**Think Play Grow Academy**

**Parent Handbook**

Revised 2022



Think Play Grow Academy

2000 N. 25th St.

Waco, Texas 76708

(254) 732-4881

**Mission Statement**

The mission of Think Play Grow is to provide model Christian based programs and leadership for infants, toddlers, and preschool children consistent with faith-based teachings, creative endeavors, and service Mission for Waco Communities. Within the school we strive to provide a strong Christian program that is based on Christian values, quality, inquiry-based, and play-centered learning in an environment that is nurturing, safe and secure.

**Philosophy**

Think play Grow believes that each child is unique and learns best through play and exploration of a variety of materials and environments. We seek to create the richness and diversity of experience that will take children along new paths, deepen their understanding and their skills, and give added complexity to the talents and personal qualities they bring to us. Children of all abilities, from infants through preschoolers, are welcome to play, explore, and expand their level of skills. An environment that fosters all aspects of development through comprehensive and multi-disciplinary activities will enhance a child's opportunities for learning.

**Curriculum**

We us the Frog Street curriculum mixed with a Christian based one that offers opportunities for bible stories and prayer. It’s based on the premise that children learn through play, the center reflects the guidelines established by the National Association for the Education of Young Children in offering developmentally appropriate learning centers for your child's exploration. You will see a wide variety of materials for our children to explore and experience, Centers and zones of learning engage children in activities related to the interests of the children. Art, music, movement, dramatic play, science, math, literacy, sensory, and motor play are integrated into daily experiences where children are active explorers of their environment. The teacher’s role is to support the children's decisions and encourage them to extend learning beyond the original plan. The curriculum promotes cognitive, language and communication, social, emotional, and motor development in a holistic manner.

We are part of the Texas Rising Star program or TRS. TRS is a voluntary, quality-based child care rating system of child care and early learning programs participating in TWC’s subsidized child care program.

**Suggestion Box**

We have a suggestion box located in the front lobby near the clock-in and out computer. If you have any suggestions or if you have any changes to your address, phone number, job, etc. please write on one of the small pieces of paper provided above the box.

**Goals for Children**

The primary goal of Think Play Grow is to present a high-quality program that will provide enriched educational experiences designed to meet the developmental needs of the children enrolled. More specific goals are to:

1. provide each child with opportunity and encouragement to express his/her individual creativity in a variety of ways;
2. foster the development of large and small motor skills through a variety of activities;
3. stimulate problem solving skills, and language and cognitive development that lead to higher ordered thinking skills and provide the foundation for early math and literacy skills;
4. develop social skills through interactions with other children and adults; and
5. Enable the child to appreciate and respect differences among people.

**Enrollment**

Enrollment in Think Play Grow is open to the community at large. Think Play Grow is designed to meet the needs of healthy children six weeks and up. All children enrolled must provide, as required by Texas child care licensing requirements, a doctor's statement to participate in group care, documentation of immunizations and hearing and vision screening. To comply with

DFPS regulations, parents must have all records complete before their child's entrance to the

Center. If you do not comply, Think Play Grow will ask you to withdraw your child.

Think Play Grow does not discriminate in enrollment on the basis of race, religious preference, national origin, or family configuration. Any child with special needs will be considered for enrollment on an individual basis. If Think Play Grow is able to meet the child's special needs, the child will be welcome in the program.

Each January updated policies are distributed and available to parents, along with the school calendar, and any changes in the curriculum or the program. Parents are asked to update their child's records after each immunization or screening and any change in address or phone numbers. This can be done by picking up a form from the front office.

**Accommodations for Families**

Think Play Grow Academy offers inclusive and intentional supports for families and children who may need additional accommodations, to include home language, differing abilities and cultural backgrounds. Parents have the right to be informed of all procedural safeguards and rights of appeal in a language easily understood by the general public and in the parent’s primary language. Please notify the Director if you or your child require accommodations and we will ensure that we do our part in making sure your needs are met.

Below are ways that our program will partner with families:

1. If specific therapies are needed during the day while the child is in our care, we will provide space to accommodate sessions.

2. Participation in all comprehensive care meetings if needed

3. Complete supporting documentation from authorized medical professional for any accommodations related to child’s physical or developmental needs.

4. Area for breastfeeding moms.

**Enrollment Forms 746.501 (12)**

Parents are responsible for completing enrollment forms *prior to care*. Forms include a Registration Form, Teacher Information Forms, Infant & Toddler Supplemental Form, Health Forms, Permission Form, and a Child Release Form.

The Registration Form contains all the general information needed to enroll your child at the center. Some of the information is required by the Texas Department of Human Services, which licenses our facility. All of the information is essential to the well-being and safety of your child. You must completely fill in all areas of the form on all pages, sign, and return it to the Center at the time of enrollment.

The Teacher Information Form asks a number of detailed questions about your child’s background and interests. It is used by the teachers to get to know their children. In addition, for children entering an infant or toddler classroom, an Infant or Toddler Supplemental Form may also be required.

The Health Form includes questions about your child’s disease history, and medical needs. If you have any additional medical concerns, please talk to your child’s teacher or one of the Center’s staff. This form must be signed by your child’s physician. We must have this form signed and on file prior to your child’s enrollment in the Center. With this form, we also need a copy of your child’s immunization records. Immunization records are to be updated after each doctor’s visit that requires more shots.

**Hours of Operation 746.501 (1)**

Think Play Grow is open year around, January through December, from 7:30 A.M. until 5:30 P.M. Monday through Friday. Parents will receive, at the beginning of the year, a calendar indicating which days the center is closed.

Think Play Grow is closed for all major holidays.

We have a 10-hour maximum policy, meaning that no children should be in attendance for more than 10 hours a day. *\*This helps keep tuition down by keeping the number of staff we need down and preventing the need of overtime. \**

 \*\*\*Holidays that land on a Saturday or Sunday will be observed on an alternative day or days during the week before or after the holiday. Anytime the center will be closed a notice will be posted as a reminder.

**Tuition**

Tuition rates are established each year in August. A one-time registration fee is charged once a space is available for enrollment. Increases in tuition or other fees will be announced by letter to all parents.

Tuition may be paid monthly, bi-monthly, or weekly. Monthly tuition is due on the first school day of each month, bi-monthly tuition is due on the 1st and the 15th, and weekly tuition is due each Monday. If tuition is not paid within three days, a $5.00 late fee will be added to your account. If tuition is not paid within five days, your child will not be allowed to return to the center until tuition is paid in full. Think Play Grow accepts cash, personal checks, ACH, and money orders. A $35.00 fee will be applied for any returned checks. Please notify us in writing if you wish to change the frequency of your payments. A pattern of late payment of fees may result in termination.

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

**Infants (0-17 months) $190 week or $803 month**

**Toddler (18months – 2 years) $185 week or $782 month**

**Preschool (3-5years) $180 week or $760 month**

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, vacations, or domestic problems.

**There are no adjustments for absences due to illness, vacation, holidays, or any emergencies, such as inclement weather days. This includes the closure of Think Play Grow for holidays', illness’ and bad weather, child care fees are charged in advance of services rendered.**

**Tuition is still charged if Think Play Grow has to close due to Bad Weather or COVID. These are things out of our control. You are charged tuition to pay the employees who will also have to stay home for closures. This helps us keep our tuition cost down.**

**Fees**

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

At the time of enrollment, a one-time non-refundable registration fee of $50.00 is required.

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

In September we charge a $35.00 supply fee that must be paid in cash. If you have more than 1 child the fee for each additional child will be $20.00.

A minimum of two weeks’ notice to the director that your child will be leaving the center is required in order for the final tuition to be prorated to reflect the final day of enrollment. No refunds will be given on monthly tuition for withdrawal before the end of the month.

**Tax Statement**

A statement will be provided before January 31st of each year for those who do not owe an outstanding balance and those who plan to expense childcare when filing taxes with the IRS. Please make arrangements to pick up these forms; they will not be mailed.

**Attendance**

Regular and prompt attendance is important. Children should arrive no later than 9:30 A.M. Drop off **after 9:30 A.M. will not be allowed,** with the exception of a doctor's appointments and or family emergencies. Children who arrive after 9:30 A.M. miss group learning activities, disrupts the whole class and makes it difficult for your child to establish a routine. If a child is to be absent, parents should call Think Play Grow to report the reason for his/her absence.

We have a 10-hour maximum policy. Meaning that no children should be in attendance for more than 10 hours a day. *\*This helps keep tuition down by keeping the number of staff we need down and preventing the need of overtime. \**

***If you withdraw your child a minimum of a written two weeks' notice is required.***

**Arrival Sign In & Departure Sign Out 746.501 (2)**

Parents are required sign each child in or out using the fingerprint computer located in the front lobby. The fingerprint sign in/out will unlock the door in order for parents to come back and pick their child up from their classroom. Every child must be signed in/out. Our responsibility begins when you place your child in the care of a staff member and ends when you take him/her from the care of a staff member. Please do not allow your child to wander off unattended or leave the building ahead of you.

For safety purposes, only those listed on the enrollment forms as designated person for pick up will be permitted to leave with your child/children. Anyone who comes to pick up your child will be asked to show us a photo ID so we can verify his/her identity and match it with your release instructions. If a circumstance should arise for someone other than those on your list to pick up your child/children, you will need to update your list in advance or let the TPGA Staff know. We will require a Valid ID for identification of an individual we do not recognize. Please inform those you have designated to pick up of our policy.

**Receiving and Dismissing Children**

Upon arrival, each child must be accompanied to his/her room by an adult. Make certain that you have greeted your child's teacher to make sure they know you are there.

Please take care when walking across the parking lot. Please make sure your child is in an appropriate seat belt restraint when you bring your child and when you leave the Center. **Car seats are an important part of your child's safety, and Think Play Grow will report any negligence that is witnessed.**

In order to provide a safe environment for the younger children (5 weeks-24 months), we ask that you leave your older child at the door of the infant or toddler room and not let him/her enter the room. Texas child care licensing regulations do not allow older siblings in the infant rooms.

**Late Pickup**

Parents are expected to arrive at the Center with enough time to visit with the teachers about the child, gather the child’s belongings, and exit the center no later than 5:30 P.M. A regular pattern of late departures will result in termination of child care services. Late pick-up charges will begin at time of close and will be charges $1.00 per minute, per child. Late charges will be added to the account at the time of pick-up. Think Play Grow will not serve families who cannot pick up their children on time on a regular basis.

**Exclusion of Children from the Center's programs**

The Director has final authority when it is necessary to ask parents to remove a child from the

Center's program. For example, Think Play Grow might recommend that a parent find other child care arrangements for their child if the Center's staff do not feel that they can meet the developmental needs of the child, staff feel other children are at risk physically or emotionally, or if the parents have not paid tuition fees. On the occasion Think Play Grow does recommend that a child leave the Center, the Director may discuss alternative child care arrangements with parents.

**Contacting the Texas Department of Family and Protective**

**Services - Child Care Licensing – Waco**

801 Austin Avenue

P.O. Box977

Waco, Texas 76701-00977

(2540750-9337

Http: //www.dfps,state.tx.us/Child\_Care

**Immunizations 746.501 (9)**

Immunizations are required of all children attending child care in the state of Texas. We understand that there may sometimes be a medical reason not to give an immunization on the scheduled time. However, unless we have a notarized note signed by your child's physician, we are not allowed to make any exceptions.

Parents are responsible for keeping their child’s records updated by giving the Director or Assistant Director written statements of any changes. Immunization cards signed by the physician are needed to update immunization records. Additional changes in required immunizations may be made. Parents will be notified of changes.

IMPORTANT: You must show proof of the appropriate immunizations **BEFORE** your child can attend the Center.

Your physician must sign an Immunization Form. You may have your child's Pediatrician Fax it to us @ 254-732-0063

Recommended immunizations Schedule for Persons 0 through 18 is available at: http//cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/downloads/child/0-18yrs-schedule.pdf

**Think Play Grow and McLennan County does not require the employees to get any vaccinations.** **746.501 (26 & 27)**

**TUBERCULIN TESTING 746.501(10)**

 McLennan County residents are not required to be tested for tuberculosis.

**Exception:**

Exceptions for immunization requirements must meet criteria specified by the Texas Department of State Health Services rules in 25 TAC§ 97.62 (relating to Exclusions from Compliance). You must contact the local health department to find out what you must provide to us in lieu of the immunization record.

**Health Care**

Think Play Grow follows the illness and exclusion policy adopted from the *Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and the Texas Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers. Doctor’s notes are accepted at the Director’s’ discretion. The note will be reviewed and the child will be assessed to determine if a child can return to daycare.*

**Illness and Injury §*746.3601* 746.501 (5 &6)**

**What type of illness would prohibit a child from being admitted for care?**

Unless you are licensed to provide get-well care, you must not admit an ill child for care if one or more of the following exists:

(1) The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in child-care center activities including outdoor play;

(2) The illness results in a greater need for care than caregivers can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children in care;

(3) The child has one of the following, unless medical evaluation by a health-care professional indicates that you can include the child in the child-care center’s activities:

1. Oral temperature of above 101 degrees and accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness;
2. 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;
3. Armpit temperature of above 100 degrees and accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness; or
4. 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
5. Sore throat with fever (follows readmission rule for fever above; after 24-48 hrs. on an antibiotic if required)
6. Croup (until symptoms subside);
7. Lice (may return after shampoo treatment and removal of nits);
8. Any unexplained rash (Until a doctor has released the child to return to the center);
9. Any skin infections – boils, ringworm, and impetigo (may return after treatment has begun, and the infection is covered.)
10. Pink eye or other eye infections (may return 24hrs after treatment and the symptoms are gone);
11. Persistent hacking or congested cough with sore throat (very red or blistered throat). Children may return with a doctor’s note.
12. Difficulty breathing to the point where the child is very uncomfortable or unable to sleep normally.

(4) 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.

Please notify the teacher immediately if your child has been exposed to any contagious disease.

*Texas Department of Family and Protective Services*

*Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers*

**Children Illnesses 746.501(3)**

Every effort is made by Center staff to prevent the spread of disease. Even with precautions, children entering care are likely to experience an increase in mild illnesses. The frequency and severity of these will vary from child to child. However, an average child under the age of five has six to twelve mild illnesses per year.

When a child is ill, they need a special level of attention and care, and unfortunately, we do not have the facilities to offer this type of care. Also, when ill children are at the Center, they are potentially spreading germs to other children and to Center staff. In addition, an ill child is vulnerable to catching a second illness while their immune system is overworked.

If your child is so ill that they need special care, and they are not able to participate normally in Center activities, they should remain at home. If they become ill at school, you will be called upon to take your child home. In the event that your child becomes ill and we cannot locate a parent, we will contact the person(s) you designated on your emergency care form, and ask them to pick up your child. The Center’s Director is the final judges of the severity of the illness and has precedence over any and all Doctors orders to return to school.

Upon arrival each day, the child will be observed for symptoms of illness. No ill child will be admitted to Think Play Grow. Child care is offered to children who are healthy enough to participate in daily curriculum and schedules.

In case of a serious illness, emergency medical care will be obtained and the parent(s) notified as soon as possible. A release for emergency treatment must be on file.

When a child becomes ill, he/she will be cared for until arrangements can be made for his/her removal from Think Play Grow as promptly as possible. Parents are expected to remove their child within 30 minutes of notification. Parents must provide the Center with the phone number of a person to contact in case of emergency, if you are unavailable. **Parents will be notified when the child has been exposed to communicable disease.**

Readmission to Think Play Grow of any child recovering from a communicable disease or disabling illness shall be based on the recommendations of the Texas Department of State

Health Services, the American Academy of Pediatrics and at the Directors discretion. The office has a copy of the Center's full health policies. These include a stipulation that children must be free of fever, diarrhea, and vomiting for 24 hours without the use of symptom-reducing medication before returning to the Center. We require a doctor's note for children returning the following day after they were sent home and Director’s approval.

**Injuries 746.501 (5 &6)**

The staff makes every effort to ensure the safety of your child while in our care. Unfortunately, accidents may occur. Teachers and Center Staff are trained in CPR and basic first aid procedures. We have implemented the following procedures, should your child experience an injury while at our center.

The teacher will immediately advise the administrative staff. The administrative staff will determine the severity of the injury (i.e., scrapes, bumps, bruises, etc.) We will administer first aid and forward an accident report home with the person that picks up your child at the end of the day.

In case of a serious accident or injury, EMS (911) will be contacted first. Within the limits of their ability, the staff will administer first aid. We will make every attempt to contact you immediately. If we cannot reach you, we will call the person you have indicated on the forms to make medical decisions for your child. If we cannot reach you, we will release your child into the custody of the emergency paramedics to transport your child for immediate medical care. Staff is prohibited from transporting an injured child. A staff member will remain with your child until you arrive.

*Any medical bills that may arise from an accident are the responsibility of the parent.*

**Hearing and Vision Screening 746.501(11)**

**Every child four (4) years of age or older is required to have a vision and hearing screening yearly. This can be done by your child's physician.**

According to Texas Health and Safety standards, all children must have vision and hearing screening between the ages of four and five years. When screening is done at your child's well checkup, the Center will need a physician's copy to keep on file, it is the parents' responsibility to get all screenings done.

**We must have current record of this screening for your child to be in care.** **746.501(11)**

**Medications 746.501(4)**

We do NOT have medicine here to give any child it must be brought in by the parents and labeled with the child’s first and last name. We follow the label, if there is no recommended dose, we cannot administer that medicine without a prescription from a doctor. (For example, if your child is 1 and the bottle says under 2 ask a doctor.)

For each medication brought into the center a parent must stop by the front desk and fill out a medication form stating how much, how often and how long (up to 6 months) the medicine needs to be given. Any prescription medication must come in its original box and with a prescription attached.

If a child has a recurring medical condition, such as asthma or allergic reactions, the child's parent or health care provider may sign a medication authorization form allowing Think Play Grow Academy to administer the medication when symptoms occur for up to a six-month period. The authorization must include information on symptoms to watch for.

All medication must be taken home at the end of the week. Think Play Grow reserves the right to obtain additional administration information from a pharmacist or a physician.

Non-prescription medication can be given at Think Play Grow if furnished by the parent. All over-the-counter medications must be brought to the office in the original container, with an age-appropriate dosage on the label, or a note from the child's physician giving a different dosage.

In the summer Think Play Grow encourages the use of sun block to protect children from the harmful rays of the sun. Parents are asked to apply the sunblock in the morning when dressing the child. Sun block must be supplied by the parents and can only be re-applied with written permission. The same procedures will be used in the application of insect repellent. Please send lotion forms of insect repellents and not sprays. Only products that are recommended for children will be used.

**Breast Feeding 746.501 (24)**

Parents have the right to breastfeed or provide breast milk for their child while in care. A chair is available in infant rooms for comfortable seating.

The infant classroom has 1 rocking chair for parents that may want to breastfeed their children. We have a blanket if needed, we can also open the break room for you to use if you need more privacy.

**Meals** **746.501(8)**

We do NOT serve Lunch! Parents are responsible to bring their children a nutritional sack lunch each day. Think Play Grow is not responsible for the nutritional value of meals and drinks provided by the parents. Foods that help with brain development, healthy teeth, and body are strongly encouraged. Please send food ready in the container you wish your child to eat from (i.e. canned goods emptied into a bowl, meat cut, grapes sliced, oranges peeled etc…) Think Play Grow will refrigerate food that needs to be kept cold and will heat and food that needs to be heated.

Since we do not have a food handling permit, the health department will not allow us to prepare food. Please do not send food that has to be prepared. All food must be in a microwavable safe container or a zip-lock bag. Examples of food that has to be prepared are as follows: Macaroni and cheese, rice-a-roni, and mashed potatoes in the add water containers (it has to already be cooked we can only warm), spaghetti and meatballs, raviolis, and spaghetti-o’s, or any canned food in the cans/containers they come packaged in have to be opened and poured into a microwave safe container, and roman noodles in the packages (they have to be cooked and, in a microwave, safe container. These are guidelines given to us by the Health Department and we are required to follow them. No food will be accepted if it’s not previously prepared.

Think Play Grow will serve milk to each child that did not bring a drink with their lunch. Please avoid junk food. Think Play Grow does NOT force children to eat, and does NOT use food as a reward or punishment.

*Research has shown that 90% of fatal choking occur in children younger than four years of age. Examples of foods that present a risk of choking include hot dogs sliced into rounds, whole grapes, hard candy, string cheese, nuts, seeds, raw peas, dried fruit, pretzels, chips, peanuts, popcorn, marshmallows, spoonsful of peanut butter, and chunks of meat larger than can be swallowed whole.*

The Center serves a morning snack and afternoon snack to all children who are in attendance at the time of service. Meals are served at no extra charge.

All meals we serve strive to meet the Department of Human Services guidelines for nutritious, appropriate foods for young children. Our Menus, kitchen facilities, and cooking procedures also follow their guidelines.

We welcome menu suggestions. However, we are NOT able to prepare separate meals for children based on their preferences. All children will be served the same meal, with the following exceptions.

* A child that is allergic or sensitive to a particular food. In this case, a physician’s note is required, which must state which food(s) are to be avoided. In those cases, the identified foods will not be served. Families must provide acceptable substitutions if desired. Please notify the Director or Assistant Director upon enrollment if this applies to your child.
* Please ensure all lunches from home are nutritious, we are not responsible for the nutritious value of the food brought from home.
* Infants are served whenever they are hungry. All other children eat their meals together with their classmates. Morning snack starts about 8:30am, lunch starts about 11:30am and afternoon snack is served about 3:00pm. We will not “hold” meals for your child. If your child is not at the Center when a meal is serves, he/she will not receive that meal. Please make arrangements for your child to be fed prior to arrival if it is after meal service time.

A nutritional snack plan is posted in the hallway by the office at the beginning of each week and posted in each classroom that eats snacks. Copies are available upon request for parents to take home. Think Play Grow will provide a morning and afternoon snack. A nutritional lunch must be provided from home.

If your child will be arriving near the end of a meal, morning snack or lunch, please arrange to have your child eat before coming into to center. It is difficult for a teacher to begin serving a late child while managing the rest of the class’s transition to the next activity.

**Morning snack ends at 9 am so if you plan on coming in after 9am please have your child eat breakfast before coming to school.**

**Breakfast: 8:30am through 9:00am**

**Lunch: 11:15am through 12:00pm**

**Afternoon snack: 3:00pm through 3:30pm**

**Food Allergies**

***What to Do If Symptoms Occur***

The appearance of symptoms (see Know the Symptoms at right) after eating food may be a sign of a food allergy. The food(s) that caused these symptoms should be avoided, and the affected person, should contact a doctor or health care provider for appropriate testing and evaluation.

* Persons found to have a food allergy should be taught to **read labels** and **avoid the offending foods**. They should also be taught, in case of accidental ingestion, to **recognize the early symptoms** of an allergic reaction, and be properly educated on — and armed with — appropriate treatment measures.
* Persons with a known food allergy who begin experiencing symptoms while, or after, eating a food should **initiate treatment immediately**, and go to a **nearby emergency room**if symptoms progress.

**The Hard Facts: *Severe Food Allergies Can Be Life-Threatening***

*Following ingestion of a food allergen(s), a person with food allergies can experience a severe, life-threatening allergic reaction called****anaphylaxis.***

***This can lead to:***

* constricted airways in the lungs
* severe lowering of blood pressure and shock ("**anaphylactic shock**")
* suffocation by swelling of the throat

**Each year in the U.S., it is estimated that anaphylaxis to food results in:**

* 30,000 emergency room visits
* 2,000 hospitalizations
* 150 deaths

Prompt administration of epinephrine by auto injector (e.g., Epi-pen) during early symptoms of anaphylaxis may help prevent these serious consequences.

**What Are *Major Food Allergens*?**

While more than 160 foods can cause allergic reactions in people with food allergies, the law identifies the eight most common allergenic foods. These foods account for 90 percent of food allergic reactions, and are the food sources from which many other ingredients are derived.

*The eight foods identified by the law are:*

1. **Milk**
2. **Eggs**
3. **Fish** (e.g., bass, flounder, cod)
4. **Crustacean shellfish** (e.g. crab, lobster, shrimp)
5. **Tree nuts** (e.g., almonds, walnuts, pecans)
6. **Peanuts**
7. **Wheat**
8. **Soybeans**

These eight foods, and any ingredient that contains protein derived from one or more of them, are designated as “major food allergens” by FALCPA.

**How *Major Food Allergens* Are Listed**

The law requires that food labels identify the food source names of all major food allergens used to make the food. This requirement is met if the common or usual name of an ingredient (e.g., buttermilk) that is a major food allergen already identifies that allergen's food source name (i.e., milk).  Otherwise, the allergen's food source name must be declared at least once on the food label in one of two ways.

The name of the food source of a major food allergen must appear:

1. In parentheses following the name of the ingredient.
***Examples:*** "lecithin (soy)," "flour (wheat)," and "whey (milk)"

**– *OR* –**

1. Immediately after or next to the list of ingredients in a "contains" statement.
***Example:*** "Contains Wheat, Milk, and Soy."

**Know the Symptoms**

Symptoms of food allergies typically appear from within a few minutes to two hours after a person has eaten the food to which he or she is allergic.

*Allergic reactions can include:*

* Hives
* Flushed skin or rash
* Tingling or itchy sensation in the mouth
* Face, tongue, or lip swelling
* Vomiting and/or diarrhea
* Abdominal cramps
* Coughing or wheezing
* Dizziness and/or lightheadedness
* Swelling of the throat and vocal cords
* Difficulty breathing
* Loss of consciousness

***About Other Allergens***
Persons may still be allergic to — and have serious reactions to — foods *other* than the eight foods identified by the law. So, always be sure to read the food label's ingredient list carefully to avoid the food allergens in question.

**Food Allergen “Advisory” Labeling** FALCPA’s labeling requirements do not apply to the potential or unintentional presence of major food allergens in foods resulting from "cross-contact" situations during manufacturing, e.g., because of shared equipment or processing lines. In the context of food allergens, "cross-contact" occurs when a residue or trace amount of an allergenic food becomes incorporated into another food not intended to contain it. FDA guidance for the food industry states that food allergen advisory statements, e.g., "may contain [allergen]" or "produced in a facility that also uses [allergen]" should not be used as a substitute for adhering to current good manufacturing practices and must be truthful and not misleading. FDA is considering ways to best manage the use of these types of statements by manufacturers to better inform consumers.

**Food Allergies - Reducing the Risks**

**Allergy Alert: Mild Symptoms Can Become More Severe**

Initially mild *symptoms* that occur after ingesting a food allergen are not always a measure of mild *severity*. In fact, if not treated promptly, these symptoms can become more serious in a very short amount of time, and could lead to **anaphylaxis**.

**Food Allergies:** *Each year, millions of Americans have allergic reactions to food. Although most food allergies cause relatively mild and minor symptoms, some food allergies can cause severe reactions, and may even be life-threatening.*

*There is no cure for food allergies. Strict avoidance of food allergens — and early recognition and management of allergic reactions to food — are important measures to prevent serious health consequences*.

**FDA's Role:**

***Labeling***

To help Americans avoid the health risks posed by food allergens, Congress passed the **Food Allergen Labeling and consumer Protection Act of 2004 (FALCPA)**. The law applies to all foods who’s labeling is regulated by FDA, both domestic and imported. (FDA regulates the labeling of all foods, except for poultry, most meats, certain egg products, and most alcoholic beverages.)

* Before FALCPA, the labels of foods made from two or more ingredients were required to list all **ingredients** by their common or usual names. The names of some ingredients, however, do not clearly identify their food source.
* Now, the law requires that labels must clearly identify the **food source names** of all ingredients that are — or contain any protein derived from —the **eight most common food allergens**, which FALCPA defines as “**major food allergens**.”As a result, food labels help allergic consumers to identify offending foods or ingredients so they can more easily avoid them.**About Foods Labeled *Before* January 1, 2006**FALCPA did not require relabeling of food products labeled before January 1, 2006, which were made with a major food allergen that did not identify its food source name in the ingredient list.  Although it is unlikely that any of these foods are still on store shelves, always use special care to read the complete ingredient list on food labels when you go shopping.

**Special Dietary Needs**

If your child develops an allergy or intolerance to certain foods, or must avoid or be given certain foods for other medical reasons, Think Play Grow must be given a written dietary plan by a physician or a licensed dietician. Children who cannot drink milk due to milk intolerance or allergy must have a nutritional plan for a source of calcium. Parents will provide supplements or substitutions for items on the Center's snack menu that are restricted from their child's diet.

**Daily Food Needs for Children**





**2022/2023 School Calendar**

**Hours of operations: Monday through Friday 7:30 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.**

**Drop off time is no later than 9:30am.**

**Think Play Grow will be closed on the following dates:**

|  |
| --- |
| **2022****October 10th – Staff Workday****November 23rd,24th,25th – Thanksgiving Break****December Friday 23rd, Monday and Tuesday 26th and 27th – Christmas Break****2023****January 2nd – New years****January 16TH – Martin Luther King Day****February 20th – Staff Development** **April 7th and April 10th – Easter Break****May 29th – Memorial Day****July 4th – Independence Day****September 4th - Labor Day****October 9th – Staff Workday****November 22nd,23rd,24th – Thanksgiving Break****December 25th, 26th and 27th - Christmas Break** |

**In case of inclement weather or school closings, watch your local news and follow Waco ISD School closing. In case of a delay, Think Play Grow will open its doors at 10:30 a.m.**

**Custody of Child**

If legal custody of any child at Think Play Grow Academy is in question, documents verifying custody will be requested when your child starts attending. Think Play Grow has a liberal "open door policy" to all its families. However, it is not an appropriate place to have visitation time during the day.

We ask parents to refrain from stopping by to visit outside of the classroom with their child as it disrupts the flow of the school day, and is often upsetting when the parent leaves.

**Diapers, Wipes, and Toilet Training**

Disposable diapers and wipes for all children who are not toilet trained must be provided by the parents. Think Play Grow requires a supply of diapers and wipes.

Before you begin preparing to toilet train your child, we ask that you meet with the teacher. We want to work with you and help you make this a successful new step in your child's development. Toilet training comes when your child is ready to take responsibility for eliminating in the toilet and handling his or her own clothing.

While your child is toilet training, Think Play Grow asks that parents provide changes of clothing each day.

\*We will not replace lost articles.

Infants & Toddlers: Parents must provide the following: Diapers or Pull-ups, Wipes, Ointment, Bottles (liners if necessary), Pacifier, and Formula. We will notify parents when their child is running low on supplies. If a parent fails to supply these items; the center will charge $1.00 for each diaper and $10.00 plus the cost of formula (a receipt will be provided)

**Items from Home**

Please do not bring food from home except for a nutritional lunch each day. For special occasions, please consult with your child's teacher. All breakfast food must be finished before your child may enter his or her classroom.

Think Play Grow does not encourage bringing toys from home, with the exception of security items for use during rest time. Bringing a toy often leads to disagreements with playmates and upset feelings- Sometimes items from home get broken. Think Play Grow is not responsible for any items brought from home.

The best items to bring from home are found "treasures." The teachers are always eager for you to share these with the class. Shells from the beach, wildflowers, snails, bugs, seeds, bird nests, magazine pictures, interesting bottles or containers, old jewelry, and many more things are valued by the children and the teachers. Children often like to share things from their house. This interest can be redirected from toys to these "treasures."

Security items are very important to a child and are often misunderstood or not respected by adults. Security items often include blankets, stuffed animals and pacifiers. These transitional items or self-comforting items will be respected by our teachers. Please label these items clearly. As your child adjusts to our program and begins to need his or her security item less, we will put it in his or her cubby. We will not force your child to separate from this item, but we will help your child find new ways to be comforted and feel safe. Please make sure that all items are taken home and washed on Friday so that they may return with your child on Monday.

**Outdoor Play**

Young children need regular opportunities for outdoor play. Think Play Grow schedules outdoor play two times each day for all children who are walking. Children must come to school healthy enough to be able to participate in outside play, infants and children will be outside if the temperature is above 32 degrees; however, teachers may decide to take children outside at lower temperatures on dry, sunny, calm days. Parents should provide appropriate clothing, including hats and gloves' ln the summer months, the teachers may need to limit outside play to 20 minutes, or less when the temperature or heat index is 100 degrees or above. We make certain that children are getting adequate supplies of water.

Think Play Grow has 2 developmentally appropriate playgrounds for young children with equipment and free space for playing outdoors. Non-walking infants will enjoy going for walks in the Bye-Bye Buggies or strollers, or lying on a blanket in grassy areas. When it is too wet to play on the playgrounds, but it is not raining, classes may take a walk outside.

**Rest Time**

Infants are kept on their home sleeping schedule. A supervised quiet period of two hours on mats will be provided for children after lunch. Think Play Grow provides rest mats for all children. If the child has a small comfort item, it can be brought with the understanding that it will be put in the child's storage area until naptime. All children will be required to rest for 2 hours, but they do not have to fall asleep. They are asked to be quiet and allow their classmates to sleep. After a period of rest, children who are not sleeping may read a book and continue to rest quietly. While the children rest, the teachers take turns having their lunch breaks and preparing the classroom for new activities.

**Clothing**

Children should come to school dressed in comfortable, washable play clothes. Children are required to wear shoes while at Think Play Grow once they are walking. Complete independence of adult help in dressing is a goal our children are encouraged to achieve. Simple clothing will enable your child to achieve this goal.

Remember that play is a child's work and that much of play is dirty. We have smocks for the children, but the paint often finds a way to get on clothes. All school supplies are non-toxic and washable.

The right clothing will contribute to your child's safety at Think play Grow. Please choose shoes that will not contribute to playground injuries from slips and falls. Select clothing that allows your child to run and climb safely. Avoid necklaces, belts, and draw-string hoods as these have been known to catch on climbing equipment or furniture, with the threat of severe injury.

Jackets, sweaters, hats, mittens, etc. should be clearly marked with your child’s name.

An extra set of clothes and shoes should be brought to the center and placed in the child’s storage area in case a change of clothes is needed. Please mark these items with permanent markings.

**Screen Policies**

Think Play Grow Academy only uses television for our 2-year-old and preschool classroom. The Preschool classroom has tablets in their classroom that they play educational games on during a 10-minute computer time. Children under the age of 2 are not exposed to any screen time as it is not age appropriate.

**Communication.**

Think Play Grow Academy uses text messaging through Pro-Care Connect, email, notes and verbal communication to let parents know about upcoming events, their children, and many other things.

**Conferences**

Conferences are scheduled to review your child’s progress. Families may be contacted or may request a conference anytime. Conferences are usually scheduled for the fall (August) and spring (April). Teachers are available upon request for additional conferences.

If you need to contact the Director, Casey Koenen for any reasons you can e-mail me at thinkplaygrow@yahoo.com, call or text my cell at 254-548-6168 or call the center phone at 254-732-4881. I can be reached anytime through text on my cellphone!

**Parents in the Classroom 746.501(18 & 19)**

Parents are welcome in the classroom at any time during the day but we ask that you avoid lingering at drop off as this can become confusing for your child and cause them to become upset at drop off. We ask that you sit and join your child in his or her activities. Please follow the teacher's lead for how to interact with the children. We ask that parents follow the same rules in the classroom that the children follow.

Family participation is highly encouraged and we would enjoy having you share a special interest, hobby, or your career with the children. Parents can enrich our curriculum in many ways and we appreciate your help.

It is very important that you respect each child and family's right to privacy. Information that you learn about another child while you are visiting the classroom must stay at the Center. Feel free to speak to the teacher if you have a concern about another child. The teacher will be free to share general information about what we do, but will not be able to share specific information about another parent's child.

Parents play an important role in our program. Your help and support are essential to us. Many opportunities for parent involvement exist at the Center.

**Parent Rights**

Parents are entitled to see the following information. You may ask the Center Director to show you the most recent copy of the

* Minimum standards for this licensed facility;
* Department of Protective and Regulatory inspection report;
* Fire marshal's inspection report;
* Health department's sanitation inspection report; and
* Gas pipe inspection report.

Children's records are kept confidential and only made available to the Director and assistant.

Parents may request access to their child's school records during school hours.

**Parents have the right to breastfeed or provide breast milk for their child while in care. A chair is available in infant rooms for comfortable seating.** **746.501 (24)**

**Non-discrimination Policy**

The Center is in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Public Law 88-352), The Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (Public Law 94-135), and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Public Law 93-112). This is an equal opportunity program. No person, in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability, political beliefs, or religion, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination. If you believe you have been discriminated against because of race, color, national origin, age, sex, a disability, political beliefs, or religion, you may lodge a complaint against Think Play Grow Academy’s Child Care Center by immediately writing and/or calling the Civil Rights Department, Texas Department of Human Services, P.O. Box 19030, Austin, Texas 78714-9030 512/450-3630.

**Complaint Procedures**

Parents are asked to speak with their child's teacher if a concern arises. If the concern cannot or is not met by the teacher, the concern should be taken to the Director. The Director will set a conference with parents and teachers to address the parents' concerns. Our goal is to meet the needs of the children and their parents on all levels of care.

**Chain of Concern 746.501 (17)**

When you have a concern, question, or comment, you should consider your child’s teachers as your first resource. They are usually able to answer questions, not only about classroom procedure, but also more general questions about child development.

☻If you have a question or concern which your child’s teachers cannot address, or if you feel more comfortable talking to someone else, please feel free to ask the Director, Casey Koenen or the Assistant Director, Lara York.

**Holidays and Birthdays**

Think Play Grow will celebrate Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, Birthday’s and Easter and on other days selected by the teacher. We ask that you bring healthy treats for our celebrations.

Teachers will specify what they want brought to parties. Part of our curriculum is teaching children about nutrition. Learning that we can have fun parties and still eat healthy foods will help our children learn to make healthy food choices.

A child's birthday is a very special event. We want to recognize each child on his or her special day. However, we will not sponsor a birthday party at the center. Parents are welcome to bring invitations to birthday parties planned for elsewhere and we will distribute them to all children in a room. Think Play Grow will not distribute addresses for security reasons, to recognize a child's birthday, a parent may bring a special snack. We ask that it be simple and age appropriate.

Please check with the teacher to see if any of the children have diet restrictions.

Some children cannot have icing because of the milk products, others cannot have chocolate.

**Field Trips 746.501 (13)**

Think Play Grow does not take field trips by vehicle. Sometimes children may go on walks and/or buggy rides to experience our neighborhood.

**We do not transport Children. 746.501 (13)**

**We do not have animals at the center. 746.501 (16)**

**Water Activities 746.501 (15)**

Water is used in sensory tables both inside and outside the classroom year-round. During the some we have sprinkler play for the older children.

**Assessments**

Each child will participate in assessments once a year in the areas of cognitive, speech development, as well as social, and motor skill functioning. Such information will be used to determine the child's progress, accomplishments, and further growth needs.

Families may be asked to participate in annual assessments of the Children's Center and its program.

**Infant and Toddler Care**

Infants' daily schedules are individualized according to their own needs for eating and sleeping. Initially very young babies may sleep a lot until they adjust to the stimulating new environment. Other babies are over-stimulated at first and sleep only for short periods of time. The more details you can share about your baby, the more quickly the caregivers will learn to read your baby's signals and respond in a way that satisfies him/her.

All baby bottles must be plastic or other unbreakable material. All bottles and pacifiers must be permanently labeled with the child's name prominently displayed.

Parents must provide all food, formula, and diapers. Please label. We encourage mothers to breast feed their babies and have arranged for a quiet space for that purpose. You may also bring expressed breast milk instead of formula. Let us know how we can help you.

Written and signed instructions as to the baby's feeding and napping schedule should be given to teachers. These instructions are to include all of the foods the baby is eating. The parents, and not the Center's staff, are to introduce all new foods to the baby. If the baby has had no reaction to the new food after three days, then add that food to the child's diet instructions at the Center.

Older siblings of infants are not allowed in the infant classroom according to Texas child care licensing standards. Please speak with the teachers about drop-off and pick-up procedures that can be arranged when you must bring an older child with you.

As your child transitions from infancy to toddlerhood, the Think play Grow staff will work with you and your child to develop a schedule that will allow for easy transition to the toddler classroom. The center staff will also help your child gain independence in feeding necessary for an easy transition. Please speak with your child's teacher for ideas and tips on helping ease this process of independence.

**Including Children with Special Needs**

Think Play Grow supports the philosophy that children learn best when they have opportunities to interact with all children, including children of different ages, gender, backgrounds and abilities. If your child has a special need that should be understood and supported by his or her teacher, please tell us about it. Children with an identified disability may be working with other professionals outside of the Center. If you have a concern about your child's development, please bring it to the attention of the teacher or Center Director, we can offer referrals to outside groups and individuals who can help your child.

**Babysitting Policy**

Think Play Grow does not endorse or take responsibility for the use of the Center staff as personal babysitters outside of school hours. If you hire a Think Play Grow staff member for purposes of private baby-sitting Think Play Grow Academy, LLC. Accepts no responsibility for that employee while they are under your supervision. You also agree not to hire a Think Play Grow staff member away from the center that takes them away from their job duties here at Think Play Grow. Both, you and the staff member, will be held liable for actual damages including loss of tuitions.

**Non-discrimination Policy**

The Center is in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Public Law 88-352), The Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (Public Law 94-135), and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Public Law 93-112). This is an equal opportunity program. No person, in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability, political beliefs, or religion, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination. If you believe you have been discriminated against because of race, color, national origin, age, sex, a disability, political beliefs, or religion, you may lodge a complaint against Think Play Grow Academy’s Child Care Center by immediately writing and/or calling the Civil Rights Department, Texas Department of Human Services, P.O. Box 19030, Austin, Texas 78714-9030 512/450-3630.

**License & Regulations 746.501(20 & 21)**

Think Play Grow Academy is licensed by the state of Texas as a Licensed Childcare Center with the capacity for 72 children, 0 to 5 years of age. Learning programs are based on developmentally appropriate practices.

You are entitled to see the following information. You may ask the Director or Assistant Director to show you the most recent copy of: \*Texas State Childcare Minimum Standards for this Childcare Center; these are also available on the web at [www.dfps.state.tx. us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us) or your local Licensing Office.

\*The most recent DFPS Inspection/Investigation Report, (compliance information is also available on the web at [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us) or your local Licensing Office)

It is also posted on the Parent Information bored next to the front office.

\*The Child Daycare Center’s Operational Policies and Procedures (hand book)

**Waco**
801 Austin Ave, Suite 400
Waco, Texas 76701
(254) 756-5571

**Gang-Free Zone 746.501(22)**

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty. See attached Form 2846 New Requirements Regarding Gang-Free Zones. The form is posted in the front hallway on the parent information board!

**Security and Emergency Procedures**

If Think Play Grow must close due to bad weather, we will post on our Facebook page, send a message through procare and try to post on the local News stations. In some cases, we will need to open late, if we choose to open late, we will open at 10:30 am.

The responsibility of a teacher and child care provider is to provide a safe environment while allowing children the opportunity to develop their motor skills and explore their environment. Minor accidents occur as children play and explore. When such an incident occurs, caregivers will do all that they can to determine the cause of the accident, care for the child, document the injury for the parents and the Director, and evaluate the incident to determine how it can be prevented in the future. Parents will receive an injury report explaining the details of the accident. If a serious injury occurs that requires medical attention, the Center will notify the parent.

Parents must keep their emergency contact numbers up-to-date at all times. The Center will call the child's doctor for instructions if the parent cannot be contacted. If the child must be transported immediately for medical attention, EMS will be called. It is important that parents keep medical information up-to-date in the child's file, especially allergies to medications, and changes in doctors.

All employees of Think Play Grow have current First Aid and CPR certificates.

Fire evacuation is practiced monthly with the children so that the children are less likely to be frightened and the teachers are prepared. Special evacuation cribs are in the infant rooms so that the babies can be removed quickly.

Preparations for threatening weather have been made at Think play Grow. Twice a year the teachers and children practice going to safe places on the inside of the building.

**Emergency Preparedness 746.501 (23)**

In the event of an emergency, operating procedures are in place to ensure the safety of the children.

**Evacuation Plans:**

•All employees are responsible for moving children to the designated safe area

•Emergency evacuation & relocation diagrams are located in areas specified by DFPS & local authorities

•In some circumstances, parents will be called upon to pick up their children. As needed, the local authorities will be called to aid in the transportation of the children to an alternate shelter away from the center.

•**Alternate shelter: St. Louis Catholic Church**

 **2001 N. 25th St.**

 **Waco TX. 76708**

 **254-754-1221**

•Upon departure and arrival, the director and Assistant Director will have a list of all children that must be accounted for. Together, the director, Assistant Director and the caregivers will verify that all children are present.

•The director and the Assistant Director are responsible for calling the local authorities needed such as: Fire department, ambulance, local police or sheriff, poison control, and DFPS child care licensing.

•The Director and the Assistant Director are responsible for securing children's emergency numbers, emergency medical authorizations, and attendance sheets during an emergency. All emergency information needed is kept in and emergency box located in the office.

**Emergency Drills**

Emergency Fire Drills are held monthly and Severe Weather Drills and Lock Down drills are held every three months to ensure children are accustom to emergency evacuation and relocation procedures.

**Weather Closures**

The Center will close for emergency weather conditions based on what Waco ISD does. In case of delay, Think Play Grow will open at 11 a.m. Check local TV and radio stations as well as the Waco ISD website for updates.

**Discipline and Guidance 746.501(7)**

Guidance is based on an understanding of the individual needs and development of a child and is directed toward teaching the child responsible behavior. Teachers seek to re-channel aggressive or problem behavior and teach the child to respect the rights of others. No physical punishment will be given. Boundaries for children are established in each classroom according to their age.

Communication between home and school is essential for the child's sense of consistency and stability. Disruptions at home or at school can be unsettling to a child and result in misbehavior. In order for the teacher to be supportive of your child, it would be helpful to know about changes that are happening at home and at school. These types of events cause stress for children and may result in a change in behavior. Adults who share this information are better prepared to support a child.

Children are learning how to behave in a group and will make mistakes. We will not report all misbehaviors to you only those that persist or are puzzling to us. We share this information with you so that we can work together to help your child overcome this problem and gain better social skills.

Severe behavior problems will sometimes occur in a classroom. These may include biting, bullying, hitting, and using profanity. Very young children frequently do these things to get a reaction from the adults. Toddlers are easily reinforced by our attention. It may be appropriate to redirect the aggressor and protect the other children without giving the aggressor much attention. Prevention is the best tool for a teacher in this situation. However, if the children are older, these behaviors are much more serious. Preschoolers should be learning how to control their tempers and may need consequences to remind them. If you witness aggressive behavior in your child's classroom, know that the teachers and the directors are working together to find a solution. If your child exhibits some unusually aggressive behavior, know that we will want to help you find resources to solve your child's problems before they become behavior patterns that are more difficult to resolve.

All of the children in the room need adult support as they learn to get along with others. Some children are intimidated by aggressive children. We will help these children learn strategies for taking care of themselves.

The techniques teachers will use include redirecting your child, offering him/her words to use to solve problems, and a chance to try again, as well as modifying the environment or routine to better meet your child's needs. At no time will physical punishment be used to correct the child.

If we do have an issue where a child’s behavior continues that we are unable to come up with a solution for we will call for a conference with the child’s parents or guardian, the Teacher and the Director at the center where we can come up with a plan of action. If we are unable to fix the problem then the child will be suspended for 3 days after the 1st occurrence following the conference. If there is a second or third occurrence this will lead to suspension of a week and/or expulsion. Expulsion is our very last option and we will work with you the best we can to keep from having to go down this path.

**Preventing and responding to abuse and neglect of children. 746.501 (25)**

Every employee is required to complete a 2-hour written training from Tym the Trainer pre-service book over Abuse and Neglect.

Think Play Grow will ensure annual training is completed by employees to prevent and respond to abuse and neglect of children.

**Reporting Abuse or Neglect**

Texas state law requires the staff of the Center to report any suspected abuse or neglect of a child to the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services or a law enforcement agency. Suspected abuse or neglect can be reported by phone (1-800-252-5400) or online at http://www.txabusehotline.org

**Recognizing the Signs of Child Abuse**

**Physical Abuse**

Physical Abuse is physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child. The physical injury (ranging from minor bruises to severe fractures or death) can result from punching, beating, shaking, kicking, biting, throwing, stabbing, hitting, burning, choking, or otherwise harming a child. Such injury is considered abuse regardless of whether the caretaker intended to hurt the child.

**Suspect Physical Abuse When You See:**

* Frequent injuries such as bruises, cuts, black eyes, or burns without adequate explanations
* Frequent complaints of pain without obvious injury
* Burns or bruises in unusual patterns that may indicate the use of an instrument or human bite; cigarette burns on any part of the body
* Lack of reaction to pain
* Aggressive, disruptive, and destructive behavior
* Passive, withdrawn, and emotionless behavior
* Fear of going home or seeing parents
* Injuries that appear after a child has not been seen for several days
* Unreasonable clothing that may hide injuries to arms or legs

**Neglect**

Neglect is failure to provide for a child’s basic needs necessary to sustain the life or health of the child, excluding failure caused primarily by financial inability unless relief services have been offered and refused.

Suspect Neglect When You See:

* Obvious malnourishment
* Lack of personal cleanliness
* Torn or dirty clothing
* Stealing or begging for food
* Child unattended for long periods of time
* Need for glasses, dental care, or other medical attention
* Frequent tardiness or absence from school

**Sexual Abuse**

Sexual Abuse includes fondling a child’s genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure, and exploitation through prostitution or producing pornographic materials.

Suspect Sexual Abuse When You See:

* Physical signs of sexually transmitted diseases
* Evidence of injury to the genital area
* Pregnancy in a young girl
* Difficulty in sitting or walking
* Extreme fear of being alone with adults of a certain sex
* Sexual comments, behaviors or play
* Knowledge of sexual relations beyond what is expected for a child’s age
* Sexual victimization of other children

**Emotional Abuse**

Emotional Abuse is mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in a child’s growth, development, or psychological functioning. It includes extreme forms of punishment such as confining a child in a dark closet, habitual scapegoating, belittling, and rejecting treatment for a child.

**Suspect Emotional Abuse When You See:**

* Over compliance
* Low self-esteem
* Severe depression, anxiety, or aggression
* Difficulty making friends or doing things with other children
* Lagging in physical, emotional, and intellectual development
* Caregiver who belittles the child, withholds love, and seems unconcerned about the child’s problems

**Keeping Children Safe 746.501(25)**

Reporting Abuse or Neglect: Texas Law requires caregivers to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Texas DPRS or law enforcement. Call 1-800-252-5400 to make confidential reports. Failure to report suspected abuse or neglect is a crime. Employers are prohibited from retaliating against caregivers who make reports in good faith. These are also available on the web at [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us) or your local Licensing Office at 979/776-7498.

The Center’s Director or teacher will notify the Department of Protective Services, and/or the local law enforcement officials, when it appears that a child is being seriously neglected or abused.

The Texas Family Code (sections§34.07) States, Failure to Report: (A) A person commits an offense if the person has cause to believe that a child’s physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be further adversely affected by abuse or neglect and knowingly fails to report it, in accordance with Section §34.02 of the code, (B) An offense Under this Section is a “Class B” Misdemeanor.

**Biting Policy**

Our program recognizes that biting is, unfortunately, not unexpected when toddlers are in group care. We are always upset when children are bitten in our program, and we recognize how upsetting it is for parents. While we feel that biting is never the right thing to do, we know that they bite for a variety of reasons. Most of the reasons are not related to behavior problems.

Our programs, then does not focus on punishment for the biting, but on effective techniques that address the specific reasons for the biting. When biting occurs, we have 4 main responses:

1. Care for and help the child who was bitten.
2. Help the child who bit learn other behaviors.
3. Work with the child and parents who bit and examine our program to stop biting.
4. 3 incidents of biting in a school day we send the biter home for the day.

Our teachers express strong disapproval of biting. They work to keep children safe and to help the child who bit learn different, more appropriate behavior. Where there are episodes of ongoing biting, we develop a plan of specific strategies, techniques, and timelines to address it. We do not and will not use and response that harms a child or is known to be ineffective.

We give immediate attention and, if necessary, first aid to the children who are bitten. We offer to put ice on the bite if the child is willing. If the skin is broken, we clean the wound with soap and water.

When children bite, their parents are informed personally and privately the same day. When children are bitten, their parents are informed personally or through phone call or text and given an incident report to sign the same day. When we experience ongoing biting in a toddler room, we develop a plan of action with strategies, techniques, and timelines to work on the problem.

Biting is always documented on our standard incident report. It is completed and signed by the teacher, administrator, and parent. The original for is kept in the child’s folder in the office. A copy is available to the parent upon request. We keep the name of the child who bit confidential to avoid labeling and to give our teachers the opportunity to use their time and energy to work on stopping the biting.

Training sessions and workshops on biting are given during the year as needed for parents and teachers. In addition, we have current resources on biting available to the parents and teachers. We encourage parents to bring concerns and frustrations directly to the teachers. The administrators are kept well informed of the problems and will work with parents and teachers to help bring the biting under control. Communication is very important in order to help children learn not to bite.

**Let’s consider the implications of these questions:**

*“What would you do if the child that was biting is yours?”*

*“Should children be ‘kicked out’ of the program if they bite too many times?”*

Would you want your child to be kicked out or would you want us to work with you and your child to help them learn what appropriate behavior is? If a child is kicked out who will take the time to teach them how to interact appropriately with their peers?

A program that kicks a child out for biting is indicating that it either doesn’t know enough to work on the problem or is unwilling to work on the problem or both. When we do the hard work of acquiring knowledge, developing skills, and deciding our motivation will be to provide the best for children, our program becomes stronger and more appropriate for children and families. When we excuse ourselves from doing this, our program becomes weaker.

When we approach parents about the fact that their child is biting, we ask them to work with us to help their child learn to stop biting. If parents are unwilling to work with us or don’t take the problem seriously, only then would we suggest that they find another center. If the parents of the biter and the parents of the child being bit are willing to go the distance, we can work hard to correct the behavior

*Adapted from “No Biting” by Gretchen Kinnell*

**Things to bring for your child:**

**Lunch is a must for all children who eat table food.**

Infants

* Change of clothes
* Diapers
* Wipes (In plastic container the first time, refills thereafter)
* Diaper ointment
* Pacifier
* Formula
* Bottles
* Baby food

Toddlers

* Change of Clothes
* Diapers
* Wipes (In plastic container the first time, refills thereafter)
* Diaper ointment
* Small blanket for naptime

Pre- School

* Change of clothes. When we send clothes home, please replace them the following day
* Small blanket for naptime

**Parent Orientation**

Name of parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I have received information on the following:

* A tour of the facility
* Introduction to the staff
* A parent visit with the classroom teacher and opportunity to visit the classroom with the child
* Overview of the parent handbook and expectations of families
* Policy for arrival and late arrival
* An opportunity for an extended visit in the classroom by both parent and child for a period of time to allow both to be comfortable
* An explanation of the Texas Rising Star Program
* Encouragement to share elements of my CCS enrollment so that the provider may assist, if applicable
* An overview of family support resources and activities in the community
* Information on child development and developmental milestones
* The significance of consistent arrival time, including:
	+ before the educational portion of the school begins
	+ impact of disrupting other children’s learning
	+ the importance of consistent routines in preparing children for the transition to kindergarten
* Statement about limiting technology use on site to improve communication between staff, children and families.
* Statement reflecting the role and influence of families. I acknowledge receipt of the above information.

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Parent signature Date

Director signature Date