



- https://stabcs.org/child-center
- 979-485-8130

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# Introduction

This Handbook serves to inform parents whose children are enrolled in our center about the policies and procedures in place. As a parent, you will be notified in writing of any changes and or additions to any policy or procedure in this handbook during the school year, no less than 10 days prior to implementation. Parents are expected to read, understand and be familiar with this Handbook as it also serves as the Parent Contract which will require your signature of receipt, understanding and agreement.



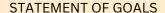
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Established in January of 2001, we have grown from our humble beginnings as a Part Day Program that afforded the mothers of our parish an opportunity to run their weekly errands, while ensuring that their children would be cared for in a safe, faith filled, and developmentally appropriate environment. A Full Day Program was established in June of 2006 to meet the needs of working families in the parish and in our community.

# **PHILOSOPHY**

Believing that each child is made in the image and likeness of God, we minister to each child and his/her family as the child develops spiritually, socially, physically, emotionally, and intellectually. We focus on providing high quality, developmentally appropriate care to children in a Catholic environment. We are continually challenged to identify and to minister to the needs of our children and their families.





The overall purpose of the St. Thomas Aquinas Child Development Center is to provide developmentally appropriate and nurturing care for children in a Catholic environment for our local parish and the larger community. The following goals are necessary to meet that purpose:

- To teach basic Catholic principles by word and example
  . To help children grow in their knowledge and
  understanding of the Catholic faith through Bible stories,
  age-appropriate activities, and the celebration of special
  feast days and customs.
- To provide a safe and healthy environment that encourages play, exploration, and learning.
- To provide interactions and activities designed to foster a healthy self-esteem and a love for learning.
- To encourage each child to solve problems independently.
- To promote physical development through fine and gross motor skills.



#### **ORGANIZATION**

The St. Thomas Aquinas Child Development Center is a licensed, non-profit organization. The Pastor of the Parish is the administrator. The Child Development Center's Director is responsible for the day-to-day operations.

The Center is open Monday through Friday from 7:00 am – 6:00 p.m. for children ages 6 weeks through 4 years old year-round. Our academic calendar runs from September through August each year.

Please see the Academic Year Calendar for a complete listing of events and also dates that the Child Development Center will be closed.

(We generally follow the College Station ISD calendar.)





#### **CURRICULUM**

Our curriculum program is called Pinnacle.

Samples of our curriculum are available to view on our website.

Our curriculum includes prayer, language experiences, art, music, physical skills, manipulatives, dramatic play, science, nature, cooking, literature, outside play and more.

Developmental skills, creativity, and exploration are enhanced through these units.

We have visits from community helpers, like firefighters, to give children a greater awareness of the world around them.

The St. Thomas Aquinas Child Development Center is a Catholic program committed to sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with children in age-appropriate ways. During class time, children are taught that God loves them, and we are all God's children. Basic Christian principles are taught by word and example; to love one another, to be kind to each other, to comfort those who are sad, and to share with each other. Bible stories and times of prayer are shared with the children. The priest of the parish conducts a weekly prayer time with all the children and staff.







# **ENROLLMENT**

Once enrolled in the program, children will remain enrolled until a 30-day written withdrawal notice is received. Children may be enrolled as places become available throughout the academic year. Enrollment for any student is subject to administrative approval.





## WITHDRAWAL

A 30-day written notice is required prior to withdrawal from the Center for any reason. A withdrawal form may be obtained from the CDC office. Monthly tuition will not be pro-rated or refunded. \*Tuition includes any fees or other charges. A \$25.00 re-registration fee is due for children who withdraw and return in the same academic year. Families terminating their contract before August have the option to be placed on end of the waitlist. Families will need to fill out a waitlist form and attach the \$25 fee. This option does not guarantee placement in the fall.

# ROOM PLACEMENT/ROOM MOVES

For students aged 6 weeks-24 months, you can expect your child to progress to the next room at least every 6 months, if not sooner due to the ratio of students that we are able to accommodate per a classroom.

We will only advance your child to the next room if we feel they are physically and academically prepared to advance.

Students in our 2-year-old room through our Pre-K class will be promoted to their appropriate classroom based on age and availability at the beginning of each academic year (September 1st).

We follow the same birthday cut-off as the school system so if your child has a birthday from September - December, they may not advance to the age group you would expect them to, but this will ensure that they do not have to repeat any classes.





#### **TUITION**

Tuition is automatically processed through Tuition Express using a bank account draft or credit card for payment. If you are paying with a credit card, please be aware that there is a 3% processing fee.

Tuition is due on the first day of each month and is considered delinquent on the 7th.

Payment received after the 7th will be assessed a \$25.00 late fee.

There is a \$25.00 returned check fee for all checks returned.

Additionally, if tuition payment and any applicable late fees are not received by the 7th, children will not be allowed to attend the CDC on or after the 8th, until the account is paid in full.

Children will be dismissed if tuition is not paid by the 12th.



#### **TUITION DISCOUNTS**

We offer two different types of discounts to our families: Multiple children, oldest sibling discount OR a parishioner, oldest child discount (only one discount per family). If you wish to partake of the parishioner discount, the form may be obtained from the CDC office.

If your start date is not the 1st of the month, prorated tuition is available for the starting month if approved by administration.

# **RATE CHANGES**

Rate changes are <u>NOT</u> based on your child's birthday.

Rate changes are based upon when your child moves from one room to the next room if they fall under a new age bracket. You must sign a Rate Change Form with the front office for a rate change to apply to the following month's tuition.

### **ABSENCES**

There are no refunds or prorated tuition on days your child is absent. If for any reason your child will be late, absent, or out for an extended period, of time please contact the CDC Office (979-485-8130).



Each family is given one access card for each parent. If you lose or damage a card the first replacement is free. After that you will have to pay a fee of \$10 for each replacement card needed. Please let us know if a card is lost or stolen so that we can deactivate it.



# Dismissal

Some situations that demand expulsion are:

- Non-payment of tuition or fees by the
   12th of the month.
- Inappropriate behavioral acts of a child as described in our below policy.

There will be no refunds of tuition for a child that is dismissed.





#### **INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR POLICY**

Aggressive behavior is defined as biting, scratching, hitting, kicking, punching, pinching or any other actions that may cause physical harm to another person. We understand that aggressive behavior unfortunately, is a part of a day care setting. Our goal is to help identify what is causing the behavior and resolve these issues. State regulations require that the parents of the child inflicting injury and the parents of the child who was injured be contacted immediately. Names of the children are not allowed to be shared with either set of parents.

#### For the child injured:

- 1. First aid is administered to the injury and the child is soothed.
- 2. The "Incident Report" form is filled out documenting the incident and parents are notified via ProCare.
- 3. The Incident Report must be **electronically signed** by a parent/guardian the day of the incident.

#### For the child that inflicted injury:

- 1. The teacher will firmly tell the child "NO" and explain to them that the behavior exhibited is wrong.
- 2. The child will be placed on a thinking square for no longer than the child's age (ex. Two years old, two minutes).
- 3. The "Incident Report" form is filled out documenting the incident and parents are notified via ProCare.
- 4. The Incident Report must be **electronically signed** by a parent/guardian the day of the incident.

#### When Aggressive Behavior Continues:

- 1. The child's teacher will reach out to parents/guardians to notify them that there is a pattern of behavior developing and that they will enact the following procedures in the classroom:
- 2. The child will be placed next to the teacher to help prevent any additional incidents.
- 3. The child will be observed by staff to determine what is causing the behavior.
- 4. The child will be given positive attention and approval for positive behavior.

#### When Aggressive Behavior becomes Excessive:

Step 1)

If a child inflicts 2 injuries in a one-week period (5 weekdays) in which a mark is left, a digital form titled "Continued Inappropriate Behavior Log" will be sent to parents via ProCare. This form requires parent signature and includes the expectation for parent intervention to occur in the household.

#### Step 2)

If a child inflicts 2 injuries in a one-week period (5 weekdays) in which a mark is left, the child will be suspended for 1 business day and parents will be required to schedule a parent/administrator conference to discuss an "Behavioral Action Plan."

#### Step 3)

If a child inflicts 2 injuries in a one-week period (5 weekdays) in which a mark is left, **the parents will be asked to make other daycare arrangements.** 

If a child who has been through steps 1-3 goes 2 weeks (10 business days) without biting/hitting/scratching, we will go back to step one. If this is not achieved, administration will decide based on the severity of the injuries, if the child will remain enrolled.

If a child inflicts an injury of any kind to a peer and/or staff member twice in one school day,
they must be picked up from day care for the remainder of the day.
This will not count toward the 1-day suspension.



## DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE

#### STA CDC employs discipline that is:

• Individualized and consistent for each child. • Appropriate to the child's level of understanding. • Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.

Our caregivers use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include at least the following:

• Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only on unacceptable behavior. • Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements. • Redirecting behavior using positive statements. • Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.

We will not tolerate harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child.

### The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:

• Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment. • Punishment associated with food, naps or toilet training. • Pinching, shaking, or biting a child. • Hitting a child with a hand or instrument. • Putting anything in or on a child's mouth. • Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child. • Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language. • Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed. • Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.

All our discipline policies are in accordance with
Texas Administrative Code,
Title 40, Chapters 746 & 747, Subchapters L,
Discipline & Guidance that govern our actions
as a State Licensed facility.



# ARRIVAL/PICK-UP

Everyone will enter and exit through the front main entrance to the Child Development Center. Please do not park in the FIRE LANE. For the safety of the children, please enter and exit the parking lot at a slow rate of speed. Each morning, children must be accompanied to their rooms OR their designated drop-off spot by a parent or authorized adult. Children MUST be signed in/out via ProCare. Children should never be left in their classroom unless there is a teacher or staff member present. Please be sure the staff sees you when you bring your child into the room. The Center will not be responsible for children whose parents do not do this. Children will be released only to those persons whose names appear on the registration form. Written notice of any changes to this agreement must be signed by the parent(s) and submitted to the Director. St. Thomas Aquinas Church has no legal authority to refuse either parent the right to pick up a child unless a court has granted temporary or permanent custody to one parent or to a third party and the school has been furnished with a copy of the court order. Photo identification and documentation of one's driver's license number is required by licensing to verify identity. Please place all strollers and/or car seats in the assigned area for safety. The Center is licensed to provide care from 7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.



# LATE PICK-UP

A LATE PICK-UP FEE will be assessed per child for late pick-up. The fee is \$1.00 per minute. For example: 5 minutes = \$5.00, 10 minutes = \$10.00 etc.

















#### **DROP OFF POLICY**

To uphold the child's daily routine, we request that children be dropped off at the center no later than 10:00am except for doctor appointments, occasional needs, and emergencies. The CDC should be notified as soon as possible in advance of changes to drop off time. We ask that drop off not occur during nap (12:00-2:30pm) as this is disruptive to the group as well as being difficult for your child.

















# YOUR CHILD WILL NEED

#### To keep at school:

 A nap mat with a built-in blanket and pillow or provide a light blanket - please no pillows or sleeping bags or fluffy items, due to limited storage space.

#### To have in your child's bag/backpack daily:

- A lunch and drink (no soda, sweet tea, candy, or gum)
  - A change of clothes (to remain in backpack/diaper bag)
- Your child may bring an item from home to have during rest time that may make him/her feel more comfortable. However, children should not bring toys from home to play with. Items should be soft for naptime, no cars/dinosaurs/dolls etc.

#### Infants:

- Formula/breast milk, water (if desired), disposable diapers and wipes
  - 4 changes of clothing
    - Pacifier

Mothers who are nursing are welcome to come during the day to nurse their children. Please coordinate with your child's teacher if you wish to do so.

\*Please LABEL all items brought to school.
Thank you!



#### PARENT INVOLVEMENT

If this is the first time your child will experience a childcare/pre-school environment, your positive attitude will greatly affect the initial adjustment to our Center.

While a majority of children have little difficulty in adjusting to new situations, some do experience teary separations. There may be tears but reassure your child of your return and leave promptly. Call the Center to check on your child as often as you like, and we will be honest with you about his or her progress. Please remember that a child can sense any reservations on the parent's part, so a positive attitude must be maintained to assure a smooth transition. Parents are welcome to visit the program at any time during hours of operation, for any reason, without prior approval. Please be considerate of nap time.

Parent involvement is welcomed and encouraged. All parents who wish to volunteer must complete Diocesan requirements for Ethics & Integrity in Ministry, including a background check, an on-line application, and attendance at an Ethics & Integrity in Ministry workshop. See the Director for more information on how to fulfill these requirements.

Individual classroom and Center newsletters, which provide information about activities, are sent home regularly along with other notices as needed. Your child's cubby should be checked daily for important information.

Parents are provided with a daily record of diaper changes, feedings, and activities. There is a parent bulletin board by the office posting state notifications, the current month's snack menu and the most recent Licensing inspection report.

Parents, please read all notes and newsletters.
We strongly encourage parents to participate
and communicate with us.



#### LUNCH

Your child's lunch should be something he/she can feed themselves (except for infants). Remember to pack foods that your child enjoys and that are safe and healthy to eat. Children will not be allowed to share lunches. Also, please do not forget a drink for lunch (please no soda or sweet tea). For your child's safety, please do not send gum or candy. We require all food to be pre-cooked. For example, we cannot make a microwaveable mac-n-cheese as it takes more than a minute to heat, making it a safety hazard. We always aim to make lunch an enjoyable time for your child.

# **SNACK**

A mid-morning and an afternoon snack will be given to all children 12 months and older. This includes a variety of food items. The monthly snack menu is posted on the parent bulletin board and in each classroom.

# **POTTY TRAINING**

Our policy requires all children going into the

3-year-old classrooms to be pottytrained prior to entering the classroom. We start introducing students to potty training at 18 months. We expect parent participation in the household to start introducing children to pull-ups.

# PETS/ANIMALS

On occasion we will have animals/pets at the center for educational purposes. We will create specific areas for interaction with animals and supervise children's contact to prevent the spread of germs. All animals will be healthy, and pets will have immunization records on file. All areas will be cleaned and disinfected before and after contact with animals. Permission slips will be sent out prior to any activity. If your child has any specific allergies related to animals/pets please let us know in advance.

## **INFANT SAFE SLEEP POLICY**

Our center will follow these safe sleep recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) for infants to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome/Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS/SUIDS):

Infants are to sleep one infant per crib on their back with a tight-fitting sheet on a firm mattress. 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. Infants must not have their heads, faces, or cribs covered at any time by items such as blankets, linens, or clothing. If an infant needs extra warmth, use sleep clothing. 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. 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. Infants sleep in a well-ventilated, temperature controlled, smoke-free room and are actively observed during sleep. Do not swaddle an infant for sleep or rest. Awake infants will have supervised "tummy time" several times daily to promote muscle growth. If an infant is able to roll back and forth from front to back, place the infant on the infant's back for sleep and allow the infant to assume a preferred sleep position.

#### **TRANSPORTATION**

The Center does not provide transportation, except on an emergency basis. Permission for emergency transportation MUST be given on the Consent/Release Form.

#### **LOST ITEMS**

Lost articles will be kept in the office. Any extra items of clothing should be clearly marked with your child's name, especially jackets. The Center will not be responsible for items left over 30 days.





# **SICK POLICY**

I need to stay home if......



#### I HAVE A FEVER

A) An oral temperature above 101 degrees B) Ear, armpit or forehead temperature above 100 degrees

Must be symptom free for 24 hours to return to care.



2 or more vomiting episodes in 24 hours. Must be symptom free for 24 hours to return to care.



#### I HAVE DIARRHEA

2 or more diarrheas in 24 hours. Must be symptom free for 24 hours to return to care.



Body rash accompanied by itching and/or fever.

Must be symptom free for 24 hours to return to care.



#### I HAVE EYE AN INFECTION

Eye is red and oozing a yellow or green discharge.

May return to care 24 hours after starting antibiotic eye drops or ointment.

#### I HAVE HEAD LICE

Itchy head, active headlice. May return to care after 1st treatment, as long as active lice are no longer present.



#### I HAVE PERSISTANT COUGHING

Frequent coughs with little to no breaks, difficulty breathing, wheezing. May return to care when coughing is mild &

infrequent unless a doctor's note is provided.

#### I AM NOT MYSELF

All children must be able to participate comfortably in child-care center activities including outdoor play. Symptoms would be lethargy, abnormal behaviors, abnormal fussiness.

May return to care as soon as they are symptom free.



# REQUIRED HEALTH **DOCUMENTS**

Children entering the childcare center for the first time must have a note of clearance from a doctor's office confirming the child is physically able to take part in the daycare program.

All children must have current immunizations on file within 30 days of beginning childcare.

4-year-olds must have vision and hearing screenings (when they turn 4). (TB tests are not required in this county.) Documentation must be submitted on the first day of attendance. This is to conform to the laws of the State of Texas and the Department of Human Services.

Please inform the Director and your child's teacher of any chronic medical problems or allergies before his/her first day of school. \* An emergency treatment authorization must be on file for each child. \*







# ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS

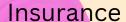
Parents are notified of any accidents or incidents. Always leave a phone number where you may be reached if it is different from the emergency numbers on file.

Accident/Incident reports are filled out by the teacher and signed by the Director or the person in charge at the time of the accident/incident. Parents are asked to sign the report for proof that you were notified.



#### **MEDICATIONS**

All medication must be turned in to the front office with an authorization form for dispensing medication.



St. Thomas Aquinas has liability insurance in the amount of \$1,000,000 for each occurrence of negligence covering injury to a child. A copy of the certificate is available for review upon written request.





# FIRST AID AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The St. Thomas Aquinas Child Development Center is extremely concerned and cognizant of its role in correctly managing situations that require first aid or emergency care.

Our staff is required to be certified in CPR and basic first aid.
Our staff is also trained in emergency and safety procedures.
Specific safety and emergency procedures are posted in each classroom and in the Staff Handbook.

We practice fire drills monthly and severe weather drills/emergency evacuation every three months.

In case of an emergency requiring children to be picked up early from the site or from an alternate shelter, parents will be notified by phone and should also tune into local reporting stations (TV channel KBTX and radio stations 104.7 and 106.1).

In case of a medical emergency, which requires advanced medical attention, parents will immediately be notified by phone by the Director or designee. If the situation warrants transportation to the emergency room, the Director will go with the child, and parents will be notified by phone to meet at the hospital.



#### **EMERGENCY READINESS PLAN**

If a code is called for the facility or grounds, lockdown or shelter in place protocols will be followed.

In case of an emergency requiring off-site relocation, our alternate shelter is:

#### Academy Sports and Outdoors located at 2511 Earl Rudder Fwy. S.

Should off-site relocation be necessary, infants will be transported in buggies and all other students will walk to the alternate shelter. Children will remain grouped by classroom and will be supervised by their teachers. Classroom teachers will carry the classroom sign-in sheet to account for children in their care. Teachers, children, and other CDC staff will exit through the back of the building and proceed across the parking lot to the side entrance of Academy.

The director's cell phone number will be the emergency contact number on file with Childcare Licensing.

CDC Staff will use personal cell phones and any other available telephones to communicate with

Childcare Licensing, local authorities, and parents.

Authorization Forms with emergency contact information and authorization for emergency medical care will be carried by classroom teachers in the classroom binder. A master binder with all student Authorization Forms will be carried by a designated staff member.

Once staff and children are in place at the alternate shelter and everyone has been accounted for, parents will be contacted and asked to immediately pick up their child(ren). If we are unable to reach the parent(s), the first emergency contact will be called and asked to immediately pick up the child(ren).

#### We will expect all children to be picked up from the alternate shelter within an hour of contact.

As parents or emergency contacts arrive to pick up children, they will be asked to sign-out their child via ProCare. Classroom teachers will stay with their students until all students have been picked up and signed out by a parent or emergency contact.

# **GANG FREE ZONE**

As a result of House Bill 2086, our childcare center is designated as a gang-free zone. The purpose of gangfree zones is to deter certain types of criminal activity in areas where children gather, by enforcing tougher penalties. Certain gang-related criminal activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of our center is a violation of this law and is therefore subject to increased penalty under state law.



#### **CELEBRATIONS**

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We have many celebrations throughout the school year (see Calendar). If parents are interested in helping with holiday parties (see "Volunteer Requirements" in Parent Involvement section) or providing refreshments, sign-up sheets will be posted in each classroom prior to the party. Parent participation is greatly appreciated! We have many special event celebrations throughout the year.

All children are encouraged to attend the Christmas Program and the Spring Program.

X-XX-XX

#### WATER ACTIVITIES

Each year, during the summer months, we have "Splash Day." During these times, children will experience water activities, such as sprinklers and water tables. Each class has water play time. Extra supervision is provided by staff.

# **LBB**

Lunch box break is a parent purchased service provided twice a month. We provide the kids with pizza, snack and a juice.

# **BIRTHDAYS**

Children love to celebrate birthdays at school. Please verify the date you wish to celebrate at least a week in advance with your child's teacher. Please send easy to handle refreshments. Some nutritional alternatives to cupcakes are raw vegetables with dip, fruit kabobs, or muffins. If you wish to send invitations to school, please send enough so that each child may receive one; otherwise, please mail the invitations. For the safety of all children at the Center, NO balloons may be brought for class parties!



# CONCERNS OF WELL BEING AND SAFETY

It is our top priority to keep your child safe from all harm while in our care.

In Texas, each person is a mandated reporter of abuse or neglect, which means that if you (or our staff) suspect a child is being abused or neglected, you are required by law to report it.

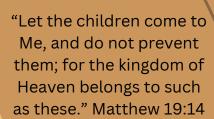
The Child Abuse Hotline number is 1-800-252-5400.

The local Licensing Office number is 979-731-0130, and the website is http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/.

"Minimum Standards" and inspection reports are available on this website and in the CDC office. In addition, if at any time you see something that appears suspicious, makes you uncomfortable, or violates policy, please bring it to the Director's attention, or that of the St. Thomas Aquinas parish's Pastor, or directly to the Diocese of Austin Bishop's office at 512-476-4888.

### CONCLUSION

It is our policy that each child's needs are met. If you have any questions or concerns about our Center, the policies and procedures, or the care of your child, please bring it to the attention of your child's teacher and/or the Child Development Center Director. Concerns may also be addressed with the Pastor of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish. We strive to make your child's stay at St. Thomas Aquinas Child Development Center a pleasurable experience. May God bless you and your family. We wish you a very successful and happy academic year! Thank you for choosing St. Thomas Aquinas Child Development Center!



# **WEBSITE**

Please see our website (www.stabcs.org) for a copy of the Parent Handbook, upcoming events, calendar information, and more!



