



PARENT HANDBOOK

JANUARY 2018

DAY NURSERY OF ABILENE, INC.

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DAY NURSERY OF ABILENE, INC.

Mission: Day Nursery of Abilene providing affordable quality child care for a diverse community.

Program Overview

Welcome to the Day Nursery of Abilene. While enrolled, children are provided with a quality child care experience. The Day Nursery has been providing quality child care in Abilene since August 30, 1973, when the first center opened for 25 children. Since then, the program has expanded to include three locations that are licensed to care for nearly 500 children. Its mission is to provide affordable quality child care for a diverse community and its underlying philosophy is “children first”. Day Nursery's tag-line is to Develop and Nurture All children.

In spite of the fact that Day Nursery was organized to assist low-income families and continues to address their needs, all children are welcome to attend. We are honored by the trust that so many parents have placed in the organization over the years. We want to help you provide your children with the experiences they need to grow — physically, intellectually, emotionally, and socially. We encourage parents to share in their child's day care experiences. Please feel free to visit our centers anytime!

All centers are licensed and inspected by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS), Child Care Licensing (CCL) Division. Parents may review the center's most recent CCL inspection report posted on the parent information board. Parents may also view a copy of Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers any time upon request or on the TDFPS website <https://www.dfps.state.tx.us>. For questions related to licensed child care programs you may call the local office for TDFPS Childcare Licensing at 325-691-8232 or go the TDFPS website. If you have concerns about this operation's compliance with Minimum Standards, you may contact the local licensing office or call the DFPS hotline at (800)252-5400. Falsely reporting complaints about an operation's non-compliance with Minimum Standards is a crime*.

In addition, all centers meet the stringent criteria for the Texas Rising Star (TRS) program. The TRS program is “a voluntary, quality-based child care rating system of child care providers participating in the Texas Workforce Commission's subsidized child care program.” TRS Certification is available to Licensed Center and Licensed and Registered Child Care Home providers who meet the certification criteria. The TRS Provider certification system offers three levels of certification (Two-Star, Three-Star, and Four-Star) to encourage providers to attain progressively higher certification requirements leading to a Four-Star level. This system is designed to assure a higher standard of child care than required by Minimum Standards. TRS requirements include higher standards for curriculum/activities, parental involvement, indoor and outdoor physical environment, group size, caregiver/child interaction, health and safety, and nutrition and mealtime.

*Human Resources Code; Chapter 42 Sec. 42.0447. FALSE REPORT; CRIMINAL PENALTY. (a) A person commits an offense if the person knowingly or intentionally files a complaint alleging that a child-care facility or registered family home failed to comply with the department's minimum standards and the person knows the allegation is false or lacks factual foundation. (b) An offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor unless it is shown on the trial of the offense that the person has previously been convicted under this section, in which case the offense is a state jail felony.

I. Admission of Children

A. Requirements for Admission

1. The Day Nursery provides child care for children from birth through 10 years of age (some exceptions may apply).
2. Children will be admitted without regard to race, creed, color, religious belief, gender, or national origin. Children with physical or mental challenges will be enrolled considering the accommodation requirement of each child's special needs.
3. If the Day Nursery center of choice has no immediate vacancies, a waiting list is maintained for future enrollment opportunities. The Day Nursery will provide drop-in child care on a space available basis.

The Day Nursery may refuse admission of a child if the Day Nursery determines due cause exists or it cannot adequately provide for such child.

B. Enrollment Interview

1. Parents of children enrolling in our program must make an appointment with the Center Director or designee for an interview before the children may begin participation in the program. This is in an effort to assure that the director knows each and every family.
2. During the enrollment interview, the parent and the Center Director (or designee) will discuss Day Nursery policies, complete essential paperwork, discuss any special needs of the child(ren), tour the center and meet the staff.
3. The parent (or legal guardian) who enrolls the child (signs the enrollment forms) is the one authorized to make changes to the enrollment forms. A new enrollment form must be completed annually. Any changes to the information on the enrollment form must be reported as they occur in order to assure accurate information at all times.

C. Health Requirements

1. The parent must provide the center with a written statement from a licensed physician who has examined their child(ren) within the last year. This statement must state that the child(ren) is (are) physically able to take part in the program. This statement must be received within one week of admission.
2. If a physician's statement cannot be obtained, a parent may submit a signed, written statement indicating that the child has been examined within the last year and is able to participate in a child care program. However, this statement must be replaced by a physician's statement within 60 days, unless medical diagnosis and treatment are against the parent's religion.
3. The parent must also provide a current immunization record for each child enrolling at the center. Periodic updates are required according to the recommended immunization schedule in order for enrollment to be continued.
4. Vision and hearing screenings will be conducted on children 4 years old or older by September 1st of each year as required by Texas Health and Safety Code.

D. Attendance

1. Upon enrollment, the parent will sign a contract indicating the days and times their child(ren) will be attending the center. This enables us to correctly plan activities, meals and staff hours. Contracts must be updated periodically.
2. If a child must be absent from the center for any reason, the parent must notify the center as soon as possible.
3. Children must be signed in upon arrival by the adult who brings them. The time in and the full name of that adult must be included on the signature line. The child must be taken to their classroom to also be signed in by the appropriate Day Nursery staff.

E. Release of Children

1. Those authorized to pick up the child(ren) must be designated by the parent at the time of enrollment. In case of an emergency, it is imperative that more than one adult be authorized so that there is always an assurance that the child(ren) will be picked up as scheduled.
2. If a person is authorized to pick up a child, they must check in at the front desk with the Center Director, or person in charge to obtain required verification.
3. In the event that someone not authorized on the child's enrollment form is designated to pick up the child, the parent must personally phone the center to make arrangements. A designated employee at each of the Day Nursery of Abilene centers verifies all such calls. Identification will be required, verified, photocopied and kept on file.
4. The child(ren) must be signed out by the authorized adult who picks them up. The complete signature is required as well as the time leaving the center. Once the child is signed out they must remain with that adult and are no longer considered in care of the center.
5. Changes in pick up authorization must be made timely and in writing by completing new enrollment information for the continued safety of your child(ren) and to ensure compliance for the operation of the center.
6. Anyone who is under the age of 18 years of age and/or under the influence of drugs or alcohol will not be considered as authorized to pick up children.
7. Law enforcement officers and Child Protective Services staff have the authority by law to remove a child without the parent's permission. In the event that this occurs, identification of the officer will be verified.

F. Policy Changes

Day Nursery of Abilene reserves the right to make any policy or financial changes at any time when it is in the best interest of the childcare center and will not compromise the quality of the children's care. All changes will be given at least a two-week notice. You will be notified as soon as possible in writing of any changes that may occur. We also reserve the right to make changes in the childcare environment without advance notice to parents, as long as any change remains within state regulations.

II. Security

- A. Day Nursery of Abilene implemented an Access Control system to gain entrance into all center buildings in order to assure children and staff are well protected.
- B. Center entrance doors will be locked at all times with limited access through the front doors only.
- C. Anyone other than authorized employees, including parents and others dropping off children, gain access only after verification by the front desk staff.
- D. Visitors and all others will not be able to gain access to the centers without proper authorization including proof of identity.

III. Fees and Payments

1. A fee schedule will be provided to the parent at the time of enrollment at which time the first week's child care payment is due. The Day Nursery does not charge for registration, activities, or meals and snacks. All services are included in regular care rates. Parents of preschool and school age children are required to purchase Day Nursery of Abilene tee-shirts for the children to wear on all field trips.
2. Any parent in need of assistance with child care fees will be referred for Child Care Services (CCS) assistance, the program authorized to distribute State subsidized child care funding. Applicants qualifying for this assistance will be notified of their eligibility directly by the contracting agency. Clients receiving CCS assistance will have their fees established by the agency and must follow this program's requirements. The Day Nursery has no influence over this process.

3. Other financial assistance may be available on a sliding scale basis. Verification of income and financial need are required through a separate application process.
4. Fees are outlined on a fee contract and are subject to change. Advance notice will be given before any changes are made to the fee contract.
5. Children receiving any subsidized or reduced child care fees are only accepted on a full-time basis according to the outlined fee contract or other authorization.

B. Fee Payment Schedule

1. All fees are due in advance and must be paid according to the fee contract in order to continue child care services.
2. Forms of payment allowed included checks, money orders and credit cards. Cash payments are no longer accepted.
3. Day Nursery of Abilene charges the maximum amount allowable by law for returned checks. Fees not paid according to the fee contract will be turned over to a collection agency and all associated collection fees will become the responsibility of the debtor.

C. Late Fees

1. Late fees accumulate, and are charged, if fees are not paid according to the fee contract.
2. Arrangements must be made to pick up children on time. There will be an additional charge for every fifteen minutes (or part of fifteen minutes) that a child is left at the center past the scheduled pick-up time.
3. Late fees must be paid upon arrival. Consistent tardiness may result in the loss of child care space in the program.

D. Drop-In Fees

1. Day Nursery may provide drop-in care on a space available basis at the daily drop in rate. There are no discounts for drop in care.
2. Drop in fees must be paid at the time of arrival when the child is signed in.

IV. Absences and Vacation

1. Fees must be paid in full without deduction for absences. Operating costs of the facility do not change when a particular child is absent.
2. Refunds will be issued for days paid for and not used, and only to families paying the full rate (unsubsidized) and when a two-week notice of withdrawal is given to the center.

B. Vacations

1. Vacation time from the center, if authorized, will be honored as outlined in the fee contract for unsubsidized children only.
2. There will be no reduction in fees for days that the center is closed due to a holiday or inclement weather.

V. Calendar of Openings and Closings

A. The Day Nursery has three licensed facilities whose operating hours are as follows:

Sherry Lane - Monday thru Friday, 6:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Vine Street - Monday thru Friday, 7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Cedar Street - Monday thru Friday, 6:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.

B. Weather or other delayed openings or closings will occur only if extreme conditions warrant. Please stay tuned to

local radio and television stations as they will be notified. Day Nursery vans will not provide any transportation when weather conditions are hazardous.

- C. Day Nursery requests that all parents sign up for and participate in the “REMIND” platform. This is encouraged at the time of enrollment. Notifications and reminders related to activities, events, holiday closures, weather, etc. will be sent to parents using this application. Information and happenings are also posted regularly on Day Nursery’s Facebook page. Day Nursery welcomes positive engagement with these postings.
- D. The Day Nursery centers are normally closed in observance of the following holidays: New Year’s Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, two days at Thanksgiving, and two days at Christmas and a minimum of two staff development days. Holiday closure notices are posted at each center in advance of the holiday.

VI. Policies Governing Ill/Sick Children

These, and other Child Care Licensing guidelines, are not designed as an inconvenience, but in effort to protect your child as well as the other children enrolled in the centers.

- A. According to licensing regulations, any child who is ill must not be admitted to the center. Parents must make arrangements for ill children to be cared for outside the center.
- B. Sometimes it is difficult to decide whether a child is truly ill. Day Nursery follows the guidelines established by Minimum Standards. Below are some guidelines to follow:
 - 1. Your child should be free of fever for 24 hours before returning to the center. **NOTE: if your child has been given Tylenol or other fever reducers, HE/SHE is not fever free.**
 - 2. If your child has been given antibiotics, he/she needs to wait 24 hours after the first dose has been administered before returning to the center. If your child has been vomiting and/or has been having diarrhea he/she needs to stay home for 24 hours after the last episode unless a note from their healthcare provider is given.
- C. If your child exhibits signs and symptoms of illness, he/she cannot participate in a child care program. Parents of any child showing symptoms of being contagious will be notified immediately and will be expected to pick up their child as soon as possible.
- D. When contagious illnesses are identified among children who attend Day Nursery, a notice will be posted in the affected classes indicating the type of illness, symptoms to look for and other information that may be of interest to parents, like the incubation period for various diseases. Names of ill children will not be made public.
- E. Administration of Medication
 - 1. Following the first dose of any medication, which must be administered by the child’s parent, the prescription medication may be administered in the center. The medication must be brought to the center in its original container labeled with the child’s name, date prescribed, directions, and the physician’s name. The parent must complete and sign an authorization form to allow Day Nursery to dispense any medication. The center must administer the medication as stated on the label directions. Day Nursery cannot administer medication after the expiration date or outside of these guidelines and those in Minimum Standards.
 - 2. Non-prescription medication can be administered at the center only with written approval by health personnel or the parent. The medication must be in its original container labeled with the child’s name and the date the medication was brought to the center. The center will only administer the medication as stated on the label directions or according to the physician’s instructions.
 - 3. During the summer months when it is hot outside children are required to use sunscreen and if necessary, mosquito repellent. The parent(s)/guardian(s) are advised to bring sunscreen and mosquito repellent with their child’s name clearly marked on the product and specified instructions for application.
 - 4. If the parent does not provide the sunscreen. Day Nursery will apply an SPF of 30 or higher with broad-

spectrum coverage as needed to keep the child protected and prevent sunburn. For water activities, a waterproof sunscreen will be applied to prevent it from washing off quickly.

5. Day Nursery provides insect repellent contains 10 percent DEET for necessary protection and will be applied as needed according to the manufactures specifications.

F. Emergency Notification Information

1. The center will make every effort to notify the parent in the event of illness or injury. In order to make this possible, the parent must provide the center with at least three telephone numbers other than his/her own.
2. The parent must notify the center immediately if any contact or emergency information concerning his/her child(ren) changes.

VII. Accidents/Emergencies

A. Accident Response/Reporting Procedures

1. At least one staff person trained in Infant/Child CPR will be on duty at all times and one trained in emergency First Aid with rescue breathing and choking with each group of children. In the case of an injury at Day Nursery, any necessary first aid will be administered by the staff or parent authorized medical personnel.
2. All accidents, major and minor, must be reported to the Center Director. Parents will be notified immediately if warranted by the seriousness of the incident.
3. The staff person in charge of the child at the time of the incident will immediately (before the end of the day) prepare a written incident report. For minor accidents not requiring any medical attention, an "Ouchie Report" will be prepared/provided. For serious incidences requiring medical attention, a "Serious Incident" report will be prepared/provided.
4. The Center Director will meet with the parent and provide a copy of the written report During the meeting the parent will have the opportunity to ask questions about the incident and will be asked to sign the completed report.
5. The parent is required to sign the report within 48 hours in order to suffice Minimum Standard regulations. Failure to sign the report can result in interruption of child care services by Day Nursery.
6. The Center Director or designee is the only staff person authorized to discuss the incident with the parent.

B. Emergency Notification of Parents

1. In the event of a medical emergency, the parent or authorized adult will be notified as soon as possible.
2. Every effort will be made to contact the child's own physician.
3. If immediate medical attention is required, the child will be transported to the local hospital.

C. Treatment of Injuries

1. Parents of children who receive minor first aid treatment during the day will be notified at the time they pick up the children. Day Nursery will notify parents immediately if significant first aid treatment must be administered to their child.
2. Day Nursery carries children's risk (accident) insurance on children enrolled in the center. Day Nursery's insurance policy provides supplemental or secondary coverage **only** and pays **only** in accordance to the policy guidelines.
3. In the event of a serious incident requiring medical attention, an accident claim form will be initiated by the center for submittal to the insurance company.

VIII. Discipline/Conduct/Suspension and Termination

- A. The Day Nursery operates on the premise that discipline is used to teach and guide rather than punish. This policy **does not** mean that the staff permits inappropriate behavior. Instead, staff wish to mold or change behavior by using positive guidance techniques and re-directing inappropriate behavior. **Physical discipline of any type will never be used.**
- B. Day Nursery of Abilene staff are all trained in a positive classroom management program called Conscious Discipline. Through this program staff provide positive guidance and teach the children empathy and self-regulation skills. The concepts of Conscious Discipline provide that relationships are built through positive connections with adults and peers, providing an environment that is a safe place where they can learn. Adults model and coach children through emotional states they experience giving children the words they need to problem solve and communicate needs and feelings.
- C. Parents are invited to share positive experiences for what works in their home environment to promote positive discipline in the centers. They are also encouraged to take advantage of training on the concepts of Conscious Discipline.
- D. **Conduct.** It is our desire that each child enjoys their experience at Day Nursery. For this reason, we have initiated policies that are fair, consistent, easily complied with by each child, and benefit everyone involved.
 1. Children enrolled in a Day Nursery center are required to follow basic safety and conduct guidelines at all times, whether in the classroom, on the playground, in the van, on field trips, etc.
 2. These guidelines are enforced with each age group on an age-appropriate level and apply at all times. Depending on the severity of the infraction, failing to follow conduct guidelines can result in:
 - a) losing the privilege of participating in a specific activity:
 - b) losing field trip privileges (if appropriate):
 - c) suspension from the program: and/or
 - d) termination from the program.
 3. Conduct violations include but not limited to the following:
 - a) Disrespecting center staff
 - b) Intentionally and repeatedly leaving the classroom, playground, and/or facility
 - c) Using foul/threatening language
 - d) Damaging Day Nursery property, property of facilities visited on field trips, or property of another child
 - e) Engaging in fighting
 - f) Failure to follow rules of safety at the center and/or while being transported
 - g) Stealing and/or
 - h) Bringing inappropriate items to the center.
 4. Conduct Correction Process
 - a) Classroom child care staff and/or Center Director document behavior information to determine and evaluate patterns and recommended changes including changes in teaching strategy, schedule, room environment, etc.
 - b) Realizing that there is a necessary commitment from the Center as well as from home, and to assist the child in both places, if and when inappropriate behavior continues and becomes repetitious, harmful to self, other children in care, child care staff or Center Directors, a Plan of Action conference will be called by the Center Director.

- c) The Plan of Action conference will involve the parent, child care staff and the Center Director to review and discuss the documented behavior. A “specific plan of action” will be determined to correct this behavior and will include a reasonable time frame for correction as well as other resource and referral information from other community agencies if applicable.
- d) If there is evident improvement the parent, child care staff and Center Director will discuss next steps to continue progress. If there is no improvement within the agreed time frame set at the Plan of Action conference and the parent has not sought help from referral agencies, child care may be suspended or terminated depending on the behavior.

E. Suspension/Termination

1. **Suspension.** If the Day Nursery staff feels it to be in the best interest of your child, Day Nursery, and/or the children in care, Day Nursery may suspend your child until a plan is put in place or move your child to a different Center location to try and alleviate any problems.
2. **Termination.** If for any reason, the Day Nursery staff considers it to be in the best interest of the child and Day Nursery to terminate the child’s attendance they may do so immediately in serious incidents; however, Day Nursery shall strive to give 24 hours’ notice to the parent/guardian of such child. If a child’s attendance is terminated, Day Nursery will refund to the parent/guardian all remaining fees not currently owed to Day Nursery.

IX. Meals and Snacks

- A. A nutritionally balanced food service program is provided at no additional cost. Day Nursery’s menus meet nutritional guidelines and are posted.
- B. One brand of iron-fortified infant formula and baby food are provided. A list of these is on file in the centers.
- C. Special diets require written orders from the child's physician.
 1. Children are not allowed to bring any food items, candy or snacks of any kind to the center.
 2. For birthdays or other special occasions, parents must obtain prior approval from the Center Director to ensure that the shared snacks meet the needs of the children requiring special diets.
 3. Day Nursery provides breakfast (between 8:00am and 9:00 a.m.), lunch (between 11:00 a.m. – 12:30pm), and an afternoon snack following rest/naptime or afterschool pick up. If your child arrives at the center outside of these mealtimes, they must be fed prior to arrival.
- D. Supplemental Food Program information related to Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program is provided upon enrollment. For additional information refer to the WIC website (www.fns.usda.gov/wic)
- E. Civil Rights. The Day Nursery of Abilene is a participant in the Special Nutrition Program, Child Care Food Program through the Texas Department of Agriculture. Certain documentation and eligibility information is required upon enrollment as well as the following non-discrimination statement and complaint filing procedures.
 1. In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.
 2. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.
 3. To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA

office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

X. Curriculum and Activities

A. Curriculum

1. Day Nursery of Abilene provides research based curriculum and related goals that are age appropriate. Hands-on learning style in all stages of development is emphasized. Lesson plans are posted each week and cover cognitive, language, social, emotional and motor development. Intellectual creative expression, cultural diversity and health and safety for all children are promoted as a part of the curriculum goals and during activities.
2. Developmental Checklist. A developmental checklist is kept for each child at Day Nursery and is updated periodically (at least two times a year), depending on the age of the child. The checklist is used to provide a developmental assessment and for promoting to the next age group. This information will be reviewed with parents at the time the child is being promoted to the next class and more often as required/requested. Please ask your child's caregiver or center director if you have any questions regarding your child's development.
3. Day Nursery works very closely with local early childhood intervention programs including Care Options, West Texas Rehab Center etc. and the early childhood intervention programs at the school districts. Day Nursery provides information to access the services of these programs.

B. Field Trips

1. The Day Nursery organizes field trips as enrichment activities for older preschool and school age children enrolled. Parents will be notified in advance of any planned trip for their child's class. Children will not be allowed to participate without parental authorization.
2. Preschool and school age children are required to wear Day Nursery tee-shirts on all field trips. Tee-shirts must be purchased from the center and worn on all field trips.
3. Parents are encouraged to participate as volunteers on field trips as their schedule allows.

C. Other Activities:

1. Physical Activity
 - i. Outside time is planned at least twice a day, weather permitting, to provide outdoor physical activity.
 - ii. Indoor physical activity is embedded into daily routines and schedules, including Circle Time, Center Play, and Music and Movement.
2. Screen Time which includes watching DVDs, television and using the classroom computers is limited to two hours a day in accordance with Minimum Standards for Child Care Center and as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

XI. Parent Involvement

- A. A variety of parent involvement opportunities and activities are provided to benefit the parent as well as their children in care.

- a. Parent involvement opportunities are scheduled at least on a quarterly basis and include parent meetings, fundraisers benefitting the program, staff appreciation activities, parent surveys and parent conferences to review child assessments/promotions to the next class.
- B. Please attend as many as possible and feel free to suggest parent education topics to your center director.
 - a. Parent conferences are offered at least two times per year and parent feedback surveys are provided periodically.
 - b. Regular communication with parents about their child's care is welcomed and encouraged.
- C. Parents (ONLY) may visit the child-care center at any time during your hours of operation to observe their child, the program activities, the building, the premises, and the equipment without having to secure prior approval. Parents are welcome and encouraged to participate in their child's program through various volunteer opportunities including:
 - a. Assisting in the classroom for special parties and/or activities
 - b. Going on field trips
 - c. Helping with fundraising efforts which benefit Day Nursery, and
 - d. Assisting with community awareness events.
 - e. Attending quarterly parent meetings
- D. Parents must adhere to the Harassment and Violence Prevention policies.
- E. All special notices and items of general interest including upcoming employee training, the most recent Licensing Inspection Report, any parent notifications, and any upcoming event details are posted on the public Bulletin Board. It is the responsibility of the parent to check this board for any pertinent information concerning their child(ren) in care. A copy of the Minimum Standards of Child Care is available for review upon request or you may access them online at: www.dfps.state.tx.us.
- F. Regular communication with parents about their child's care is welcomed and encouraged. Failure to communicate an issue may prevent our Center from meeting your child's needs.

XII. Other Responsibilities of Parents

A. Children's Clothing:

Children are encouraged to wear play clothes and tennis shoes or other closed toed appropriate play shoes. Flip flops and open toed shoes are hazardous and discouraged. Children should come to the center ready for hands on learning that can at times be messy.

- B. Child Care Licensing Minimum Standards requires that all children must have time outdoors each day that weather permits. Please assure that your child has a jacket, appropriate closed-toed shoes, and socks or other suitable clothing to keep your child comfortable while on the playground or participating in other outdoor activities. A doctor's note is required if you do not wish your child to go outside.
 1. The child's name should be placed on all clothing and other belongings to help ensure the return of all proper possessions and clothing.
 2. For your child's comfort, we ask that all parents bring a complete change of clothing for your children. This extra set of clothing will be used in cases of excessive soiling of clothes.
 3. Disposable diapers and "Pull Ups" are to be provided by the parents of children who use them. Children who are potty training need several pairs of underwear at the center at all times. These items should also be clearly labeled with your child's name.
 4. All children should avoid wearing small bows, jewelry or clips which could become choking or otherwise hazardous.
 5. Children must not bring cell phones, toys, money, balloons, etc., to the center.

6. **The Day Nursery is not responsible for any items lost as a result of bringing them to the center.**

C. Delivery and Pick Up of Children

1. Children must not be brought before the center opens or before their scheduled/authorized time.
2. Children must be picked up at the center at your scheduled pick-up time. Late fees will be assessed when a child is picked up late. These fees must be paid before the child can return to the center.
3. Child Protective Services (CPS) and the police department will be notified immediately if a child is not picked up by the time the center closes.
4. Each parent must designate alternate persons to pick up their child(ren) in the event that they cannot pick up the child(ren). If the person a parent authorizes to pick up a child is not listed on the enrollment form, the center must verify that the person is authorized before releasing the child. No child will be released to a person who has not been previously authorized by the parent.
5. Parents or other authorized adults are not to pick up children from the center when intoxicated or under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Another designee is to be contacted in such circumstances.

D. School transportation policy

1. All children under 4' 9" tall or less than 8 years of age must be in a child booster seat and must have a harness safety belt. Day Nursery's "Dora Bus" is exempt from this rule by state law.
2. Children must remain seated and their safety belt latched while the van or bus is in motion.
3. Parents of school age children must notify their center by noon each day if their child will not be riding the van/bus that afternoon.
4. If a child breaks transportation rules or their behavior otherwise places another child or the Day Nursery driver at risk of harm, the child will be suspended or terminated.

XIII. Grievances/Concerns/Complaints:

- A. It is our number one priority to provide quality child care for your children. If you have any concerns or suggestions, please talk to the Center Director.
- B. If a concern or suggestion has not been appropriately acted upon in the center, a parent may request a conference by contacting the Program Director at the administration office.

XIV. Harassment & Violence Prevention:

- A. Employees and parents and/or guardians are expected to act in a positive, cooperative manner and contribute to a productive and healthy environment for the child that is free from harassing or disruptive activity. As such, all employees, volunteers, and staff should be treated with courtesy and respect at all times. Parents are expected to refrain from threatening behavior, fighting and any other conduct that may be dangerous to others. Conduct that threatens, intimidates, or coerces an employee, another parent, or a member of the public on the Day Nursery facility premises or in its immediate vicinity, at any time, will not be tolerated. This prohibition includes all acts of harassment.
- B. Day Nursery of Abilene's mission is to provide affordable, quality childcare services for a diverse community. Aside from just demonstrating competency, good judgment, and self-control in the presence of children and when performing responsibilities our caregivers MUST relate to children with courtesy, respect, acceptance, and patience and recognize and respect the uniqueness and potential of all children, their families, and their cultures. Day Nursery also expects the same courtesies from parents, family members, authorized visitors, authorized individuals to pick up from care, and to any member of the public on the Day Nursery of Abilene's facility premises. Day Nursery takes this very seriously and strictly adheres to the policies listed herein. Your child may be suspended or expelled if the policies below are not followed:

No Tolerance. Any form of harassment including, but not limited to the following types of harassment, are violations of this policy and will be treated as a disciplinary matter:

1. This prohibition includes all direct or indirect acts of threat or harassment, including harassment that is based on:
(1) a court proceeding against the other parent or guardian (i.e. child custody or divorce proceeding), (2) threats of violence against the other parent of the child; (2) an individual's sex, race, color, age, national origin, disability, genetic information; or (3) any characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law.
 2. Sexual harassment is a form of prohibited harassment. Any sexually harassing or offensive conduct in the work place, whether committed by supervisors, employees, visitors or non-employees, is prohibited.
 3. Conduct or words that threatens, intimidates, or coerces an employee, another parent, or a member of the public on the Day Nursery facility premises or in its immediate vicinity, at any time.
 4. Day Nursery of Abilene prohibits verbal, graphic, or physical conduct, which harasses, disrupts, or interferes with or creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment for the children in care.
- C. Any threats of violence, whether direct and indirect, must be reported by employees immediately to their supervisor or the Director and may result in a report to the Department of Family and Protective Services. This includes threats by employees, visitors, parents, or any other member of the public to any person on the Day Nursery facility premises. All suspicious individuals or activities should also be reported as soon as possible. If warranted, the aggressor will be asked to leave, and/or the authorities will be called to remove the aggressor from the Day Nursery.
- D. Possession of weapons and other hazardous devices or substances is prohibited on Day Nursery of Abilene premises. Any threatening behavior and/or possession of weapons or other dangerous, hazardous items will result in the immediate expulsion of the aggressor's child in care, removal of the aggressor from the premises without his child, and/or reporting the aggressor and his or her conduct to the authorities. Any threatening behavior and/or possession of weapons or other dangerous, hazardous items will result in the immediate expulsion of the aggressor's child in care, removal of the aggressor from the premises without his child, and/or reporting the aggressor and his or her conduct to the authorities. If the aggressor is removed from the premises or refuses to leave the premises, Day Nursery's policy is to not release the child to that individual. The aggressors' child in care may be immediately expelled due to his parent or guardian's conduct.

XV. Child Abuse and Neglect Policies

- A. By law, Day Nursery is required to report any instances of suspected child abuse or neglect to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or the Child's Protective Service (CPS). If you suspect child abuse or neglect, you may use the toll-free Child Abuse Hotline number (1-800-252-5400) available 24 hours a day.
- B. Day Nursery staff are required to attend annual training on recognizing and reporting child abuse. Day Nursery of Abilene coordinates and works with agencies through the 211 "Call for Help" program. The local 211 office is located in the United Way of Abilene building on Cypress Street. 211 operators are able to connect parents with the community resources of benefit to the parent/family during times of need.
- C. Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Strategies:
1. Learn what is and is not age appropriate.
 2. Have realistic expectations of what children can handle at certain ages.
 3. Develop positive parenting skills and appropriate discipline techniques
 4. Set clear boundaries for your children.
- D. The Day Nursery is not responsible for the investigation of any cases reported to CPS

XVI. Staff Health Requirements

- A. It is Day Nursery's recommendation that although staff are not required to maintain adult vaccinations that they consult their physician regarding their own health and recommended adult vaccinations. A flu vaccine is one that is recommended.
- B. If and when it becomes necessary, we will follow the recommendations of the CDC.

1. All staff who do not have an exemption will be required to have these immunizations if we determine it to be necessary
2. Employees will be required to provide the center with immunization records if we determine it to be necessary to require immunizations.
3. If an employee needs to be exempt, we will require written documentation to be kept in their records with the center if we determine it to be necessary to require immunizations
4. Exempt employees who are not vaccinated will be required to protect the children from exposure by following the CDC recommendations if we determine it to be necessary to require immunizations
5. Any employee who is exempt from a vaccine will not be discriminated against
6. Immunization records for employees will be kept confidential in their health files
Employees will not be allowed to work if they fail to comply with our immunization policies.

XVII. Emergency Preparedness Plan:

In accordance with Child Care Licensing standards for child care centers, the Day Nursery is communicating its adopted Emergency Preparedness Plan to parents in order for them to be aware of Day Nursery's effort to ensure the safety of every child attending the Day Nursery of Abilene child care centers.

1. In the event of an emergency such as tornadoes, floods or hurricanes, medical emergencies, communicable disease outbreak, and human-caused events such as intruder with weapon, explosion, or chemical spill the following plans will be executed.
 - a. Evacuation from child care center building or children moved to designated safe place.
 - b. Staff Responsibilities: To move children to a safe place in an orderly manner. Have child records with parent and emergency phone numbers, doctor's names, and hospital preferences. Accurate Transition Sheet is used to account for every child at all times.
 - c. All staff and children will meet in the prearranged location.
2. Day Nursery has a floor plan posted in each classroom at the entrance or exit which shows the following:
 - Two exit paths from each room, unless a room opens directly to the outdoors at ground level;
 - The designated location outside the child-care operation where all staff and children meet to ensure everyone has exited the operation safely; and
 - The designated location in the operation where all caregivers and children take shelter from threatening weather
3. For intruders, tornadoes, etc. where going outside of the building is hazardous, each center/classroom has designated safety areas for the children and staff to remain safe until the danger has passed.
4. Parents will be notified as soon as possible in any emergency situation.

XVIII. Gang Free Zone

The purpose of the gang-free zones is to deter certain types of criminal activity in area where children gather by enforcing tougher penalties.

House Bill 2086 that passed during the 81st Legislature, which became effective September 2009, requires that Licensed Child Care Centers are now in "**GANG FREE ZONES**".

A gang-free zone is a designed area around a specific location where prohibited gang related activity is subject to increased penalty under Texas Law. The specific locations include day care centers. The gang-free zone is within 1000 feet of your child care center. More information can be found in sections 71.28 and 71.029 of the Texas Penal Code.

XIX. Breastfeeding

- A. Day Nursery of Abilene supports breastfeeding and provides a private comfortable area with an adult sized seat at each center for mothers to breastfeed their infants.

In addition, nursing mothers have the right to breastfeed for their child while in care;

- B. If a nursing mother wishes to provide breast milk for their child while in care, those mothers may bring pumped breast milk for staff to give to the infant during the required feeding times.

- C. Staff members are trained to handle the storage and administration of breast milk according to the mother's instructions.

XX. Safe Sleep

All staff and volunteers will follow the Safe Sleep Recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Consumer Product Safety Commission (SPSC) for infants to reduce the risk of sudden death syndrome (SIDS)/sudden unexpected death syndrome. A copy of the required form must be reviewed and signed by all parents of infants enrolled in the Day Nursery of Abilene centers.

- We will always put infants to sleep on their backs unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 2710 signed by the infant's health care professional.
- Infants will be placed on a firm mattress, with a tight-fitting sheet, in a crib that meets the CPSC federal requirements for full size cribs.
- For infants who are younger than 12 months of age, cribs should be bare except for a tight-fitting sheet and a mattress cover or protector. Items that should not be placed in a crib include: soft or loose bedding, such as blankets, quilts, or comforters; pillows; stuffed toys/animals; soft objects; bumper pads; liners; or sleep positioning devices. Also, infants must not have their heads, faces, or cribs covered at any time by items such as blankets, linens, or clothing.
- We do not use sleep positioning devices, such as wedges or infant positioners. The AAP has found no evidence that these devices are safe. Their use may increase the risk of suffocation.
- We will ensure that sleeping areas are ventilated and at a temperature that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult.

We will never sleep more than one infant in each crib. Infants may use a pacifier during sleep. But the pacifier must not be attached to a stuffed animal or the infant's clothing by a string, cord, or other attaching mechanism that might be a suffocation or strangulation risk. If the infant falls asleep in a restrictive device other than a crib (such as a bouncy chair or swing, (or arrives to care asleep in a car seat), move the infant to a crib immediately, unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 2710 signed by the infant's health care professional. Day Nursery of Abilene is smoke-free. Smoking is not allowed in Texas child care operations. (this includes e-cigarettes and any type of vaporizers).

- Our staff will actively observe sleeping infants by sight and sound.
- If an infant is able to roll back and forth from front to back, the infant will be placed on their back and allowed to assume a preferred sleep position.
- Awake infants will have supervised "tummy time" several times daily. This will help them strengthen their muscles and develop normally.
- Do not swaddle an infant for sleep or rest unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 2710 signed by the infant's health care professional.

XI. Pest Extermination

Day Nursery of Abilene uses the services of an exterminating company on a monthly basis to control unwanted pests. The proper and required notification is posted in each center indicating the designated day for these services. Should there be any changes or revisions in these policies, parents will be notified in writing immediately.

**DAY NURSERY OF ABILENE, INC.
PARENT HANDBOOK**

LOCATIONS:

SHERRY LANE CENTER

3434 Sherry Lane
Abilene, Texas 79603
325-673-1781

VINE STREET CENTER

1442 Vine Street
Abilene, Texas 79602
325-672-7351

CEDAR STREET CENTER

650 Cedar Street
Abilene, Texas 79601
325-670-0002

ADMINISTRATION OFFICE

702 Cedar Street
Abilene, Texas 79601
325-673-1110

www.daynurseryabilene.org

**Day Nursery works hard at ensuring its employees are well trained and qualified to deal with any situation, but if you have any questions or concerns, please call our Programs Director whom would be happy to answer any questions or concerns*