is a long-term medication to be given (for recurring or periodic problems like asthma or allergic reactions), then a long-term medication form must be filled out every six months. This authorization form must include information on symptoms to watch for and a plan from the doctor.

All medicine must be disposed of or returned to the parent when the medication is out-of-date or no longer required for the child or when the child withdraws.

### **Prevention of Illness**

Two of the best methods for preventing illness are hand washing and covering sneezes and coughs. Parents can help us by encouraging the same methods at home. Staff and children are required to wash their hands many times a day. Please follow our example and have your child often wash hands with soap for as long as it takes to sing the

“Alphabet Song.” We teach children to cough or sneeze into the crook of their elbow, thereby avoiding the spread of those germs by using their hands and then immediately touching objects or people.

***Teacher Health Requirements*** Our teachers and other staff members are immunized as required by the Travis County Health Department. At this time, no immunizations are required.

## **Food Practices\***

### **Breakfast**

Children may eat breakfast brought from home between 7:00 and 7:30 a.m. ONLY. Children are served morning snack at 9:30 (Blue and Purple Rooms) and 9:30 (Pink Room), and meals/snacks must be two hours apart. Children arriving at the center after 7:30 a.m. should eat breakfast at home. Breakfast brought to the center should include a protein or dairy (eggs, cheese, yogurt, or a glass of milk for example), a fruit, and a whole grain (whole wheat tortilla, bagel, etc.). Please no sugary foods such as sugared cereals, donuts, or Pop Tarts.

### **Morning and Afternoon Snacks**

Each child is offered a nutritious snack at mid-morning (between 9 and 9:30). For those children staying after 3:00 p.m., TCDC will provide a nutritious snack and drink. These snacks will consist of two of the following: grain, dairy, fruit,

vegetable. In addition, water is also provided. Cooking or food preparation may also be part of a class lesson. Menus are posted on the Parent Bulletin Board in the hall. If you'd like your own copy, please ask and we will copy it for you.

## Lunch

Trinity CDC provides 2% milk and water at lunch time. Lunch is no closer than 2 hours or more than 3 hours from snack times. Parents and guardians provide the food for their child's lunch. According to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, while children are in our care, they must eat food that provides them with one-half (1/2) of their daily food needs. Consequently, we rely on you to provide a nutritious lunch. Because children learn best if their nutritional needs are being met, we ask parents not to send food with empty calories

*Please do not bring these foods into TCDC for breakfast or for lunch*

Potato chips	Fritos
Cheetos	
Plain Jell-O	Cookies
Candy	
Brownies	Cakes
Pudding	
Fruit snacks	Gum

Drinks other than white milk or alternative plain milk choices (no juice, sodas, tea, chocolate milk)

By sending only healthy foods, children are not tempted to fill up on the chips, cookies, etc., thus depriving themselves of the foods needed to develop strong minds and bodies. It works best if parents think of sending one fruit, one vegetable, one protein (meat, peanut butter, cheese, yogurt, egg), and one grain (crackers, bread, pretzels, biscuit, etc.). Please try and send lunches that include all these four foods. Teachers will attempt to give families suggestions on types of food that your child is or is not enjoying at school. Together we can help children learn healthy, life-long habits!

Lunches will not be kept in a refrigerator or heated. Often parents find it helpful to use "blue ice" and/or thermal jars in the lunch boxes to keep items at a temperature to the child's liking. Meat, dairy, or egg products must either be in a thermos or be in a lunch bag with Blue Ice. See the office if you need an icepack.

We discourage wasting your money on Lunchables and lots of prepackaged food. Besides being expensive, they often contain lots of sodium and other additives. It's better to prepare your own little packages (take a package of meat; cut it up and divide into 5 bags of meat on Sunday night). We

also encourage family members to educate themselves by reading information about good nutrition and the labels on food packaging. The food we offer young children sets a pattern for and affects so many things: brain development, diabetes, obesity, stress, etc.

Choking can be a very dangerous problem with young children. In order to keep our children as safe as possible, we follow these rules: We are not allowed to give children who are one, two, and three year olds these foods: hot dogs that are whole or sliced into rounds; whole grapes; nuts; popcorn; raw peas, hard pretzels; spoonful's of peanut butter; or chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole. If you do send a hot dog, grapes, chicken nuggets, fish sticks, or any of these foods, please cut them into pieces no larger than ½ inch square according to each child's chewing and swallowing capability.

Good and easy ideas for lunch include choosing something from any of the following columns. Remember: we ask family members to send something from each food group. Besides sending healthy food, we also want you to make preparing lunch as easy as possible

**Grain** (Whole grains are best)      **Protein**  
**Fruit**                                      **Vegetable**

Whole wheat bread	Peanut butter (sandwich)	Banana	Carrots (must be shredded or cooked for those 3 and under)
Crackers	Peanut butter (on crackers)	Applesauce	Cherry or grape tomatoes
Pizza slice	(Cheese or meat on pizza slice)	Apple	(Tomato sauce & other veggies on pizza)
Rice cakes	Pieces of turkey, chicken, ham, meat	Peaches	Cucumber slices
Tortilla	Beans (spread on tortilla)	Melon pieces	Green peas or beans
Bagel	Cream Cheese	Strawberries	Corn
Whole wheat roll	Chicken leg	Orange	Broccoli pieces with dip
English muffin	Yogurt/soy	Plum	Baby spinach leaves
Bread for sandwich	Tuna fish salad (sandwich)	Raisins	Dill pickle
Pasta, or rice dish  You may want to heat at home	Meat in the sauce	Grapes (cut into quarters)	Green beans

& put in a thermal jar.			
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\*Food allergies in classrooms will be taken into consideration at meal times. Please ask your classroom teacher if a known severe allergy is present. The health and well-being of our staff and students is of the utmost importance.

Please provide an Allergy/asthma action plan for all children with allergies or asthma.

### **Bottles and Cups**

Toddlers must not carry bottles, sippy cups, or regular cups with them while crawling or walking.

They must be seated to drink. By the time children are old enough to come to our program, we believe that they are ready to use a cup. If a child is not using a cup when they begin our program, our staff will work with families to help develop those skills as quickly as possible. Only water will be allowed in sippy cups or bottles, which must be labeled with the child's whole name and kept in their cubby.

### **Teeth Brushing**

All children in the Blue Room have the opportunity to brush their teeth at least once a day. Parents may be asked to provide a child sized toothbrush and toothpaste.

## Guidance and Discipline Policy

Guidance and discipline techniques are based on an understanding of individual needs and development while promoting self-discipline and acceptable behavior. Staff attempt to anticipate and eliminate potential problems as much as possible. Discipline shall be directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control in a loving manner.

Staff use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction which include:

1. Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only on the unacceptable behavior.
2. Reminding children of behavior expectations by giving clear, positive directions and guidance on the child's level of understanding. (e.g. "Walking feet" or "Blocks are for building" or "It's time to put away the dishes.")
3. Redirecting behavior by using positive statements ("Blocks are for building - try throwing this ball.")
4. Using brief, supervised separation from the activity or group. This allows for "cool-off" time. Older children decide as much as possible when they are ready to act appropriately. The time is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.

5. Teaching by example using fair and consistent rules. Discipline is relevant to the behavior involved.
6. Supervising, always aware of all activity, showing an attitude of understanding and firmness.
7. Helping children to understand why their conduct is unacceptable and letting them know what is acceptable in a given situation.
8. Helping to solve problems creatively when a conflict arises. Teachers help children verbalize the problem (e.g. "You both want that tricycle.") Depending upon the child's age, either the Teachers either suggest ideas or children will help to problem-solve ("I could get that other tricycle.)
9. Using consequences whenever possible. (e.g. You threw the milk on the floor. Get a towel and wipe it up.")
10. Communicating frequently with parents to discuss areas of concern, unusual behavior, common patterns, and strategies.

According to DFPS regulations, 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 an 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
9. Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.

Although Trinity CDC does not expect to have consistent discipline problems, it is a possibility upon occasion. If difficult discipline problems arise, they will first be handled by the classroom teacher, then by the Director. If the staff determines that it would be beneficial to the child or the center, parents will be requested to make an appointment for a conference with the teacher (and perhaps the Director) to discuss the situation. The purpose of the conference is for TCDC staff and parents to share information, observations and suggestions about the child's behavior and to problem solve together.

Trinity CDC will make every effort to understand the cultural context of the family when making decisions regarding a child. However, there may be times when we feel it is in the best interest of the child to consult with experts regarding the child's behavior

or social/emotional state. We have access to any community resources to help families and we reserve the right to require observation, evaluation, and/or therapy by a trained professional for the continued enrollment of a child in need.

Unusual behavior exhibited by a student may be related to events or experiences outside the center. Parents are encouraged to share their concerns with the center staff and to keep them informed about situations (family deaths, major changes to routines, etc.) that might affect the student's attitude or behavior temporarily, and which might require special consideration. If disruptive behavior continues after conferences and other attempts to resolve the problems are unsuccessful, the child may need to be removed from the classroom setting. A child may be dismissed from the center if his or her presence is determined to be detrimental to the child, to other children, or to the best interest of the center. If the center dismisses a child, the parents are no longer obligated to pay the tuition fees.

## **Parking**

There usually is room for at least 3 vehicles directly in front of the center on the street. Do not park beyond the sign that says "No Parking." You may briefly pull into the circular drive for drop of/pick-up but we ask that you not block it. We want people to

be able to drive through between the 2 rows of parked cars. You may also park in the shopping center across the street as long as you do not park directly in front of the businesses.

## **Safety**

Our premises are inspected annually by the Fire Marshall, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, the City of Austin Health and Sanitation Department, and by representatives of Texas Workforce Child Care Services. Fire drills are held once a month and tornado drills once every three months to help the children and staff practice emergency procedures.

If classes and administrative staff are all on the playground, you may find our front door locked. Please come through the second chain link gate to find your children in the afternoon if that happens.

According to Texas Law, we are required to report any kind of suspected neglect, sexual, physical, or emotional abuse of a child.

Trinity CDC carries accidental insurance on the children for accidents that may happen on the premises.

## **Emergency Evacuation Plan**

Our plan is designed to ensure the safety of children during a fire, weather, or other emergency requiring

evacuation or relocation of the children. We practice fire drills monthly and have bad weather drills at least every three months. When there are fire drills, we follow the evacuation and relocation diagram that is posted in every classroom.

We have emergency lock down drills quarterly as required by state licensing. If you have any questions or concerns please contact the office.

In case of gas explosion or hazardous material spill, we will wait for emergency response teams to transport us. We would go to the library next door, to Highland Mall on Airport Blvd., or to any other location designated by the City of Austin Office of Emergency Management. Staff will notify parents as soon as possible in order to assure them their children are safe and to let them know to where the children have been relocated. In all instances, as soon as possible, staff will also post a message on the 928-2212 phone number call notes to inform parents as to what happened.

## **Enrollment and Termination Policies**

Enrollment in our program is based on available space without regard to race, sex, creed, or religion.

We operate with a waiting list. After visiting the center and talking with the Director, when a family decides that they want to enroll their child in our center, a registration fee must be paid. When there is space available, the family will be notified and

arrangements made regarding the first day of enrollment. Children and parents are encouraged to visit at least once and as many times as desired to familiarize the child with the setting and the people.

On or before the first day of admission, parents must fill out and turn in all required paperwork including Admission Information, Enrollment Agreement, Emergency Authorization, Health Statement, Immunizations, and Personal Child Information. Parents must update all Admission Information such as phone numbers and addresses quarterly or when such information changes.

Parents will be provided with this Parent Handbook, which includes all of Trinity CDC's operational policies and procedures. When a policy is changed by the Board of Directors, parents will be notified with an individual note in the Family Folder. Parents must sign the updated policy and this form will be kept in the child's records.

Parents are to give a two week notice before withdrawing their child.

### **Family Participation (Procedures for visiting, observing, and for participating)**

We believe that parents are indeed the child's first and most important teacher. We also recognize the fact that children do not come with instruction

manuals. We do everything in our power to work WITH families in meeting each individual child's needs. We aim to strengthen the role of the family in whatever ways we can and welcome ideas from family members as to how we can best achieve teamwork, open communication, and ultimately success for the child.

Parents are encouraged to take a few minutes at the beginning of the day to give needed information to the teacher when they bring the children.

Establishing a consistent pattern is helpful for the children. You may want to put their breakfast on the table and give them a big hug. You may choose to play on the floor a few minutes or read a book. The most important thing is to reassure your child when you will be back and to tell him/her goodbye. This unhurried manner of leaving your children makes for a better day for everyone.

Parents are welcome to visit the center at any time. You do not have to secure prior approval. Because the youngest children can be very sensitive to changes in their routines, parents are encouraged to observe from a window or from a distance.

Spending direct time with your child and their class often works best at the end of the day for these smaller children. Parents of the older children are encouraged to eat lunch with them or walk with us to chapel or the library.

Other activities that families may participate in are:

- \* Reading all communication from TCDC
- \* Helping in the classroom by sharing a hobby or professional skill, etc.
- \* Attending our semi-annual Family Picnics
- \* Attending orientation and parent meetings
- \* Helping at workdays to spruce up the playground or classrooms
- \* Planning and participating in our yearly fundraisers (typically a yard sale in the spring and Sharing with Santa in December)
- \* Giving feedback to the teachers and director, including filling out our regular surveys
- \* Serving on the Board or its committees

TCDC encourages family involvement in all of its activities. That involvement makes our center a quality center starts new parents on the road to effective parent participation for another 12 – 15 years and helps to build a real feeling of community for our most important resources – the children!

## **Grievance Policy**

You may find yourself displeased with something that has happened at our center. We ask that you talk about those things first with the person directly involved. (E.g. with the teacher assistant, or lead teacher or director.) If you don't feel satisfied after conversations with a teacher or assistant, please go to the director. If you still feel the matter is not

resolved after consultation with the director, you may contact the Board of Directors of TCDC. Names and phone numbers are available in the office. She/he will ask that you put the concern in writing.

### **Procedures for parents to review Minimum Standards and most recent Licensing Inspection Report**

At any time, parents may ask to review the Minimum Standard Rules for Child Care Centers which are kept in the office and in every classroom. All of our Licensing Inspection Reports are posted on the Hall Bulletin Board for your viewing. Parents are encouraged to ask questions or for clarification at any time. If you believe that the State's Minimum Standards aren't being met and you receive no satisfaction from the director, you may call the Child Care Licensing Office. Their number is 834-3195 and is posted in the office. (<http://www.txchildcaresearch.org>). A licensing representative will investigate your complaint.

Parents are also required by law to report any suspected neglect or abuse of a child by calling 1-800-252-5400.

## Odds and Ends

### Birthdays and Holidays

The philosophy concerning holidays at TCDC is:

- \* to foster a sense of community, family, and togetherness
- \* to provide a stress free environment for children and adults
- \* to provide fun and help mark time for children
- \* to avoid commercialism and over-stimulation
- \* to reflect our goal of encouraging a healthy lifestyle and
- \* to provide information & plan activities in a developmentally appropriate manner.

With those ideals in mind, here's what takes place in regards to

**Halloween:** We encourage dressing up and pretending in our dramatic play centers as we do throughout the year. We talk about pretend and real. We talk about the fall harvest which includes pumpkins. We also learn that a pumpkin with a face is called a jack-o-lantern. We often cut open a pumpkin and let each child experience pulling out pulp and seeds. On the 31st, the children do NOT bring costumes to wear and we do not encourage trick or treating or eating of candy. We often ask that children wear clothing that's either all orange or has the color orange in it. We find the children to be

much happier and stress free without too much activity that could cause fear or confusion for them.

**Christmas:** We encourage the ideas of sharing with others and spreading love. On the first weekend in December, we do have a Santa Claus visit our Saturday Sharing event. Everyone is encouraged to bring presents TO Santa and become a Santa's Helper. Santa puts no focus on what individuals GET for Christmas but on what they are going to do or share. We do not encourage candy or other sweets. We do not exchange gifts, but instead focus on making presents and pictures, and sharing ourselves with those we love or who are in need.

**Easter:** We focus on new life: butterflies coming from caterpillars, eggs hatching into birds or chickens, and baby animals (rabbits, lambs, etc.). We do have an Egg Hunt on a Thursday where children find boiled or plastic eggs filled not with candy, but with healthy items (raisins, cheerios, toys, playdough, etc.)

**Birthdays:** Birthdays are special time for us all; it is our very own special day. We will celebrate birthdays in each class in whatever manner that you and the teacher believe is appropriate for all children involved. We ask that gifts not be given to children at any center function and that if you give out invitations, they only be distributed at the center if all the children from that class have been invited. A wonderful way to share your child's birthday with everyone is to donate a book or tape to the

classroom in his or her name. Parents are under no obligation to bring anything for the child's birthday, but sometimes do like to provide food. In keeping with our healthy food policy, acceptable birthday snacks are fruit trays and muffins. Sometimes parents like to provide pizza for a classroom at lunch although we do have to work together as some children have dietary restrictions. Low-key, inexpensive activities may also be planned (piñata, face-painting, a visit from a family member, etc.)

### **Breastfeeding**

Mothers who are breastfeeding may do so in the school office. Parents have a right to breastfeed or provide breast milk for their child while in care.

### **Clothing**

Clothing which is removable (sweaters, caps, etc.) should be labeled with child's name. Comfortable play clothes are best for school. We try to use cover ups for our "messy" work, but sometimes accidents happen. Therefore, we ask that your child not wear something that would upset you if it got dirt or paint on it.

For safety purposes, flip flops may NOT be worn. We prefer that children not wear cowboy boots or open-heeled sandals or shoes as they are not safe for the climbing we do outdoors. Sneakers or rubber-soled shoes with a back are best for climbing and running. Likewise, jewelry is often not

appropriate for our child-oriented activities; it is best left at home.

Every child should have at least one seasonally appropriate change of clothing at school. Younger children who tend to have more bathroom accidents should have several changes of underwear.

Bathroom accidents or spills can happen to anyone and children handle it best when they have a change of their own clothing. All clothing should be labeled with the child's name to help avoid loss and confusion.

### **Confidentiality**

We strive to ensure confidentiality for our children and families. Student information and results of screenings and assessments are confidential and shared only with parents and teachers who have direct contact with the child. Results may be shared with consultants when parents have given written permission.

We work with parents to help them see the need for staff to know of special circumstances in a child's life because these can affect our dealings and knowledge for working with the child. When information is shared, speculation is avoided; facts are stated. If in doubt about whether to share information or how to share information, please discuss this with the Director.

All parents give written permission at admission for health information (screenings, tests, diagnoses, and

treatments and recommendations) to be shared with members of the teaching staff who are assigned responsibility for that child's care and education. This also includes TCDC's health consultant and other visiting regulatory agencies if necessary.

We strive to maintain confidentiality and the family's right to privacy, refraining from disclosure of confidential information and intrusion into family life. However, when we have reason to believe that a child's welfare is at risk, it is permissible to share confidential information with regulatory agencies and individuals who have legal responsibility for intervening in the child's interest.

### **Gang-Free Zone**

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

### **Items from Home**

Because young children often find sharing of personal items difficult and because there is a potential for damage or loss, children are encouraged to leave treasured possessions and toys at home. "Security objects" such as stuffed animals or blankets are sometimes needed to facilitate the transition from home to school. In the event your child does bring an object from home, the toy or object will remain in his/her cubby or special place provided by the teacher. Parents should not allow

items to come which are irreplaceable. There may be days when the teacher will ask for particular items (e.g. round items for circle week; Teddy Bears for the Teddy Bear picnic, etc.). Books and tapes or CDs are welcome almost any day, as long as their main theme is NOT violence. Please label all items so that they can be returned home safely.

### **Nap Items**

Parents provide a crib sheet and blanket, (and a small, child-sized pillow if desired) for the children. It is the parent's responsibility to take those items home for laundering every Friday and bring them back every Monday. Please label everything.

### **Outdoor Play**

We believe that outdoor play is important, even in cold weather. Please dress your child accordingly. Layers that can be removed or added as necessary are very helpful in autumn and spring. Girls need to have pants or stockings on their legs in winter. All items such as jackets, gloves, and hats should be labeled.

In the hot Texas summertime, all children have the opportunity to play in the shade but when children do play in the sun, they should wear sunscreen or sun block with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher. We ask parents to apply this at home in the mornings when getting dressed in the months of June, July, and August. We will apply it to the

children's exposed skin when we go outside during those months in the afternoon, if parents have given us permission in writing to do so. We attempt to monitor Austin Ozone Days and limit the time when children are outside on those days. Insect repellent may also be brought and applied by teachers once a day with a family permission note, provided in the enrollment forms.

### **Water Play**

We have sensory tables and water tables year around and sprinkler activities in the summer time. In the enrollment agreement, you can give permission for participation in these activities.

### **The Board of Directors**

The Center is operated under the auspices of the Trinity Child Development Center Board. The Board is composed of eleven to thirteen members from the community and parent representatives. The director is an ex-officio member.

The Board sets the school calendar, tuition rates, oversees financial matters, establishes policies, and hires and evaluates the director. Parents and guardians are encouraged to participate in the work of the Board through service on it or on one of its committees.

