

Stepping Stones of Knowledge Academy



PARENT POLICY HANDBOOK

206 East Redbird Lane

Duncanville, Texas 75116

(972) 572-3601

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Welcome

Welcome to Stepping Stones of Knowledge Academy! We believe that parents and teachers need to work together as a team and we're looking forward to a happy and productive environment. More than likely, you'll have questions and concerns. If you don't find the information you need in this booklet, please contact one of our staff members and we'll do our best to help. It is required by law that you sign a contract stating that you understand and agree to the contents of this policy handbook.

Mission

Stepping Stones of Knowledge Academy's mission is to provide children with a safe, nurturing environment where they are given the academic and social skills needed for continued success in the future.

Minimum Standards

The minimum standards are developed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. It is mandatory that our center maintains compliance with all standards set forth in the Minimum standards handbook. A copy of the standards is in the office at all times and available for review. The most recent Licensing inspection is located on the wall near the office for immediate review as well.

Philosophy/Goals

Our staff believes that children are unique individuals and by building upon each child's strengths and abilities, all children can be successful learners. We believe that children learn in an engaging, safe, and consistent environment supported by trained, caring, and responsive staff. Children need a variety of experiences that include daily opportunities to participate in small and large group activities which encourage math, language, problem solving, thinking skills, social, and muscle development. We believe that children learn best when they have opportunities to explore their world with adults encouraging and guiding growth and development. Our goal is to create a home/school partnership where parents and teachers work together to support children's learning.

- To promote interactive learning and encourage intellectual curiosity, social values, as well as emotional wellbeing
- To teach respect for others as well as acceptance of herself/himself
- To promote students accepting responsibility
- To promote awareness of cultural diversity
- To develop critical thinking, problem solving, and communication skills through opportunities with choice and decision
- To teach students how cooperatively in groups and individually
- To promote the relationship of good health to success and happiness

Operation Information

Stepping Stones of Knowledge Academy is open Monday through Friday from 6AM to 6PM. In order for everyone to receive full benefit of the program, all children are encouraged to be present a few minutes before 8:00 a. m. as preschool will begin promptly at that time. A phone call prior to class time is appreciated to inform us that your child will not be in attendance on a given day. The following holidays will be observed for the school year. If there are any changes to these days, a note will be sent home in advance notifying of the changes so you can make the necessary arrangements. The holidays are as follows:

New Year's Eve (close early 3pm)

New Year's Day (closed)
Martin Luther King Jr. Day (closed)
Labor Day (closed)
Memorial Day (closed)
Fourth of July (closed)
Labor Day (closed)
Day Before Thanksgiving (close early 3pm)
Thanksgiving Day (closed)
Day After Thanksgiving (closed)
Day Before Christmas Eve (close early 3pm)
Christmas Eve (closed)
Christmas Day (closed)

Tuition/Fees

Tuition is due on Monday of each week. Tuition not received by the close of Monday will be considered late and a \$25.00 late fee will be charged daily until tuition has been paid. If tuition is not received on Wednesday morning, your child will not be admitted until the full delinquent tuition has been paid. Parents that would like to pay tuition on a monthly basis will need to sign a contract. Monthly tuition will be due on the first day of each month. The monthly tuition will be based on every full week of each month (a full week is considered three or more days in a week). A \$35 processing fee will be charge for any bounced checks. After two checks have bounced on a family account, only cash or money order will be accepted. Please understand that tuition rates are subject to change as conditions require, but you will receive at least two weeks' notice of any change in tuition rates.

Stepping Stones of Knowledge Academy offers full-time preschool positions. Full tuition, as contracted upon in the student enrollment application, is required weekly regardless of holidays. The reasoning behind this is that we incur regular recurring bills, such as insurance, based on the number of children enrolled. Refunds, credits, or make-ups will not be granted in the case that there is an unplanned absence or extended illness for one or two full calendar weeks. Two weeks written notice is required for any vacation taken outside the calendar breaks and a \$50 holding fee per week will be expected prior to departure. This will ensure that your child's place is held while he/she is absent. Failure to do so will require you to re-enroll your child in our facility and require a new registration fee. After one full year of enrollment, with an account in good standing, your child will be entitled to one free week of vacation.

Enrollment

All children are accepted into the program regardless of race, national origin, color, sex, age, religion, or disability. All enrollment forms must be completed and returned to Stepping Stones of Knowledge Academy before your child will be admitted. This will keep Stepping Stones of Knowledge Academy in compliance with state regulations along with providing important information needed to handle emergency situations.

Entering/Leaving the Building

The parent is responsible daily for walking the child into the facility and making sure that your child is under proper supervision before leaving the building. Once your child is released to you, please do not allow them to roam the premises unattended as this is a safety risk. Also, please do not allow your child to leave the building ahead of you. Your cooperation will greatly be appreciated and will ensure the safety of your child. Please remember to use the data terminal to clock your child in when he/she arrives and clock out when he/she leaves. If you fail to clock your child in/out, a \$1.00 processing fee will be applied to your account each time. Please do not leave your car running and unattended in the driveway.

Release of a Child

Children will be released only to those individuals whose names are listed on the enrollment forms. The director is to be notified if any other individual is going to pick up your child. The unlisted individual(s) must show a driver's license or some form of picture identification and know the pin number. If there is no authorization, your child will not be permitted to leave the premises. In the custody arrangements, it is important that the registering parent indicates who has legal custody and who may pick up the child. If there is a court order keeping one parent or guardian away from the child, I must have a written note from the custodial parent or guardian in my file to that effect. This confidential document will be placed in the child's file. Children will be released only to those individuals whose names are listed on the enrollment forms. The director is to be notified if any other individual is going to pick up your child. The unlisted individual(s) must show a driver's license or some form of picture identification and know the pin number. If there is no authorization, your child will not be permitted to leave the premises. In the custody arrangements, it is important that the registering parent indicates who has legal custody and who may pick up the child. If there is a court order keeping one parent or guardian away from the child, I must have a written note from the custodial parent or guardian in my file to that effect. This confidential document will be placed in the child's file.

Late Pick Up

If your child remains at the center past the scheduled closing time, there will be a charge of \$1.00 per minute per child accessed to your account. This amount is due when you pick up your child. Otherwise, your child will not be admitted the next day. Please understand the staff that has to stay late for your child also has plans and things to do and you are keeping them from doing so.

Discipline

We use a positive approach to discipline. Our staff believes in redirecting children when a discipline situation arises. Every discipline confrontation can be turned into a learning situation. We encourage children to be responsible for their actions and allow them to experience the natural or logical consequences of their behavior. We believe in empowering each child by:

- Using firmness with respect and dignity. We speak to each child as a person with feelings
- Speaking in a calm voice instead of yelling
- Modeling respect and expecting children to respect all staff and each other
- Not using scare tactics or threatening children nor allowing children to use scare tactics or to threaten each other or staff. Bullying is unacceptable and not tolerated.

- Not ridiculing any child, their family, life style, religious beliefs, nationality, etc.
- Focusing on prevention
- Limiting the number of children in each area of the room avoids overcrowding and allows for sufficient materials and the opportunity for constructive interactions, which reduces opportunities for negative behaviors.
- Positively redirecting their behavior. If a behavior is inappropriate, we use redirection. For example, if Peter is throwing blocks, we would say, “Peter, build with the blocks.” If necessary, we would teach the appropriate behavior to him. Sometimes, we give children choices, which help them to choose appropriate behaviors. For example, “Peter, build with the blocks, or you will have to play somewhere else.”
- Asking the child to sit on a thinking chair, this is a time out place to think about what she/he has done. With the help of a teacher’s discussion with him/her, a better way to interact with the other children, materials, etc. is discussed. Thinking time lasts for one minute per year of life. For example, a four-year-old would sit for four minutes.
- Not allowing your child to participate in field trips or suspension.

We do not use any form of hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, or ridicule. Harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment is unacceptable. We try to be as consistent as possible with our classroom rules so that the children will know what is expected of them. We find that this helps the children and leads to their success. Parents are notified by note, phone call, or parent teacher conference of any persistent behavior concerns. On a final note, in the event the center is not able to provide the services based on the child’s behavior, the center will ask the parent to withdraw the child. We do reserve the right to dismiss a child whose behavior endangers or is detrimental to the wellbeing and educational environment of the other children.

Dress Code

All children are required to wear designated uniforms Monday – Thursday every week. Uniforms include solid color polo red style shirts and khaki or navy blue pants, shorts or skirts and dress for girls. Fridays are free days. Please dress your child appropriately. The activities may be messy. Do not send your child in clothing that you do not want stained. Weather permitting; we will spend time outdoors. You also need to supply a complete change of clothing in case of an accident. If the child has no spare clothing, the parent will be called to bring some.

Communication

We believe that open communication is necessary to be able to provide the best care to your child. We will develop an ongoing relationship with each child and family. We appreciate any information that may assist us in understanding your child. Please notify us as to changes at home that might affect your child’s mood, behavior, or performance at school. It is understood that changes in routines, such as visitors, marital discord, or illness or death of a loved one may be stressful to a child. The teachers and Director are always available to talk to you and your family regarding any questions or concerns. We also will communicate information to you via the following outlets: Weekly Parent-Teacher Communication Letters Weekly Classroom Newsletters Monthly Academy Newsletters Our Monthly PowerPoint presentation on the monitor in the lobby Parent Teacher Conferences Open House Phone Calls Emails Letters/Flyers

Parent Involvement/ Visits

Stepping Stones of Knowledge Academy would like for all parents and families to be as involved in the program as they are comfortable being. There are many opportunities available such as helping with a holiday party, a special project or field trip. Just talk to your child’s teacher and let them know when, where and how you can help. You are

welcome to visit at any time during the center's operations hours to observe your child, the operations and program activities. Please just be sure to sign in at the front office first.

Personal Belongings

All personal items brought to the center must be labeled with the child's name. No items should be brought from home other than extra clothing, coats, hats, or similar. Special occasions like show and tell will be exceptions and staff will specify dates in advance. Stepping Stones of Knowledge Academy will not be held responsible for lost, stolen, or broken items.

First Aid

First aid and emergency care guides will be posted. The director as well as the staff will be trained to administer first aid.

Medical Emergency/Injuries

Safety rules will be posted. The owner, directors and staff will make every effort to make the environment as safe as possible for each individual student. Unfortunately, minor accidents may occur. WE ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ACCIDENTS OR INJURIES BEYOND OUR CONTROL. We realize that you want to be aware of your child's injuries or illnesses that have occurred at Stepping Stones of Knowledge Academy, Inc. In the case of serious accidental injury, we will (1) contact emergency medical services or take the child to the nearest emergency room, (2) give the child first aid treatment or CPR when needed, (3) Contact the physician identified in the child's records, (4) Contact the child's parent, and (5) ensure the supervision of other children in the group. Please make sure that the name(s) listed are people you can rely on to make the best emergency decisions in the best interest of your child.

Illness

Stepping Stones of Knowledge Academy is a "well child" facility. At NO time do we provide care for sick children. The following illness policies are strictly enforced at the discretion of Stepping Stones of Knowledge Academy staff members for the health, well-being, and safety of all concerned. Children and/or adults with any of the following illnesses or symptoms will be excluded from the program for the length of time specified.

Immunizations/ Tuberculosis/ Hearing & Vision Screening

Each child enrolled or admitted must meet applicable immunization requirements specified by the Texas Department of State Health Services in 25 TAC 97, Subchapter B. This requirement applies to all children from birth through 14 years of age. For more info, go to <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize>

Requirements for tuberculosis screening and testing vary across the state. The Dallas County Health Department does not require children in the child care center to be tested but all staff members are tested.

It is required that all children have a screening or a professional examination for possible vision and hearing problems. The parent must submit to us (1) an individual visual acuity and sweep check or (2) a signed statement from the child's parent that the child's screening records are current and on file at the pre-kindergarten program or school the child attends away from the center or (3) a affidavit that vision or screening conflicts with the tenets or practices of a church or religious denomination of which the affiant is an adherent or member.

Vaccine Preventable Diseases

Staff members are required to get TB test done every two years. Documentation is kept on file showing compliance with this requirement.

Child Abuse Mandate/Health Checks

All care providers and teachers are required by law to report any suspicions of child abuse or neglect. Our staff members are trained through annual required training to identify signs that may indicate possible abuse and we will report them. If your child has any birth marks or bumps, bruises, scrapes, etc, please let staff know about them. We will inquire about them when noticed and document them as well. Our focus is on preventing and responding to abuse and neglect by (1) required annual training for employees, (2) methods for increasing employee and parent awareness of issues regarding child abuse and neglect, including warning signs that a child may be a victim of abuse or neglect, (3) methods for increasing employee and parent awareness of prevention techniques for child abuse and neglect, (4) strategies for coordination between the center and appropriate community organizations, (5) actions that the parent of a child who is a victim of abuse or neglect should take to obtain assistance and intervention.

Changes to Policies

Changes may be made to these policies as needed with 2 weeks' notice. The policy, contracts, consents, and forms will be reviewed and updated, if needed, yearly in January. Please give written notice of any changes that may occur, especially of name or address, or of updated immunizations.

Medication Policy

Whenever possible, schedule the administration of medication for times when your child is home. However, the need is recognized that certain students may be required to take medications during the school day and if this is so, parents have two options: 1) parents can come to school and administer the medication to the student themselves or 2) medication can be administered by the school nurse or designated personnel. In order for school personnel to administer prescription or over the counter medication at school, the following is needed: a copy of the written order from the child's health-care provider which includes the name of the medication, dosage, time to be given, length of time the medication will be prescribed and the reason for the medication to be given. A valid current prescription label that contains this information may be substituted for this order. written permission from parent/guardian. medication brought in by the parent/guardian in the original container.

Severe Weather Policy

Any change in the school schedule or school closing due to weather will be announced over Fox 4 News and recorded on voice mail. Many parents of preschoolers have concerns about sending their children to school on days when severe weather conditions exist. We believe that it is your right and responsibility to decide if the weather indicates keeping your child at home. Please call us if you choose to keep your child home for the day.

Transportation Policy

In order to provide transportation services to any child, the parent must review and sign the transportation permission slip. We will take the following precautions when transporting your child: (1) load and unload children at the curbside of the vehicle or in a protected parking area or driveway, (2) not allow a child to cross a street unless accompanied by an adult, (3) account for all children exiting the vehicle before leaving the vehicle unattended using name to face accounting, (4) each child will be required to wear seat belt. Drivers will carry (1) a

list of children being transported, (2) emergency information on each child (contact name and number, (3) first aid kit, and (4) fire extinguisher.

Diapering and Toilet Training

Some children in our programs are not toilet trained. We work cooperatively with parents to establish plans and procedures to assist the child in developing proper toilet training habits. We teach children to use proper hand washing procedures following toilet use/diaper changes.

- Parents need to provide either disposable diapers or diapers from a commercial diaper service. If your child is unable to use diapers from these sources due to health reasons, another arrangement can be made according to a parent or licensed physician's instructions.
- The center has designated diapering areas that are sanitized after each diapering and maintained in a safe manner.
- Staff thoroughly wash their hands using the state hand washing guidelines after diapering or dealing with body fluids.
- All diapering materials (wash cloths, wipes, etc.) are disposed of or washed and sanitized before being re-used.
- All training devices (potty chairs) are emptied and sanitized immediately after use.
- Diapers will be changed when soiled or wet.

Food

Stepping Stones of Knowledge Academy, Inc. will provide full-day children with adequate snacks (morning and afternoon) and a hot, nutritional meal daily. Menus will be posted to allow parents to know what types of nutritional foods are being served. Arrangements can be made to bring food for children with special dietary needs. Birthday parties are allowed and at the expense of the parent.

Field Trips

Field trips will include culturally enriched activities as well as museums, the zoo, theater, library and etc. Parents must complete a form giving permission for your child to attend the scheduled trip.

Parent Complaints

Procedure Stepping Stones of Knowledge Academy, Inc. responds promptly to all parent concerns and complaints. All parents with concerns or complaints please contact the director in person, by phone or mail. The director will respond promptly in person, writing or by phone. Twenty-four-hour notice is required to schedule a parent conference. The director will work with all parents diligently to resolve concerns and complaints.

Important Phone Numbers

To contact the local licensing office, call (214) 951-7902 or visit 8700 North Stemmons Freeway, Suite 104, Dallas, Texas 75247. The DFPS Child Abuse Hotline is 1(800) 252-5400 and website is <https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/>

Gang Free Zone

Any area within 1000 feet of the child care center is a gang free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.

Emergency Preparedness Plan

In the case of an emergency, the first responsibility of staff is to move the children to a designated safe area or alternate shelter known to all employees, caregivers, and volunteers. When evacuating the building, Teachers count their children and take attendance sheets with them. No one can stop for coats or any other personal supplies. The designated member of the management team goes to the infant/toddler area. Children who are not walking are placed in an evacuation crib (four to a crib) and the crib is wheeled outside to the designated area. Toddlers (walkers) proceed immediately with staff to the outside-designated area. Teachers count their children and leave the building in groups, taking attendance sheets with them. No one can stop for coats or any personal belongings. Everyone should go to his/her designated place on the playground or other space. Once outside, teachers recount their children. The Center Director or designee checks bathrooms, closets, and "hiding places" for "lost children" and for possible sources of smoke or fire. The Center Director retrieves the files of all parent/guardian names and emergency telephone numbers to contact parent/guardian. The Center Director or designee checks with each group to verify an accurate recount of all persons. The Center Director will contact the local authorities (fires, law enforcement emergency medical services, health department), parents and the local licensing office. Children and staff will relocate to Jabez Christian Learning Academy. It is located at 550 N Highway 67, Cedar Hill, TX 75104. The phone number is (972) 291-5777.

Thank you for taking time to read and familiarize yourself with our policies. Please sign below acknowledging that you have read, understand and agree to the following policies indicated in this Parent Policy Handbook.

Print Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____