



Parent Handbook & Center Policies

Our goal is to provide safe, affordable but high quality, developmentally appropriate childcare for children ages 6 weeks to 12 years. We focus on helping children become social, well-educated, independent and self-confident in the quest for learning.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WELCOME TO SHINING STARS ACADEMY	4
OUR PHILOSOPY	5
GENERAL POLICIES	6
OPEN DOOR POLICY	6
NEWSLETTER	7
HOURS OF OPERATION.....	7
IN-SERVICE DAYS	7
HOLIDAY CLOSINGS	8
NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY	8
ACCOMMODATING FAMILIES AND CHILDREN.....	9
TUITION	9
BONUSES AND DISCOUNTS	11
VACATION CREDIT	12
ABSENCES	12
CREDIT CARD/ACH FEES	13
WITHDRAWAL AND TERMINATION NOTIFICATION	13
AGES OF CHILDREN IN OUR CENTER	15
INFANT/TODDLER POLICY.....	15
FORMULA AND FOOD	17
SAFE SLEEP POLICY	17
TOILET LEARNING	20

BITING.....	21
SCHOOL AGE.....	23
MEALS AND FOOD SERVICES.....	23
ADDITIONAL HEALTH AND NUTRITION PRACTICES/COMMUNITY RESOURCES.....	24
MONEY.....	25
CUBBIES/FOLDERS.....	25
CLOTHING & PERSONAL POSSESSIONS.....	25
CURRICULUM AND OTHER PROGRAMS	25
CHILD ASSESSMENT POLICY.....	26
IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.....	26
FIELD TRIPS.....	27
WATER ACTIVITIES.....	27
REST TIME.....	27
TOYS AND SHOW N TELL.....	28
BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION AND SPECIAL EVENTS.....	28
PHOTOGRAPHS.....	29
SUMMER CAMP.....	29
ADMINISTERING SUNSCREEN/INSECT REPELLENT/OINTMENTS.....	29
SECURITY, SAFETY, AND HEALTH	30
SEVERE WEATHER/EMERGENCIES.....	30
TRANSPORTATION.....	30
DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP.....	30

SIGNING IN/OUT AND RELEASE OF CHILDREN 32

SMOKING POLICY 33

ILLNESS AND EXCLUSION FROM CENTER 33

PARENTAL NOTIFICATION 35

CONTACTING CHILD CARE LICENSING..... 35

ADMINISTERING MEDICATION 35

EMERGENCIES/EVACUATION 36

IMMUNIZATION/VISION/HEARING 36

TUBERCULOSIS TEST REQUIREMENTS..... 38

EMPLOYEE IMMUNIZATION POLICY..... 38

CHILD CUSTODY ISSUES 38

CHILDREN WITH ALLERGIES 39

DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE POLICY 39

PEST CONTROL 42

GANG FREE ZONE 42

WELCOME TO SHINING STARS ACADEMY

We are happy that you chose Shining Stars Academy and excited to be a part of our family.

We have created this Parent Handbook & Center Policies to provide you with the guidelines and policies of our school. These guidelines have been developed to ensure your child receives the best care possible during their time with us. They have been developed in accordance with state licensing standards as well as the American Academy of Pediatrics. We encourage you to read the information for a better understanding of what you will be able to expect during your time here at Shining Stars Academy.

We welcome any questions you might have on the information contained in this handbook, and we encourage you to talk to your Director if you require clarification on any topic.

There may be times when we need to revise one of our guidelines or policies contained in this handbook due to updated standards for early childcare. If this occurs, we will provide you with reasonable notice of any modification that will impact you and your child.

Thank you again for choosing Shining Stars Academy.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

It is the philosophy of Shining Stars Academy that children be encouraged to learn and grow by providing a foundation of developmentally appropriate experiences where all children can succeed in a safe, friendly, educational and loving environment. We believe that each child is a unique individual and recognize children's varied abilities, interest, needs, and learning styles.

At Shining Stars Academy, we believe young children learn best by doing. It requires active thinking, and experimenting, to determine how things work, and to learn firsthand about the world we live in. We encourage the children to acquire and practice new learning skills, which will translate into long term development into areas of cognitive development, literacy and language skills, social, emotional and physical development.

Shining Stars Academy recognizes that parents are the child's first teachers. Children learn best when parents are involved in their educational program. The primary bridge between home and school is the involvement of family and community.

GENERAL POLICIES

Policies are reviewed annually and updated if necessary.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

Our goal is to collaborate with you to ensure your child has the best experience possible, and we welcome you to observe your child at any time. We do encourage parents to not disturb children during their nap time. It is important that all children have the opportunity to have a peaceful and undisturbed nap.

Classroom Visits - You are welcome at any time to visit or join a class at Shining Stars Academy. If you have something special you would like to share, we would be very happy to have you bring it in. The more parent participation we have, the better overall experience for the children. We do ask that you talk with your child's teacher about your visit so we can plan the best way to utilize your time with us.

Special Materials - During the year, there will be times when you will be asked to bring in special materials for the school or your child's class. These will be such items as magazines, paper towels rolls, baby food jars, etc.

Volunteers - We will be giving you many opportunities to volunteer at Shining Stars Academy throughout the year. These opportunities will include field trips, special school parties and joining the classes to share special topics of interest. Parents wanting to volunteer will be required to have a criminal background check as required by the State of Texas and is for the safety of all children.

Parent Conferences - Conferences will be scheduled by the teacher at least twice each year. These are a wonderful

tool to discuss your child's progress, update on ongoing development and set up goals. At any time, a teacher or parent may schedule an additional conference to discuss or review a child's progress.

NEWSLETTER

In an effort to keep you informed of what we are doing at the school, we publish and distribute a monthly newsletter with important announcements of upcoming activities and events, as well as any important news that needs to be communicated to you.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Shining Stars Academy is open-year-round. We are open Monday thru Friday 6:30 A.M. to 6:30 P.M., to serve the needs of working parents.

In order to avoid disruption to the class, children must arrive no later than 9:00 A.M. The only exception is if your child has a doctor's appointment and you have a note from the doctor. Please let us know in advance of your child's appointment.

IN-SERVICE DAYS

In addition to the frequent after hour training we provide for our staff, Shining Stars Academy will close for 2 days during the year to provide additional full day trainings for our staff. These in-service days will be held the third Friday in January and the first Friday in August. It is the parent/guardian responsibility to find alternative care for their child of those days of closure.

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

We will close on the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- The 3rd Friday in January (Teacher In-Service)
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- July 4th
- The 1st Friday in August (Teacher In-Service)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving
- the day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas
- 3:00 pm on New Year's Eve (we reserve the right to close for the full day and will provide notice)

Should any of these holidays fall on the weekend, the center will designate the preceding Friday or the following Monday as the day of closing.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

It is our policy to provide an environment that is free from unlawful discrimination of any type. Shining Stars Academy does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender expression, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations.

ACCOMMODATING FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

Our program supports families and children who may need additional accommodations, to include home language, special needs/differing abilities, and cultural backgrounds. We accommodate family culture in various ways: Spanish/English labels in each classroom, Spanish/English community resource flyers/documents, flexible teaching methods, designated space for intervention sessions or therapies when needed are a few ways we accommodate families.

TUITION

Tuition is based on facility and staffing that we must have available in order to care properly for your child. Therefore, if your child does not attend for any reason, tuition is NOT reduced. No reduction is given for unexpected closings, holidays, severe weather closings, absences, unearned vacations, or domestic problems.

Tuition is payable in advance, but always due on the 1st of the month. Payments are considered late on the first working day after the due date. A fee of \$25 will be assessed for each week payments are received late. Families with delinquent accounts may be asked to withdraw. A new enrollment fee will be required for reinstatement. A returned check fee of \$35 is assessed for every check or electronic withdrawal returned by your bank. In addition, if the return causes your payment to be late, you are also assessed the appropriate late payment fee.

Your credit card on file will automatically be charged if tuition is not paid by 3rd working day after your due date.

****EVERY CHILD MUST HAVE A CREDIT CARD AND CREDIT CARD AUTHORIZATION ON FILE BEFORE BEING ADMITTED****

Monthly tuition is calculated using the weekly fee x 4.33 (average number of weeks in a month during a fiscal year).

Tuition is based on the classroom, not on the child's actual age. For example, your child may turn three while still in a classroom which maintains a teacher/child ratio of a classroom with two year old's. In that case, you will be charged the two year old's tuition until your child moves up to the three's class.

In addition to tuition, the Center has the following required fees:

- At the time of enrollment, a one-time non-refundable registration fee of \$50 is required.
- A supply fee of \$30.00 for a single child or \$50.00 for a multi-family is charged out every September 1st.

Also, the center has the following fees which are incurred in certain situations:

- A late pickup fee of \$10.00 will be accessed up to the first 15 minutes or portion thereof that a child remains at the center after closing time. An additional \$1 per minute will be charged thereafter. This fee is payable to the staff member on duty.

BONUSES AND DISCOUNTS

Parent Referral Bonus

If you refer a new family to the school and they enroll their child with us a minimum of 3 half days per week for four weeks, you and the referred family may be eligible to receive one week of tuition. Both accounts must pay full tuition in advance and be current before a credit can be applied. The credit applied to the child with the lowest tuition base (usually the oldest). The discount is not valid with any other offers and is not available to Shining Stars Academy associates or their immediate families.

Multiple Child Discount

When multiple children from the same family attend the school, a 10% discount from the usual tuition fee may be granted once the second child begins attending and for each child who attends thereafter. To take advantage of this discount, full tuition must be paid for the child with the highest tuition base. The discount is then applied to the other child from the same family. In most cases, the discount will apply to the tuition of the oldest child. You are only entitled to one form of a discount, which cannot be combined with other discounts offered by Shining Stars Academy or other sources (such as state discounts). Please see Director for details.

VACATION CREDIT

Following every 6 months of continuous enrollment, a family is eligible for vacation time based on the number of days the child is enrolled and the child is not present, should they be in good financial standing. For example, if the child is enrolled 5 fulltime days a week, then the child is eligible for 5 days of vacation time every 6 months. If the child is enrolled 2 days a week then the child is eligible for 2 vacation days and so on. Vacation time can be accumulated up to 2 weeks. No reductions are made for holidays or absences.

The chart below is if the child is enrolled full time (5 full days a week), their vacation credit accumulates as follows:

Time Enrolled	Vacation Credit
1 day to 6 months	0 school days
6 months to 1 year	5 school days
1 year to 1.5 years	10 school days
1.5 years to 2 years	10 school days*

*max accumulation is 10 school days

When parents have accumulated vacation credits and would like to use them, they must notify the Director in order to ensure billing is accurate.

ABSENCES

If your child is going to be absent, you must notify a member of management as soon as possible. If your child is ill, please notify us as to the nature of the illness, particularly if it is contagious. Tuition is still charged for

that day. If you have accrued vacation time, you may use the accrued vacation time for the day(s) your child is absent.

If your child is enrolled in our school-age program, please let the Director know about any changes to your child's schedule. Additionally, if your school-age child rides our van and is absent from elementary school for the day, please notify us at least 2 hours in advance. This will give us adequate time to change the van rosters and notify the appropriate driver.

CREDIT CARD/ACH FEES

****EVERY CHILD MUST HAVE A CREDIT CARD ON FILE BEFORE BEING ADMITTED****

A copy of the Credit Card Authorization form can be found in your Admissions Packet.

For your convenience we will accept Visa and Mastercard. You will be assessed a 2.85% convenience fee. This fee is NOT charged by us, it is charged by the credit card processing company. We also accept ACH. There is a .40 cent fee that we the Center, will absorb. You will NOT be charged for this fee. These fees are subject to change based on the fees charged by our bank.

WITHDRAWAL AND TERMINATION NOTIFICATION

Should it be necessary for you to withdraw your child from our center, we request that you provide us with a two-week notification in writing. If notification is not provided you will still be responsible for all tuition and fees for the two weeks, whether or not your child is in attendance.

After you have withdrawn your child, he or she will only

be eligible for readmission based upon space availability and if all other enrollment criteria are met. If an outstanding balance existed when your child was withdrawn, you must bring your account current before we can consider you for re-enrollment. **If your child is eligible to re-enroll, you must pay a new non-refundable registration fee at the current rate.** Please note that you will your vacation credits reset. (Example: if you withdrawal your child for the summer, and plan to re-enroll in fall, we cannot guarantee holding their spot, vacation time resets, tuition will match current rate and not be grandfathered in, and a new registration fee will be charged.

Disenrollment

In certain circumstances it may be necessary to discontinue a child's enrollment. This decision is based on the best interest of the child concerned, other children in the class, and the well-being of everyone at the school. Every effort will be made to correct a situation before a final decision is made (i.e. moving child to another class, redirecting behaviors, providing choices, separating children who are not getting along, or other interventions).

Disenrollment may be a result if the following:

- Abuse of other children, staff, or property by child or parent/guardian.
- Continued violation of policies by child or parent/guardian.

- Disruptive or dangerous behavior by child or parent/guardian.
- The school's inability to meet the child's need or the parent's/guardian expectations.
- Non-payment of tuition

This is a partial list and we reserve the right to end enrollment of a child at any time for any reason deemed appropriate. Whenever possible, prior notification will be provided to the parent. No refunds are given if a child is asked to be withdrawn.

AGES OF CHILDREN IN OUR CENTER

We provide fulltime childcare for children ages 6 weeks to 12 years old. We also offer after school care and summer camp for ages 5 to 12.

INFANT/TODDLER POLICY

Many parents have asked us "what is an appropriate amount of supplies for the school to have in order to adequately meet the needs of each child". Below is a list of supplies we consider to be **the minimum** to have on hand for **daily care**. Ideally providing enough supplies for each week would be best but at least try to maintain these amounts so that we can provide the best care for your precious little one.

- Three changes of clothing (including socks or booties) - Labeled
- Disposable Diapers

- Disposable Wipes
- Formula – Labeled with child’s name & date
- Pacifier - Labeled
- Ointments
- Bottles with nipples and/or Sippy Cup – Labeled
- Nursery Purified Water – 1 gallon
- Jar food and cereal (when applicable) – Labeled
- Sweater/and or jackets to accommodate the indoor/outdoor temperature change
- Any additional items that would make your child feel and secure.

When your child does not have at least the above, you will be notified that supplies are needed.

We ask that ALL items that are brought in, such as bottle’s, be labeled with the child’s first and last name. Infant belongings (soiled cloths, used/unused bottle’s etc....) must be taken home nightly.

Infants are fed, changed, and placed in a crib to sleep on demand. They are also held while being bottle fed and placed in their cribs to sleep. They are removed from the crib for playing and nurturing during their waking hours. You are encouraged to visit the school to feed, play, and interact with your infant. You are also welcome to breast feed your infant at any time. We have a sofa and a rocking chair available in room 12 for any parent who would like to come nurse or bottle feed their baby.

FORMULA AND FOOD

Families are required to provide a nutritional diet for their infant. All foods, including formula, jar foods and cereals, must be supplied and labeled by the parent, including the child's first and last name, contents and date. **Glass bottles are prohibited.** Foods and formula will be stored in the appropriate location in the child's room. Unused portions of bottles will be discarded according to manufactures labeled instructions. If the toddler is on table food, we will provide the food.

SAFE SLEEP POLICY

This form provides the required information per minimum standards §746.501(9) and §747.501(6) for the safe sleep policy per Texas Department of Family and Protective Service. A copy of this form was given to you and signed by you upon enrolling.

All staff, substitute staff, and volunteers at Shining Stars Academy 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):

- Always put infants to sleep on their backs unless you provide Form 3019, Infant Sleep Exception/Health Care Professional Recommendation, signed by the infant's health care professional [§746.2427 and §747.2327].

- Place infants on a firm mattress, with a tight fitting sheet, in a crib that meets the CPSC federal requirements for full-size cribs and for non-full size cribs [§746.2409 and §747.2309].
- 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 [§746.2415(b) and §747.2315(b)]. Also, infants must not have their heads, faces, or cribs covered at any time by items such as blankets, linens, or clothing [§746.2429 and §747.2329].
- 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 [§746.2415(b) and §747.2315(b)].
- Ensure that sleeping areas are ventilated and at a temperature that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult [§746.3407(10) and §747.3203(10)].
- If an infant needs extra warmth, use sleep clothing such as sleeper or footed pajamas as an alternative to blankets[§746.2415(b) and §747.2315(b)].
- Place only one infant in a crib to sleep [§746.2405 and §747.2305].
- Infants may use a pacifier during sleep. But the pacifier must not be attached to a stuffed animal [§746.2415(b) and §747.2315(b)] or the infant's

clothing by a string, cord, or other attaching mechanism that might be a suffocation or strangulation risk [§746.2401(6) and §747.2315(b)].

- 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 Form 3019, Infant Sleep Exception/Health Care Professional Recommendation, signed by the infant's health-care professional [§746.2426 and §747.2326].
- Our childcare program is smoke-free. Smoking is not allowed in Texas childcare operations (this includes e-cigarettes and any type of vaporizers) [§746.3703(d) and §747.3503(d)].
- Actively observe sleeping infants by sight and sound [§746.2403 and §747.2303].
- 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 [§746.2427 and §747.2327].
- Awake infants will have supervised “tummy time” several times daily. This will help them strengthen their muscles and develop normally [§746.2427 and §747.2327].
- Do not swaddle an infant for sleep or rest unless you provide Form 3019, Infant Sleep Exception/Health Care Professional Recommendation, signed by the infant’s health care professional [§746.2428 and §747.2328].

TOILET LEARNING

Learning to use the toilet is a gradual process that takes place over a period of time as a child's body matures. Successful toilet learning depends upon physical, cognitive, and language development of the child. For example, for a child to be ready for toilet learning he or she must:

- Be aware of bowel and bladder fullness.
- Have the muscle development to control elimination.
- Have the language and locomotor skills to signal the need to the caregivers.
- Have the gross and fine motor skills to get to the toilet on time, remove clothing, and then actually use the toilet.

As you can see, these are complex abilities that develop over an extended period of time.

A child shows his readiness to begin toilet learning when he/she recognizes his/her diaper needs to be changed. At this point, a child may be ready to learn and able to control his bowels and bladder. Beginning the toilet learning process too early will cause frustration for children. Toilet learning is recommended for children between the ages of 2 and 3 years old.

A child's cues and mannerisms initiate toilet learning. These may include verbal request, gestures of pulling down pants, leading the caregiver to the bathroom, squirming in place, and pointing gestures.

We will be sensitive to the cues by asking the child to use the toilet, assisting the child on scheduled visits to the bathroom when they are most likely to need to use the toilet, giving frequent verbal reminders during the day, and communicating with you to establish consistency between the school and home.

This growth period is a natural progression of independence. Toileting accidents, which will happen frequently before children master this complex task, are treated respectfully. You must bring at least three full changes of clothes, including underwear, pants, shirt, socks, and an extra pair of shoes. If the child has an accident, staff, using gloves, will assist in changing the child's clothes. For health and safety reasons, soiled clothing will not be washed or rinsed by the school. All soiled clothing will be placed in a sealed plastic bag and returned to you for pick-up at the end of the day.

Children will be assisted, as needed, when using the bathroom. Children will flush the toilet and be assisted with washing their hands with soap and water. All efforts by the child will be positively acknowledged and encouraged.

BITING

If you are the parent of an older infant and toddler, we know it is distressing to learn your child has been bitten or has bitten a friend. Experts in the field of child development agree that biting is within a range of expected behaviors among toddlers 13 months to 3 years

of age. Common reasons cited for biting are: need for autonomy and control, exploration, teething, attention getting, frustration (frequently due to lack of language or unmet needs), anxiety, mimicking, self-defense, and lack of experience interacting with children in a group. At the first sign of biting, we evaluate the environment and activities at the time of the bite. If warranted, adjustments in the environment, routines, or the transitions in the classroom may be made.

If a bite occurs, the teacher will first attend to the bitten child by comforting the child and gently cleaning the bitten area with soap and water. Staff will complete an incident report for the bitten child.

The child who has bitten will be removed from the immediate area and closely supervised for a period of time after the incident. We will complete an incident report for the child who has bitten and discuss the incident with the child's parents. It is important to remember that biting is a developmentally appropriate behavior. For children who continue to bite, more specific intervention will be initiated, including a conference with the family and the creation of a Behavioral Intervention Plan. Each case will be assessed on an individual basis.

Staff cannot discuss with either parent the identity of the child involved in the incident, nor can staff discuss the medical history of any child involved in a biting incident with the other parent.

SCHOOL AGE

We provide after school care, as well as, Summer Camp for school age children. We also provide full childcare for days that the child's school is closed, and we are open. An extra charge will apply for those days. On days that the children are at the center all day, there may be field trips planned which require extra fees. During Summer Camp the activity fees are included in the weekly tuition.

MEALS AND FOOD SERVICES

We provide breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack for the children. If you choose to provide your child's meals and snacks every day, then we will need a written statement from you stating that the center is not responsible for meeting the child's daily food needs. We must have written approval from a physician to serve a child a therapeutic or special diet. We may not serve nutrient concentrates such as protein powders, liquid protein, vitamins, minerals, and other nonfood substances, without written instructions from a physician. Monthly menus are posted in each classroom, in the kitchen, on the Information Board, website, and in our monthly newsletters.

BREAKFAST: Served from 6:45 to 8:00 am. If your child brings in a "breakfast meal" after 8:00 to 8:15, it will be placed in your child's cubby and offered to him/her at lunchtime. Late arrivals will be fed at the next scheduled mealtime.

LUNCH: Served at 11:00 am. A count is taken of the children at 10:00 am as preparation for lunch begins. If your child will be here after 10:00, but in time for lunch, please call ahead to make sure a meal is prepared for

him/her. Please be sure to feed lunch to your child before bringing him/her to school, if they are arriving after 11:30 am.

SNACK: The snack is served at 2:30 pm. If you send a snack with your child in the morning to have in the afternoon, please make sure it is something healthy.

Please do not allow your child to bring gum or candy to school unless we request you to do so.

- Liquids and food hotter than 110 degrees F are kept out of reach.
- All prepared meals, prepared food brought into the program to be shared among children is commercially prepared OR prepared in a kitchen that is inspected by local health officials.
- Our healthy snacks (as listed by the Texas Department of Agriculture) are available for school-aged children as children arrive.
- We will provide milk, fresh fruit and vegetables for children who bring lunches from home.
- All Staff are trained and educated on food allergies.

ADDITIONAL HEALTH AND NUTRITION PRACTICES/COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Please see resource center regarding, Breastfeeding, Screen Time, Oral Health, Health Benefit Resources, and various Professional Development and Healthy/Nutritional best practices in Spanish and English!

Additional Resources:

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/oralhealth/Pages/default.aspx>

<https://www.texaschildrenshealthplan.org/what-we-offer>

MONEY

Please do not send money with your child to school unless requested to do so.

CUBBIES/FOLDERS

Cubbies/folders are provided for each child in their classroom. The space provided is limited in size, so be sure to check your child's cubby daily for any teacher notes, soiled clothes, school projects, etc.

CLOTHING & PERSONAL POSSESSIONS

Children should be dressed comfortably in washable play cloths. All jackets, sweaters, etc. should be clearly marked with your child's name. Please leave a second change of clothes in your child's cubby or in a backpack, as sometimes accidents or messes do occur. The children will be doing lots of projects through-out the year. Please remove these items when they are put into your child's cubby.

CURRICULUM AND OTHER PROGRAMS

As explained in the Welcome letter, our educational approach at Shining Stars Academy is based on best practices for preschool children, as determined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Emphasis is always to make learning a fun and rewarding process. This translates into a lifetime of being able to enjoy the learning process. Each teacher has designated age-appropriate weekly themes for your child to learn and interact with the other children

Each teacher uses many available resources to plan the curriculum for their classroom. Our primary curriculum is Teaching Strategies, but it is supplement by many Early Childhood resource. Our lesson plans focus on environmental planning and thematic learning because children learn through play. All lesson plans are posted in each classroom for parents to view. Teachers are provided Curriculum training, planning time, access to resources and timely feedback on lesson plans.

CHILD ASSESSMENT POLICY

We utilize informal assessments such as developmental checklist for observing developmental progress for all children.

IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

All children benefit from mild and vigorous physical activity and there will be scheduled times for structures physical activity outside as well as free choice activities. A total of a minimum 1.5 hours of physical activity is planned each day. Most physical activities will take place outside on the playground. All classes have alternative indoor activity plans for the times when the weather does not allow for outdoor time. They may use their classroom or the lobby area for these activities.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are a wonderful way to extend the child's learning environment, as well as, to enhance their social development by providing experiences beyond the classroom. Beginning with our Pre-K class thru Schoolers, the teachers plan field trips that enhance the curriculum and provide wonderful opportunities for the children to explore their communities, such attending the farmers market, the library, the post office or the fire station. All children under age 8 and 4 feet 9 inches in height are required by State law to use an appropriate car safety seat for all transportation outings.

WATER ACTIVITIES

During the summer months, we have an in-ground swimming pool, splash/wading pools, as well as sprinklers for water play. The swimming pool, when not in use, is securely locked. When the pool is in use, there is always a teacher trained in water safety on duty at the pool, as well as, another staff member. Splash/wading pools will have less than 2 feet of water in them while they are in use. When the splash pools are not in use, they are emptied and put away.

REST TIME

Rest time is from 12:00 P.M. to 2 P.M. every day. It is very important for your child to have time to rest. If your child will be coming to school during rest time, please be sure to let the center know, so your child's teacher can have their mat and blanket ready. If your child needs to leave during

rest time, please call ahead and let the teacher know so the other sleeping children are not disturbed. Please provide one small blanket and, if necessary, a very small pillow, due to the cubby size. All items must be labeled with your child's name. Please take these items home on Friday to be washed and bring back on Monday.

TOYS AND SHOW N TELL

Your child's teacher will designate a day for Show-N-Tell. On that day, your child may bring one small toy or item to discuss and share. Toys or items brought on any other day will be taken away and returned to the parent on Friday. Also, please be aware that the teacher will let your child play with the Show-N-Tell during center time, so do not send anything that could be broken. Water toys can be brought on scheduled, specified days.

No toy guns, knives, or swords may be brought to school!

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION AND SPECIAL EVENTS

For us to comply with new sanitary guidelines, all food and drink must be of safe quality. They must come in original store-bought containers, or you may bring ingredients bought from the store, and we can prepare the food items. If we have a function outside of regular business hours, such as the Halloween Carnival, then you may bring homemade items. If you have any concerns about any food item or drink, you may speak with any office personnel, or your child's teacher.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Shining Stars Academy offers the opportunity to have portraits taken 2 times a year. Pictures may be taken from time to time of children while at the center or on field trips. The center may use the photographs for advertising or display, without compensation to the family of the child unless otherwise stipulated in writing by the parent or guardian.

SUMMER CAMP

For Schoolers to have a maximum enjoyable summer, we have Summer Camp! This is fully explained each spring as the program changes each year.

ADMINISTERING SUNSCREEN/INSECT REPELLENT/OINTMENTS

Sunscreen, insect repellent and ointments must be provided by you for your child. The sunscreen must have a SPF of 15 or higher. It must be labeled with your child's first and last name, and it must have directions for application on the product. It is the parents responsibility to check the ingredients of these types of products to insure your child is not allergic to it.

Your child's teacher or a designated staff member will apply the product to exposed skin, including but not limited to the face, top of the ears, tops of the head, neck, shoulders, arms, legs and feet.

Application of sunscreen, insect repellent, and ointments will take place before going outside, swim time, field trips and/or any other necessary time. Sunscreen and insect

repellent will not be applied to any broken skin. You will be notified if your child develops a skin reaction or any abnormal symptoms.

A signed permission form will be kept in your child's file.

SECURITY, SAFETY, AND HEALTH

SEVERE WEATHER/EMERGENCIES

Any closing of our center due to a natural disaster, severe weather, or other such emergency will be announced on the major radio and television stations in the Austin area. We observe all closures and late openings declared by the Round Rock School District. Please check with your director for specific instructions. Please call the Center to make sure some staff has arrived before you attempt to leave your home.

TRANSPORTATION

We use vans for our mode of transportation. We will transport school age children from public school. We also use the vans for field trips, starting with ages 4 years and up.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

Security Entrance System

Our school is equipped with a security entry system to protect the children in our care. This system ensures that only people with access will be allowed to enter the school. You will be given free access to the school during business hours. Upon enrollment, your Director will

provide you with access and instructions for entry. If extra access is needed for another person other than the parents, then a \$10 fee will be required.

Please do not allow other persons to “piggyback” into the building when you enter our school. While we all want to be polite and hold the door for others, the security system cannot be enforced if parents allow others to enter at the same time they do, with no knowledge of whether that person has a legitimate access to school property.

Arriving at the School

In order to avoid disruption to the class, children must arrive no later than 9:00 A.M. The only exception is if your child has a doctor’s appointment and you have a note from the doctor. Please let us know in advance of your child’s appointment.

Please keep your child with you at all times, especially when exiting your vehicle in our parking lot. Do not leave children, regardless of their age, unattended in your car when dropping off or picking up. Lock your car, as we cannot be responsible for any personal belongings taken from your vehicle while it is on our property.

Visitors and Volunteers

With your approval, we welcome other relatives or friends to visit your child at the school. For the safety of all children enrolled in our school, all visitors and volunteers must provide current phot identification and sign in with the office upon arrival. A staff member will accompany all

visitors and volunteers at all times. We adhere to all state licensing regulations regarding the health and background of volunteers.

SIGNING IN/OUT AND RELEASE OF CHILDREN

Parents are required to check in/out at the check station in the lobby upon arrival and departure. Upon checking in, accompany your child to his or her classroom, and let the teacher know your child has arrived. This provides a smooth transition and allows you a brief exchange with the teacher to convey information about your child and to learn of the day's plans. Children must be supervised at all time; therefore, if you have more than one child at our school, take your older child to his or her classroom first. It is unsafe for our infants and toddlers to have older children in their room.

When we first open for the day and attendance is low, children may be gathered into one/several rooms before moving to their respective classrooms. Likewise, at the end of the day as children are picked up, remaining children may be placed in a room other than their assigned classroom.

Releasing of Children

Every child will only be released to one of their parents or to a person designated by the parent. We will ask for and copy a valid ID photo that matches the designated person.

Picking Up Your Child

When you arrive to pick up your child, allow time for your child to complete whatever activity he or she is participating in. Please remember to let the teacher

know your child is leaving and to sign out as you exit the building.

We must ask you to make every effort to pick up your child before closing time. If you are going to be late, please call our office immediately. A late fee will be assessed for arriving at the school after closing time (Please see the fee outlined under Tuition). If we do not receive a call from you and cannot reach your emergency release contacts, we may be required to call local authorities to assist with the situation. Members of our staff are not permitted to take your child home with them.

SMOKING POLICY

Smoking is prohibited anywhere on school premises.

ILLNESS AND EXCLUSION FROM CENTER

We follow the guidelines given to us from the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services and the Texas Department of Health when deciding if a child should be excluded from the center. We cannot admit a child in the center if one or more of the following exists:

- The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in center activities, including outdoor play.
- The illness results in a greater need for care than caregivers can provide without compromising the health, safety and supervision of the other children.
- The child has one of the following, (unless medical evaluation by a health-care professional indicates

that we can include the child in the center activities):

- An oral temperature above 101 degrees that is accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness;
- A tympanic (ear) temperature above 100 degrees that is accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness. Tympanic thermometers are not recommended for children under six months old;
- An axillary (armpit) temperature above 100 degrees that is accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness; or
- Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy; abnormal breathing; uncontrolled diarrhea; two or more vomiting episodes in 24 hours; rash with fever; mouth sores with drooling; behavior changes; or other signs that the child may be severely ill ; or
- A health-care professional has diagnosed the child with a communicable disease, and the child does not have medical documentation to indicate that the child is no longer contagious.
- Pink Eye Policy: Children with pink eye may return to center 24 hours after antibiotic drops. If no antibiotics are being taken, then they may return 24 hours after the eye discharge stops.

If the child becomes ill while he/she is in our care, we will contact the parent to pick the child up. If the child has a critical illness or a severe injury that would require

immediate medical attention or a physician, we will contact emergency services or take your child to the nearest emergency room, contact the child's physician, and contact the parent(s).

PARENTAL NOTIFICATION

Any important policy or structural changes pertaining to the center will be done so with a written notice. We have a monthly newsletter that is available for parents each month. Any parental needs or concerns may be set up with a conference with the director. Parents may request at any time to review the copy of the minimum standard rules, as well as the most recent Licensing inspection report.

CONTACTING CHILD CARE LICENSING

Parents may contact our licensing representative or Texas Health and Human Services by calling 512-834-3426 or by website: hhs.texas.gov for more information. To report child abuse, you may call the hotline at 1-800-252-5400.

ADMINISTERING MEDICATION

As a courtesy to our parents, we will administer medication to children. You will be required to sign a Medication Form. The

Director or Assistant Director will administer the medicine. Your child's medication will be returned to you when the time specified is over. We do reserve the right to not administer medicine that is one of the following:

- Not in the correct container;

- Not the right dosage on the container;
- If the incorrect name or no name is on the prescription medication; or
- If the medication has expired.

EMERGENCIES/EVACUATION

In the event of a fire in the building, the children will evacuate the building according to the evacuation map located in each classroom. When the children evacuate the building, they will gather in front of the school, near the fence line, on the grass on both sides of the school. In the event of threatening weather, such as a tornado, the children will relocate into the main hallway away from the windows. We will conduct fire drills monthly, and severe weather and lockdown drill four times a year. In case we need to evacuate the area of one school, everyone will be relocated to the Clay Madsen Recreation Center, located at 1600 Gattis School Rd., Round Rock, TX 78664

IMMUNIZATION/VISION/HEARING

We require that all children who are enrolled in the center be current on all of their immunizations. The parent will need to provide us with a copy of each child's immunization record within the first week of enrollment and update every time your child receives new immunizations. The Texas Department of Health will come to the center periodically to check the records. You may contact the Texas Department of Health to find out what immunizations are required or ask your physician. When a child attains the age of 4, he/she is required to have a vision and hearing screening. The parent is

responsible to make sure that this is done. Your child's doctor may provide these screenings.

Documentation: Since many types of personal immunization records are in use, any document will be acceptable provided a physician or public health personnel has validated it. Validation includes a signature, initials, or stamp. An immunization record generated from an electronic health record must include clinic contact information and the provider's signature/stamp, along with the vaccine name and vaccination date (month, day, and year). An official record generated from a health authority is acceptable. An official record received from school officials, including a record from another state is acceptable.

Exemptions: Texas law allows (a) physicians to write medical exemption statements which clearly state a medical reason exists that the person cannot receive specific vaccines, and (b) parents/guardians to choose an exemption from immunization requirements for reasons of conscience, including a religious belief. The law does not allow parents/guardians to elect an exemption simply because of inconvenience (for example, a record is lost or incomplete and it is too much trouble to go to a physician or clinic to correct the problem). Schools should maintain an up-to-date list of students with exemptions, so they may be excluded in times of emergency or epidemic declared by the commissioner of public health. Instructions for requesting the official exemption affidavit that must be signed by parents/guardians choosing the

exemption for reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, can be found at www.dshs.texas.gov/immunize/school/exemptions.aspx. The original Exemption Affidavit must be completed and submitted to the school. For children claiming medical exemptions, a written statement by the physician must be submitted to the school. Unless it is written in the statement that a lifelong condition exists, the exemption statement is valid for only one year from the date signed by the physician.

TUBERCULOSIS TEST REQUIREMENTS

Shining Stars Academy is located in Williamson County, Texas. We are NOT required at this time to have Tuberculosis tests on file for the children. These requirements could change at any time, for health requirements do change periodically.

EMPLOYEE IMMUNIZATION POLICY

Shining Stars Academy has implemented the following immunization policy for all its employees to be in compliance with the Texas Department of Family Services, Minimum Standard Rule §746.3611, which requires a policy protecting children from vaccine-preventable diseases. While the safety of our employees and children in our care is paramount and we highly encourage our staff, we have elected to make immunization for vaccine preventable diseases optional to the employees.

CHILD CUSTODY ISSUES

It is our intent to meet the needs of children, especially when the parents may be experiencing difficult situations,

such as divorce, separation or remarriage. Sharing information about such situations may be helpful to center staff and will be held in the strictest confidence.

The center cannot legally restrict the custodial parents from visiting the child(ren), reviewing records, or picking the child(ren) up, unless the center has been furnished with legally filed, executed and current documents. In case of conflicts, the proper authorities will be contacted.

CHILDREN WITH ALLERGIES

Please notify us immediately when you learn that your child has allergies. If a child requires medication for a life-threatening allergic reaction (i.e. bee stings), the child's prescription may be kept at the school and administered when necessary. If your child suffers from allergies, please contact your Director, who can provide you with additional information.

DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE POLICY

Part of our job is to make sure the child learns appropriate behavior and successful social skills. As such, we use several discipline and guidance techniques. The following explains the Operational Discipline and Guidance Policy. A copy was given to and signed by you, upon enrollment.

Discipline must be:

- 1) Individualized and consistent for each child;
- 2) Appropriate to the child's level of understanding; and
- 3) Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.

A caregiver may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include at least the following:

- 1) Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
- 2) Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
- 3) Redirecting behavior using positive statements; and
- 4) 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.

There must be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:

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

Additional Discipline and Guidance Measures (Only Applies to Before or After School Program (BAP)/School Age Program (SAP) that Operates under 26 TAC Chapter 744)

A program must take the following steps if it uses disciplinary measures for teaching a skill, talent, ability, expertise, or proficiency:

- Ensure that the measures are considered commonly accepted teaching or training techniques;
- Describe the training and disciplinary measures in writing to parents and employees and include the following information:
 - The disciplinary measures that may be used, such as physical exercise or sparring used in martial arts programs;
 - What behaviors would warrant the use of these measures; and
 - The maximum amount of time the measures would be imposed;
- Inform parents that they have the right to ask for additional information; and
- Ensure that the disciplinary measures used are not considered abuse, neglect, or exploitation as specified in Texas Family Code §261.001 and TAC Chapter 745, Subchapter K, Division 5, of this title (relating to Abuse and Neglect).

Challenging Behavior

Teacher and/or director will have ongoing conversations with parents to express concerns and discuss strategies in

addressing challenging behaviors. Conversations are framed around the objective of the program. Parents are kept informed of their child's progress.

PEST CONTROL

Our school will control pests to protect the health and safety of children and staff, maintain a productive learning environment, and maintain the integrity of the school and grounds. We use all suitable techniques to prevent pest. In the event that we must apply a pesticide, we will use only those products registered for such use in accordance with Feder, State, and Local laws. The use of pesticides by an unlicensed person is prohibited. Only individuals licensed by the State and will use pesticide product and the use will be in strict accordance with the product's label.

GANG FREE ZONE

We are in a Gang-Free Zone

In 2009, the Texas Legislature provided that childcare centers, among other facilities, are in a Gang-Free Zone. Basically, this provides that certain gang-related activities or engaging in organized criminal activity conducted within 1000 feet of the center are in violation of this law and is therefore subject to increased penalties under state law. Ask the Director for further information.