

Parent Handbook

Quality childcare...a topic being discussed every day by caring, concerned parents.

Finding quality childcare is a great concern for the working parent. To feel safe and comfortable with a facility to take care of your pride and joy is what every parent worries about. As a passionate educator, owner Jennifer Stevenson strives to stand above the rest to provide an educational, fun atmosphere for the children of Bogalusa. The Garden of Knowledge offers the best facility, an extensive curriculum beginning in infancy and through Pre-K, an indoor playroom for rainy day activities, and a fantastic playground to further develop the whole child.

Our Mission

The mission of The Garden of Knowledge is to provide a stimulating, safe, clean environment and age-appropriate curriculum to support the academic learning and social/emotional development of our students. Kindergarten preparation along with an atmosphere of family partnership and acceptance are an integral part of our program.

Infants and Toddlers

Each baby will be handled with tender loving care. From constant monitoring of each child to proper feeding and the all-important clean diaper, every need is met, and every action is recorded. Brains will also be stimulated by musical and visual selections chosen specially to promote learning in infants and toddlers. Age-appropriate centers, materials, toys and books are provided for individual levels of growth and development.

Preschool Program

Our preschool program was designed with curious children in mind. The Garden of Knowledge implements a flexible, child-centered curriculum that nurtures all children by offering age-appropriate hands-on experiences. Each classroom is divided into learning centers such as art, block, library, writing, listening, manipulatives, and music. In addition to center learning we provide a stimulating curriculum designed to prepare your child for kindergarten. Our curriculum focuses on teaching students about their world using weekly themes while integrating the basic concepts, such as shapes, colors, letter and numbers. Children will get plenty of exercise on the developmentally appropriate playground equipment complete with climbing equipment, dramatic play opportunities, riding equipment and exploration of the outdoor environment.

Parental Involvement

The Garden of Knowledge strongly encourages parents to be involved in their child's early childhood experience. Opportunities for parent participation are held throughout the year which includes but is not limited to classroom holiday parties, special events, and parent workshops.

Complaint Procedures

- At The Garden of Knowledge we strive to provide a safe, nurturing, and high quality learning environment for all children. We value open communication and encourage parents to share concerns or complaints in a respectful and constructive manner.
- To ensure all concerns are addressed promptly and effectively, we ask parents to follow the chain of command outlined below:
 - **Classroom Teacher**- regarding your child's daily experiences, classroom environment or interactions with staff, please discuss the issue directly with your child's teacher first. Many concerns can be resolved quickly through open communication.
 - **Center Director**- If the issue is not resolved after speaking with the teacher or if the concern involves center policies or operations.
 - **Center Owner (Mrs. Jennifer Stevenson)**- If the concern remains unresolved after speaking with the center director, parents may escalate the issue to the center's owner. She will review the situation and work towards a resolution.
 - **Louisiana Department of Education**- If you feel your concern has not been adequately addressed at the center level you may contact the Louisiana Department of Education to report licensing concerns or policy violations:

Department of Education
P.O. Box 4249
Baton Rouge, LA 70821
(225) 342-9905
(225) 342-2498 fax
ldelicense@la.gov email

Licensing surveys and inspections, regulations and information regarding early learning centers is available on the Department of Education's website.

Eligibility

The Garden of Knowledge is open to all children ages 6 weeks through PreK years and eligible children through age 10 for our before and after care program. The Garden of Knowledge does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, handicap conditions, breast-fed children, or ancestry.

Hours of Operation and Open Door Policy

The Garden of Knowledge has an “open door policy”, which allows parents to visit anytime between the hours of 7:00AM and 5:00PM, Monday through Friday. Parents are encouraged to speak with their child’s teacher to discuss progress, behavior, and any other information pertaining to the child or center.

Enrollment Procedures

To enroll your child at The Garden of Knowledge, completion of the following forms is required: master form, topical application authorization, photography permission form, water activities permission, and tuition agreement. Also, due to Health Department requirements, we must also receive an updated immunization sheet which must be kept current until the child withdraws from the center.

Registration Fee

The Garden of Knowledge requires an annual registration fee. This fee covers the cost of art supplies, paper, educational materials, etc. This fee is **non-refundable**. If already enrolled, there is no extra fee for the summer session. When a child is enrolled after the beginning of the school year (August) the registration fee for that school year will be due. Registration for the next school year will be due again during regular registration time.

Tuition/Payment Policy

Weekly tuition fees are due on Monday morning for the upcoming week or in advance. A \$20 late fee will be charged if your tuition is not paid in full by Monday evening. All accounts not current by the following Monday will not be allowed to attend The Garden of Knowledge until the tuition plus late fees are paid. Monthly and bi-weekly tuition arrangements can be made with the Director in advance.

Late Tuition Fee

Will be assessed accordingly following the payment date which was agreed upon between the family and management. Regular tuition is due on holiday weeks or in an emergency situation, such as a hurricane or tropical storm, as The Garden of Knowledge pays their employees for days closed.

LATE PICK-UP FEE: All children must be picked up by **4:59 PM**. Any pickup after **5:00 PM** will result in the following late fees:

- **\$25 per child plus \$1 per additional minute** past 5:00 PM, due immediately or added to your SmartCare account and paid before the child can return.
- **On Fridays, these fees are doubled**
- If you are late picking up your child(ren) 3 times in a 4-week period, your child will be dismissed from the program immediately.

Please note if you are on the childcare assistance program, the program only pays for a total of five absence days per month. If your child is absent more than 5 days you, the parent, will be responsible for paying the difference. If any additional amount is owed, the parent will be billed after the month for absences due.

Absenteeism/Vacation

If your child is present one to five days, the full tuition is due. Only one week, during the first year of attendance, if your child is not present at all, you can pay half a week to reserve your child's place. After one year of enrollment, one full week of nonattendance for vacation will be provided free of charge. Except for the mentioned exceptions, full tuition costs will be due to reserve your child's place regardless of attendance. In the event of a closure due to inclement weather (tropical storm, hurricane, flooding), the full tuition will be due upon the reopening of the center.

Holidays

The Garden of Knowledge will be closed for the following holidays: the week of New Years, Lundi Gras, Mardi Gras, Ash Wednesday, July 4th, Good Friday & the Monday following Easter, Labor Day, Memorial Day, Washington Parish Free Fair Week, the day before Thanksgiving, Thanksgiving Day, and the day after Thanksgiving, the week of Christmas. Full tuition is due on holiday weeks as The Garden of Knowledge pays all employees for the normal hours worked. In addition, the center will close throughout the year for Professional Development. These days will be determined at the discretion of the school based on upcoming opportunities and the areas where our staff need support at that time. Parents shall have a minimum of 2 weeks' notice to prepare for such a closure

Policy/Procedure Regarding Admissions

Prior to admission, the Director, in consultation with the parent, shall determine that individual needs of each child can adequately be met by the center's program and facilities

Admission of children to The Garden of Knowledge shall include an interview with the parent or guardian to:

1. Provide the parent with written policies of The Garden of Knowledge (parents must sign documentation that they read a copy of this handbook)
2. Secure necessary information about the child to include the following
 - a. All information as required on the child's information form (master card)
 - b. An immunization record signed/stamped by physician on each child verifying the child has had, or is in the process of receiving all immunizations appropriate to his/her age as required by the Office of Public Health
 - these documents shall be part of the child's records; when the child leaves the center, these documents shall be returned to the parent
 - if a parent chooses for his/her child not to receive immunizations for personal or religious reasons, documentation from the parent shall be on file.
3. Obtain signed agreements between the center and the parent for each child giving permission to:
 - a. Care for the child during the time he/she is in the center

- b. Administer and/or secure emergency medical treatment
- c. Release the child to any person (s) listed by the parent including the non-custodial parent(s), or any other child care facilities, or contract person(s). A child shall never be released to anyone unless authorized in writing by the parent.
- d. Give medication and/or special medical procedures

Withdrawal Procedures

A child may be withdrawn at any time by giving two weeks written notice to the Director. The child's tuition will continue until the two weeks written notice has been fulfilled.

Referrals

Your referral is the highest compliment you can give us. To thank you for sending a new family to The Garden of Knowledge, your child will receive one week free after the new student stays with The Garden of Knowledge for one month. A referral credit equal to one weeks of tuition will be applied to your child's SmartCare account at that time. For families with multiple students, a credit for the youngest child's tuition amount will be applied.

Confidentiality and Security of Files

All files pertaining to the children enrolled at The Garden of Knowledge are confidential. Employees of the center shall not disclose or knowingly permit the disclosure of any information concerning the child or his/her family, directly, or indirectly, to any unauthorized person. Only information necessary to the direct care of the children will be disclosed to The Garden of Knowledge employees. The director of The Garden of Knowledge shall supervise the maintenance of records, have custody of the records, and authorize to whom the records may be released. Records shall be the property of The Garden of Knowledge, and the Director, as custodian, shall secure the records against loss, tampering, or unauthorized use. For licensing purposes, children's records shall be kept on file a minimum of two years from date of discharge from the center.

Drop Off/Pick Up Policy

- Each child must be walked to their classroom and handed off directly to the teacher by a parent or guardian. All children must be accompanied by an adult at all times.
- All children must be signed in using the **SmartCare kiosk** located near the entrance. If accessible, the **Kinder Connect** system must also be used.
 - If you are unable to successfully check your child in, they will not be permitted to stay for the day.
 - The intent of this policy is to ensure the safety and security of your child. Our records must reflect who is present at all times in preparation of an emergency. If your child is not clocked in, firemen would not know to look for your child when we hand over our attendance. If your child is clocked in but not present, fireman could be entering a dangerous situation to save a child who is not present.

- All children are expected to be in class by 9:00am. Teachers must begin circle time promptly at 9:00am.
 - If your child has an appointment of any kind and will arrive after 9:00am but before 10:00am, your child will need an excuse and will need to have been fed breakfast prior to arriving at the center.
 - Children will not be accepted to enter after 10:00am.
- Parents and guardians are **not permitted to use cell phones** while inside the classroom during drop-off and pick-up. This time is important for conversations between teachers and parents regarding the child's day, progress, and any concerns.
- **Pick-Up Procedures:**
 - Children must be signed out by a parent or pre-designated guardian using the **SmartCare and Kinder Connect app for parents**.
 - If you are unable to check your child out more than **three (3) times within a 30-day period**, you will receive a written reminder of this policy.
 - After receiving **three reminders**, your child will be dismissed from the program

Non-Parental Pick up

- In order for someone else to pick your child up from school, arrangements must be made in advance with the center. The person must be listed on the main registration form, which allows others to pick up your child from The Garden of Knowledge.
- In an emergency a written note via fax or email is acceptable.
- Any changes to the master pick up list must be done in writing with documentation of the date and who made the change.
- It is extremely important that the master pickup list stays up to date!
- You must have at least 3 emergency contacts listed for pick-up.
- Please advise any family and friends authorized to pick-up your child to bring their picture ID for review upon arrival and be at least 18 years old.

Parent Dress Code Policy

To maintain a welcoming and respectful atmosphere, parents and guardians must dress in a presentable manner when dropping off and picking up children. The following attire is **not permitted**:

- Pajamas, robes, or sleepwear
- Clothing with inappropriate or offensive language/images
- Revealing or excessively tight clothing (e.g., sheer garments, crop tops, short shorts)
- House slippers or barefoot entry
- Undergarments worn as outerwear

Cell Phone Usage

- The time you spend in the center dropping off and picking up your child is the primary window of opportunity to communicate with you about your child. To make the best use

of these opportunities, as well as to be attentive to your child and other children, we ask that you NOT use your cellphone at any time while visiting the center. Being on the phone while picking up or dropping off could result in miscommunication between you and Center Staff. This policy shall include any person that is picking the child up, so please be sure and inform the designated person that will be picking the child up. The following actions will be taken if cell phone usage occurs at pick-up or drop-off

- 1st offense- Parent/Guardian/Designee will be given a verbal warning, and the warning will be documented in the child's file
- 2nd offense- Parent will receive a written reminder of the policy, and the warning will be documented in the child's file
- 3rd offense- A parent/Teacher conference will be required to discuss a plan of action moving forward
- 4th offense – Family will be dismissed for failure to properly communicate with center staff about child's development, growth, concerns, etc.

Abuse and Neglect

All employees are **mandated reporters** as required by state and federal law. This means that if a staff member suspects or has reason to believe that a child is experiencing abuse, neglect, or endangerment, we are **legally required** to report the concerns to the appropriate child protective services agency.

- Reports are made **for the safety and well-being of the child** and are **not optional** for staff members.
- Staff members **cannot discuss or disclose** any reports made due to confidentiality laws.

Behavior Management

Discipline consists of positive redirection or if necessary, time out for children ages two and up. Time out is limited to one minute per age of the child per incident. Time out consists of sitting facing the group, but apart, still within supervision of the teacher. Time out shall not be used for children under the age of two.

If a child is displaying dangerous and/or out of control behaviors, which may include but not be limited to biting, hitting, throwing chairs, harming themselves or others, placing themselves or others in dangerous situations, these behaviors shall be documented in SmartCare and in an incident report. These documentation procedures ensure that parents are informed in written and verbal communication every step of the way. Suspension or expulsion will be considered as a final action after the implementation of behavior support strategies, including but not limited to providing a referral to EarlySteps, Child Search, and/or mental health consultant if appropriate. If the family refuses these support strategies, the child will be dismissed immediately.

No child shall be subject to any of the following:

- Physical or corporal punishment which includes but is not limited to any of the following: yanking, shaking, pinching, exposure to extreme temperatures or other measures producing Physical pain, putting anything in the mouth of a child, requiring a child to exercise, or placing a child in an uncomfortable position.
- Verbal abuse, which includes but is not limited to using offensive or profane language, telling a child to “shut up”, or making derogatory remarks about children or family members of children in the presence of children.
- The threat of prohibited action even if there is no intent to follow through with the threat.
- Being disciplined by another child.
- Being bullied by another child
- Being deprived of food or beverages
- Being restrained by devices such as highchairs or feeding tables for disciplinary purposes
- Having active play time withheld for disciplinary purposes, except timeout may be used during active play time for an infraction incurred during the playtime.

Suspension or expulsion should only be considered as a final action after the implementation of behavior support strategies, including at a minimum:

Biting Policy

- Biting Policy Due to lack of verbal skills and the ability to express frustration, pain (associated with teething), anger or wants effectively, some infants and toddlers do bite. If your child bites, you will be notified of the incident. With your support we will attempt to help the child work through this difficult stage through shadowing, providing teething toys, redirection, and support. If your child continues to bite habitually, even after assistance in an attempt to stop the behavior, we will dismiss your child from The Garden of Knowledge.

Dismissal on the frequency and severity of bites is as follows:

1st biting incident parent will be notified.

2nd incident (within 2 weeks) parent will be called, and a copy of our biting policy will be sent home with the child.

3rd incident (within 2 weeks) Parent meeting will be scheduled.

4th incident (within 2 weeks) child will need to be picked up.

5th incident (within 2 weeks) Child will be dismissed from our center.

- When he/she has outgrown the biting period, he/she can reenroll and be added to our waiting list to start back.
- If a child has been dismissed and reenrolled for biting, 1st biting incident child is to be picked up, 2nd biting incident the child will be dismissed from our center indefinitely.

Accidents Policy

In the event of an accident or an incident involving your child, an incident report will be completed, and you will be notified of the incident via phone, SmartCare, or upon arrival. The incident report shall be signed by the parent and left at the center for the child's permanent file.

Illness Policy

We ask that if your child displays signs of illness that you keep your child home to protect your child and the other children enrolled in the center. If your child displays any of the following symptoms at The Garden of Knowledge you will be required to pick up your child as soon as possible and keep him/her out according to the following.

- Vomiting – a child must be sent home after one episode of vomiting and may return to school after 24 hours vomit-free without an anti-nausea medicine
- Diarrhea – a child must be sent home after two diarrhea diapers or if it is uncontained. The child may return after 24 hours diarrhea free.
- Fever – a child must be sent home after a fever reaches 100 or above. The child must be fever free for 24 hours without a fever reducing medication before return.
- Conjunctivitis or Pink Eye – a child must be sent home if the child is displaying symptoms of pink eye. The child may not return without a doctor's note from a pediatrician stating that the child is no longer considered contagious and no longer requires treatment
- Undiagnosed generalized rash – Child must be seen and cleared by a pediatrician stating that the rash is not contagious, and the child can function without limitations in a childcare setting.
- Sudden onset of unable to participate, irritability, or excessive sleepiness – Child will need to be seen by a pediatrician and cleared to be in a childcare setting
- Thick yellow or green nasal discharge – a child must be sent home if they begin to have thick yellow or green nasal discharge. The child may not return without a note from the pediatrician stating that the child is not contagious, and the mucus has thinned in thickness and cleared in color.
- Severe coughing (excessive; red or blue in the face; high-pitched or “whooping” cough) – a child must be sent home if they begin to suffer with severe coughing. The child cannot return without a note from the pediatrician stating that the child is not contagious and coughing as gotten better.
- Meningococcal disease – a child must be well and have proof of non-carriage from a doctor and cleared by the pediatrician before returning to school.
- Hib disease – a child must be well and have proof of non-carriage from a doctor and cleared by the pediatrician before returning to school

- Chicken pox – a child must be sent home if they are showing signs of possible chicken pox. The child may not return until skin lesions (blisters) are completely gone and have proof of non-carriage from a doctor and being cleared by the pediatrician before returning to school
- Hepatitis A – a child must be sent home if they begin to show signs of Hepatitis A (vomiting and diarrhea, as well as fever, loss of appetite, darker than usual urine (pee), jaundice (when the skin and whites of the eyes look yellow), and abdominal (belly pain) and may not return until one week has passed, child has been fever free for 24 hours without a fever reducing medication, and has been cleared by the pediatrician.
- AIDS (or HIV infection) – a child must not return until child’s health, neurologic development, behavior, and immune status is deemed appropriate (on a case-by-case basis) by qualified persons, including the child’s physician chosen by the child’s parent, guardian and the center director
- Hands, Foot, and Mouth Disease- Children with a fever and mouth sores must stay home until they have been **fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of medication** and are able to eat and drink normally. If blisters are open and oozing, the child must remain at home until the lesions have dried up.
- Flu- a child diagnosed with flu must remain at home for a minimum of five days. Child must be fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication and presenting no symptoms before return.
- **Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV):** a child diagnosed with RSV must remain at home for a minimum of five days. Child must be fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication and presenting no symptoms before return.
- **COVID-19:** In accordance with CDC guidelines, children who test positive for COVID-19 should remain at home for at least **five days after symptom onset**. They may return once they have been **fever-free for 24 hours without medication** and their symptoms have significantly improved.
- **Mononucleosis (Mono):** Children with **fever, extreme fatigue, or difficulty swallowing due to swollen glands** should stay home until their symptoms improve. A pediatrician clearance will be required before returning.

Children may return to childcare once they meet the illness-specific guidelines and can fully participate in daily activities without needing extra care. If a child still appears unwell, the center will require additional time at home or a pediatrician before they are allowed to return.

- Return to school notes must be completed and signed by Pediatrician’s office.

The registration form includes a section for emergency phone numbers used when the parent(s) cannot be reached. Children must be picked up from the center within **45 minutes of an illness call**. The Garden of Knowledge staff may use their discretion when making what they feel is the best judgement call to protect themselves and the other children from communicable illnesses. If a child has been sent home due to illness or suspected illness or suspected illness, they will be sent home with an illness form. This form must be taken to a pediatrician and filled out by the pediatrician. This form must stay attached to the other forms and returned with a doctor's note from the pediatrician. The signature on the form and the signature on the doctor's note must match. The form must be filled out in its entirety or it will not be accepted and the child cannot return until our illness policy states, which can be found on the illness form under "When can my child return to school?" Also, The Garden of Knowledge reserves the right to use our discretion to exclude children from school despite the clearance from a pediatrician based on our abilities to meet the needs of your child and the other children. For example, if your child has uncontained diarrhea that is deemed to be caused by teething, your child will not be able to return until the diarrhea has cleared up. Uncontained stools are unsanitary and take up too much of the teacher's time away from supervising children to clean up thoroughly to ensure the safety and sanitary needs of our school. Lastly, if a child is too ill to participate in the normal day-to-day routine, the child is too sick to attend school.

Medications

A child who has been ill may return to school only when he/she is no longer contagious. If the child is on prescription medication, the parent will need to fill out a medication form. The information must include the child's name, dosage, directions, frequency, time and special instructions associated with this medication and a parent signature. If there is any change in dosage times or frequency a new medication form must be completed. All prescription medication must be sent to the center in the original container, shall not have an expired date, and shall be clearly labeled with the name of the child. If the medication is an inhalant for a breathing machine, a copy of the prescription label is acceptable. If over-the-counter medications are needed, a note from the doctor written on letterhead or prescription pad, must accompany the medication. No medication of any type will be given to a child without a medication form being filled out. All medication must be given to, and will be dispensed by, the Director or other authorized person. Medications will be stored in a locked cabinet.

Authorization for "as needed" prescription and non-prescription medication shall be updated as necessary or during the following months; January, May and August. This authorization shall include circumstances for administering "as needed" medication and any applicable special instructions. The consecutive length of administering "as needed" medication is not to exceed ten calendar days without instructions from the child's physician.

Breathing treatments, after initially prescribed, are often times prescribed to be used "as needed." In order for the center to administer the breathing treatments for "as needed" medication, the circumstances for administering the medication must be present. Treatments will only be given according to the schedule prescribed and are to follow the parent giving the initial treatment in the morning.

Epi-Pen

The Garden of Knowledge will not obtain a prescription for epi-pens, however, if your child has been diagnosed with having anaphylaxis reactions to certain products, we will follow our policy on administering medications for your child.

Topical

An authorization for topical ointments and sprays is in the registration packet. A one-time authorization for diaper cream, sunscreen and bug spray is required for the center to apply these treatments on an “as needed” basis. The topical ointments and sprays shall be provided by the parent.

Allergies

- At The Garden of Knowledge, we prioritize the health and safety of every child, including those with food allergies or dietary restrictions. To ensure a safe eating environment, we ask all parents and guardians to adhere to the following guidelines:
 - **Food Allergies and Dietary Restrictions:**
 - If your child has a food allergy or dietary restriction, you must **notify us immediately**.
 - A **doctor’s note** is required to document any medical allergies or dietary needs.
 - Parents must provide **suitable food replacements** for any restricted items.
 - **Insect Allergies:**
 - If your child has an allergy to insect bites or stings, please provide **written documentation from a doctor**.

Any prescribed emergency medications (such as an EpiPen) must be provided and kept on-site with proper instructions and documentation filled out.

Diapers

If your child is in diapers, we ask that you bring enough diapers and wipes to last throughout the day. Five diapers are usually sufficient for one day. If you would like to bring diapers in quantity, we will label them with your child’s name. Any disposable underwear sent to the center should have resealable sides to make diaper changing time more efficient for center staff, unless otherwise stated in our Toilet Training Policy.

Toilet Training

We believe that toilet training is a collaborative effort between parents, caregivers, and the child. Our goal is to make the process positive, encouraging, and developmentally appropriate.

Readiness & Communication

- Toilet training will begin when the child **shows signs of readiness** (e.g., staying dry for longer periods, showing interest in the toilet, verbalizing the need to go).

- Parents should **discuss toilet training plans** with the teacher in charge to coordinate timing and methods for consistency between home and the center.
- We will **never force a child to use the toilet** or create a negative experience around the process.

Expectations & Supplies

- Parents are required to provide:
 - Several pairs of **training pants or underwear**
 - Multiple **changes of clothing** (including socks)
 - Pull-ups (if used) that are **easy to remove for posttying**
- Clothing should be **easily accessible** (e.g., no difficult buttons, belts, or zippers).

Approach & Reinforcement

- Toilet training is a **partnership**—the child must be **actively participating**, and parents must also be involved and reinforcing training at home.
- We will use **positive reinforcement** (such as praise and encouragement) but will **not use food as a reward** for potty success.

Accidents are a natural part of the process. We will handle them calmly and supportively, encouraging the child to keep trying

Meals

We provide nutritious meals and snacks to support the health and well-being of all children in our care. To ensure smooth meal service, please adhere to the following schedule and guidelines.

Meal Schedule

- **Breakfast:**
 - **One-Year-Old Room:** 8:00 AM – 8:15 AM
 - **Twos:** 8:15 AM – 8:30 AM
 - **Pre-K:** 8:30 AM – 8:45 AM
 - *Children must arrive during their class's scheduled breakfast time to receive breakfast. Anyone arriving late will be offered a snack if they are hungry when they arrive.*
- **Lunch:**
 - **One-year old room:** 10:45AM-11:00AM
 - **Twos:** 11:05AM-11:15AM
 - **Pre-K:** 11:15AM-11:25AM
- **Snack:** 2:00 PM (served after nap time) and 4:00PM

Additional Guidelines

- We encourage all children to participate in meal and snack times.
- Outside food is **not permitted** unless approved by the administration for medical or cultural reasons.

- Food bought for birthday parties or holiday gatherings must be store bought. Home-made food items must not be served to children in a childcare center.

Nap Time and Infant Sleeping

The state requires that all preschool children take at least a one-hour nap. Children will be required to bring a sleep mat with his/her name on it. A labeled mat cover and blanket must also be brought to keep in the child's cubby. These must be taken home each Friday for laundering and returned to school on Monday. Please do not bring pillows. Mats must be present at school while child is present.

All infants will be put to sleep on their backs as recommended by the American Association of Pediatrics. Once a child can turn over and move about, he/she will be allowed to sleep in any way comfortable.

Water Activities

The Garden of Knowledge will limit water activities to sprinkler or waterslide during the summer months for ages one and up. No type of pool activities will be conducted at or away from the center.

Off-Site Activities

There will be no off-site activities scheduled at The Garden of Knowledge.

Clothing

Every child must have 3 extra changes of clothes at school labeled with his/her name on them. Please be sure the clothing is appropriate for the weather and is the correct size. Also, children need to wear comfortable clothing, suitable for active play. Shoes must be tennis shoes or sandals/flip flops with a strap behind the heel. No heeled shoes will be allowed or regular flip flops, to prevent accidents. If possible please refrain from bringing backpacks or diaper bags to school. A cubby is provided for each child to keep necessary items here at school.

Toys

Please keep all personal toys at home. Many times, these toys become lost and/or broken. Also, small toys such as Mardi Gras beads, money, jewelry, etc. are all dangerous to little ones and will not be allowed at The Garden of Knowledge. Please help us to ensure the safety of our children by not bringing such items.

Outside cups and food are not permitted in the classroom.

Transitioning

As children grow and learn, they will need different learning environments. The Director and teachers will work closely with the parents in determining when the child is ready to move to the next class. The child will spend time visiting the next class and getting to know the teacher and routines. After a few

days, and when the parents, teacher and Director are confident that the child is ready, the child will be fully moved over into his/her new classroom.

Teacher Qualifications

Each teacher is chosen based on their experience working with young children, the interview process, and their education related to Early Childhood Education. Each new hire must undergo a thorough fingerprint-based criminal background system check which includes a search of the Louisiana and federal criminal history information record, a search of the state central registry of child abuse and neglect, and a search of the sex offender and child predator registry at the state and national level. All prospective employees seeking employment with The Garden of Knowledge shall have a determination of “eligible” before being present in the center and working with the children unsupervised. A person who receives a status of provisional, because of a delay in processing, will be under the direct supervision of a veteran teacher and documentation of an observation conducted every 30 minutes will be recorded on the log obtained from the Department of Education.

Harmful Items Policy

The Garden of Knowledge strictly prohibits the use of alcohol and the use or possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances, fireworks, firearms, pellet or BB guns (loaded or unloaded) in the center and on the playground.

The center also prohibits the use of tobacco in any form in indoor areas of the center and on the playground.

Electronic Devices Policy

The use of electronic devices is prohibited at The Garden of Knowledge. All activities that include electronic devices, including but not limited to television, movies, games, videos, computers and handheld electronic devices, shall not be used by children. Programs and movies shown to children during holiday festivities will be “G” rated and appropriate for children. Programs, movies, and video games with violent or adult content, including but not limited to soap operas, television news, and sports programs aimed at audiences other than children, shall not be permitted in the presence of children. “E10+” rated games shall be permitted for children ages 10 years and older. “T” and “M” rated games are prohibited.

Health and Safety Procedures

Each employee will complete a three hour course on health and safety training annually. All information and training from the course will be utilized to ensure that proper health and safety standards are met. In addition, 100 % of staff members will be trained in proper First Aid and CPR.

Plans for Severe Weather and Tornadoes

Director or the center will monitor weather reports via television or radio. Staff will be informed by the Director as to the severity of the situation. Children will be moved into the interiors of the building away from windows and projectile objects. All small objects which can pose a hazard in severe winds will be

secured. A monthly tornado drill is conducted to ensure children and teachers are familiar with the proper procedure during the months of March through June.

Fire Plan

In the event of a fire, the fire alarm will sound and all children and staff will exit the building according to the floor plan.

No one will be allowed back into the building until the fire department gives clearance. All parents will be notified by phone in the event of a fire at the center.

Fire drills will be conducted monthly and all records of this will be kept in the Director's office.

Emergency Plan

In the event of a spontaneous emergency situation such as severe weather, tornado, flash flood, fire, long term power outage, bomb threat or unforeseen emergency, parents will be notified as to the situation and location of the children.

The **Washington Parish Homeland Security & Emergency Management** will be contacted as situations will be handled in accordance with the Washington Parish multi-hazard disaster plan.
9858390434

If it is necessary for children to be evacuated from the center, parents will be notified and children will be transported on a Washington Parish School Board Bus or personal vehicles to First Pentecostal Church at 14532 LA-21, Bogalusa, LA 70427

In the event of a foreseen emergency such as hurricane or flood, the center will be closed at least 36 hours prior and landfall of the hurricane or peak flood stage. Parents will be notified by phone, email, social media, text or notice placed on the door of the closing of the center. The Garden of Knowledge follows Washington Parish and/or The City of Bogalusa school closings in regards to closings due to weather. The center may reopen earlier than local schools after dangerous weather if the Director determines that the children will be safe and secure at The Garden of Knowledge. However, the Director may also choose to remain closed for additional time if necessary .

Dismissal Policy

The Garden of Knowledge has accepted your child/children for enrollment at The Garden of Knowledge based on your written registration application and the information given to us during our initial conference with you. Acceptance of your child, and your child's continued enrollment at the center, is based on the continued accuracy of the information you have furnished us, your timely payment of the registration fee and tuition as it becomes due, and you and your child's abidance by the rules, regulations, and procedures established by The Garden of Knowledge at any time as determined solely by The Garden of Knowledge.

Your child's enrollment may be discontinued, and your child dismissed from the center for the following reasons, among others:

Non-Payment of Tuition

Tuition is payable weekly/monthly **in advance**. A penalty of \$20.00 will be charged if not paid in full by 9am on Tuesday morning. All accounts not current by the following Monday will not be allowed to attend The Garden of Knowledge until the full tuition plus late fees are paid or a reasonable payment arrangement made with the Director. The Garden of Knowledge will only discuss special payment arrangements in advance of the event or circumstance.

In order to assure that there is no misunderstanding about the amount and timeliness of your payment, please make all payments by check payable to The Garden of Knowledge or if payment is made in cash, make sure that you obtain a receipt from The Garden of Knowledge showing the correct time of payment and amount paid. Frequent (in the sole judgment of The Garden of Knowledge) instances of late payment may result in your child's being dismissed.

Unacceptable Behavior of Child/Guardian

Unacceptable child behavior is behavior determined by The Garden of Knowledge in its sole judgment to be not in conformity with the following expectations:

- a. A child/guardian is expected to be polite and courteous to the staff and personnel
- b. A child/guardian is expected to abide by the reasonable requests and instructions of the child's supervisors and teachers
- c. A child/guardian is expected to be mindful of the physical well-being of others

Therefore, a child shall not be disobedient, discourteous, disruptive and/or harmful to himself or others. If a child is disobedient, discourteous, disruptive or harmful to himself or other, the Director and/or the child's teacher shall first consult with you and assist you in modifying the child's behavior to conform to the reasonable expectations of The Garden of Knowledge, as stated above. If after consultations, a child continues to be disobedient, discourteous, and/or disruptive, in the sole judgment of The Garden of Knowledge, the child shall no longer be accepted to The Garden of Knowledge and may be immediately dismissed. If your child is dismissed from for any of the above reasons stated, **all tuition and registration fees are nonrefundable**.

Lack of Parental/Caregiver Cooperation

The Garden of Knowledge expects parents and/or the child's caregiver to cooperate with the Director, teachers, and staff, and if they fail or refuse to abide by the reasonable requests of the Director or the child's teachers to assist in assuring that the child will not continue to be disobedient, discourteous, disruptive, and/or harmful, then The Garden of Knowledge shall have the right in its sole discretion to dismiss the child.

In the event that the child is dismissed because of frequent disregard of the rules, or because the child has harmed or attempted to harm himself or another child, the parent/caregiver will be notified by telephone and you must pick your child immediately.

If your child is dismissed from The Garden of Knowledge for any of the above reasons stated, **all tuition and registration fees are nonrefundable**.

Child Needs

- All children must have all supplies to remain at school:
 - Nap mat
 - Diapers and wipes if needed
 - 3 complete outfits
 - Formula if needed
 - Approved food substitutions for allergies

By registering your child at The Garden of Knowledge you agree to all of the conditions and agreements set forth above.

Parent/Teacher Conference

Should you or your child's teacher wish to have a conference to discuss the development of your child, or any concern you may have, this meeting must be scheduled at the convenience of the teacher and the center due to the demand of mandated ratios. It is acceptable to get an update about your child at drop-off or pick-up, but it is unacceptable to hold a conference with a teacher while she is in the classroom in charge of supervising other children. A lengthy conversation with any staff member shall never happen while said staff member is supervising children, nor shall any grievance be discussed in the presence of children. This is highly unacceptable and grounds for immediate termination of services.

Example of a Basic Daily Schedule:

7:00 – 8:00	Center opens. Indoor/Outdoor unstructured play.
8:00 – 8:30	Breakfast is served.
8:30 – 9:00	Bathroom visit- toileting, diapering and washing.
9:00 – 9:20	Opening circle time: thinking, talking, sharing
9:40 – 10:10	Class Time
10:10 – 10:30	Learning centers, Outdoor play
10:30 – 11:00	Learning centers or outdoor play with bathroom visits – toileting and hand washing
11:00 – 12:00	Lunch service
12:00 – 12:30	Nap time (younger children are served first and nap earlier)
2:00	Awaken from nap. Bathroom visits. Snacks served.
2:20 – 2:30	Story time
3:00 - 4:00	Free Choice Centers
4:00 – 5:00	Outside play/ bathroom and diaper changing time/ Departure