

Amazing Beginning

Childcare Center

Parent Handbook

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Dear Parents,

Welcome and thank you for choosing *Amazing Beginning Childcare Center* for your child's care and educational needs.

We hope your experiences with us will be memorable one's for you and your family.

Parents should contact the Director to make arrangements to discuss any questions or concerns about the policies and procedures of *Amazing Beginning*. A copy of the minimum standards and the most recent licensing inspection report for *Amazing Beginning* are available for review upon request.

Periodically, parents will be notified about opportunities to participate in school activities.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions, concerns, or need further assistance.

Sincerely,

Viviana Velasquez
Director of Amazing Beginning

Educational Philosophy

Amazing Beginning Childcare Center offers programs for children from 6 weeks to 12 years of age. Our philosophy is to provide a homelike and loving environment, where every child is stimulated socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually. We strive to promote the unique characteristics of each child and nurture them in their interests through their developmental stages. Our center provides children a safe atmosphere in which they are able to interact, work and play with other children in a friendly and loving manner. Our well trained and talented team of early childhood professionals encourages children to gain new skills, form good habits and explore their individuality with creative activities. At *Amazing Beginning Childcare Center*, we appreciate and acknowledge each individual child's diversity, challenges and successes with love and respect.

Amazing Beginning works closely with parents through conferences to provide a comprehensive and enriching program for their child's social, emotional, physical and intellectual needs. We are committed to excellence in early childhood education and look forward to working closely with you to better serve your families needs.

Curriculum and Goals

We believe childhood should be a time of great joy, love and exploration. Based on our teachers' knowledge and the particular needs of what is meaningful for each child, our curriculum emerges from the combination of teacher direction and children's interest. Our early childhood professionals plan and prepare a program that is appropriate for all areas of a child's development, including physical, emotional, social and cognitive aspects. In a developmentally appropriate program, hands-on experiences and age-appropriate play, activities and materials provide the foundation for learning. *Amazing Beginning* provides learning in an atmosphere where the child feels loved and accepted. Our activities support and foster the children's freedom of expression, growing independence, and positive self-esteem.

Our goals at *Amazing Beginning Childcare Center* are:

- To provide a healthy, loving and nurturing environment;
- To provide an opportunity for young children to live, work and play together;
- To encourage the development of a positive self-image for each child;
- To encourage creativity and an appreciation of fine arts;
- To make learning fun so that children can develop a love for learning;
- To provide an environment which encourages emotional, social, physical, and intellectual development;
- To provide learning experiences through discovery, exploration, and hands-on activities;
- To encourage children in learning how to interact successfully with other children and adults, and how to live together in a cooperative environment which promotes decision-making, peaceful resolution of conflicts, and respect for and care of others;
- To form a cooperative partnership with parents so that we can work together to meet the needs of each child.

Professional Staff

The Director provides leadership, curriculum expertise, teacher training and parental communication and information. Our teachers are committed to understanding, protecting, nurturing, and preserving each child's uniqueness. They know and understand child development and have expectations that are age appropriate. Their knowledge and understanding are used to develop and implement the most effective program for each child. They also provide children with excellent role models by demonstrating responsibility, creativity, patience, empathy and consistency.

Our Mission Statement

We welcome children without regard to race, creed, sex, national/ethnic origin or disability. Within the limitations of our resources, we are committed to assessing the needs of each child who applies for admission and accepting the child if it is beneficial to the child, the other children in the school and *Amazing Beginning Childcare Center*. The progress will be closely monitored so participation in the program can be adjusted if necessary for the benefit of the child and the school.

Referrals

It is the policy of *Amazing Beginning Childcare Center* to make referrals to an appropriate resource person or agency whenever it is considered needed. Referrals may be considered for children experiencing difficulties in the following areas: vision, hearing, speech, health, learning, emotional or behavioral. *Amazing Beginning* will be ready to serve children with special needs unless meeting their physical, emotional or educational needs place an undue burden on the staff and school resources. If evaluation by the Directors and teachers determines *Amazing Beginning* to be inappropriate to meet the child's needs, a recommendation will be made to have the child placed in a more appropriate environment.

Holidays & School Closings

Amazing Beginning Childcare Center is open Monday – Friday from 6:00am – 6:30pm. Please see below on our closure days.

Amazing Beginning will be closed the following holidays:

- New Years Eve (Early Dismissal)
- New Years Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day (July 4th)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Friday after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

If the holiday falls on a weekend, we will be closed the day before or the day after, depending upon when the holiday is being observed by other local businesses, schools,

etc. If for any reason this should change, you will be notified well in advance. A full week's tuition is charged for the week in which the holiday is observed.

Parent Code of Responsibility

Amazing Beginning has clear and appropriate expectations of both children and staff. We also have clear and appropriate expectations of our parents. Working in partnership with us, we encourage your involvement, seek your support and understanding, and appreciate your hopes and vision for your child's future. *Amazing Beginning* is your child's home away from home. We want your child to feel safe and secure here, and we want you to feel welcome at any time. Your interaction with our teachers, staff and directors translates into improved care of your child. Recognizing the integrity of the child/teacher/parent relationship, you should:

- Be familiar with school rules and expectations;
- Read everything that comes home;
- Communicate directly with the appropriate teacher, should you have concerns or questions regarding your child's progress;
- Communicate directly with the Director and Office Staff if you have any concerns and/or problems with the operations of the school;
- Make every reasonable effort to get your child to and from school on time on a regular basis;

Parent Involvement

Parents are a very important part of a child's successful experience at school and are always welcome to be visitors in the classroom. Parents are encouraged to contact the appropriate staff any time they have a concern regarding their child or the school.

Parents are asked to participate each year in a written evaluation of the school. This information is important so the school can plan and improve the program from year to year. Parents will also have the opportunity to attend orientation and open house to learn more about *Amazing Beginning Childcare Center*.

Parent Volunteers

Amazing Beginning is very happy to have parents help with all the activities, special events and field trips. We realize that at times a parent who wishes to volunteer may not be able to do so because of a younger sibling. We regret having to tell parents that we are not able to allow younger siblings to attend Parent conferences, classroom parties or come along on our scheduled field trips. We have found that when a younger child accompanies you, you are unable to give your full attention to the preschool children who are depending on you. Parent volunteers must be able to give their full attention to the children in their care.

Parent Conferences

A parent (s) may request a conference with a teacher and/or the Director whenever needed. The teacher and/or Director will also notify the parents to set up a conference if special circumstances or problems are affecting your child.

Evaluations and conferences are scheduled once a year. We take this time to discuss your child's progress and answer any questions or concerns parents may have regarding their child.

Guidance and Discipline Policy

Believing that ultimate discipline comes from within and does not depend on external reward or punishment to ensure doing whatever needs to be done, we see our task as teachers to involve helping children develop inner discipline. Thus, we must provide reasonable rules, logical consequences for breaking rules, and be willing to give more responsibility to the children, as they are able to assume it.

- Each child is a precious and important individual who deserves to feel good about him/her self;
- Children need opportunities to allow them to make appropriate choices;
- Children need limitations that are consistently enforced;
- Children need opportunities to learn responsibilities and fully understand the consequences of their actions;
- When a child exhibits inappropriate behavior, it has been proven that a positive approach to redirecting that child is most effective;

While we must consistently enforce reasonable behavioral limitations, our teachers and staff are trained to respond to inappropriate behavior with insight, sensitivity and skill. Only when children clearly understand their limitations can they learn to make behavior modifications and become responsible for their actions.

In effort to prevent behavioral problems at *Amazing Beginning*, we arrange our classrooms so that children work in small groups and have a wide variety of choices. The range of activities affords children the freedom to become self-directed and experience success. Teachers serve as role models and must skillfully direct behavior along appropriate and positive channels. Children are encouraged to verbalize their feelings so as to learn how to handle strong emotions. Removal from a situation, loss of privileges, and intentional ignoring of bad behavior from a child are methods used to help redirect bad behavior.

Suspension and Expulsion of a Student

A child, who has physically hurt someone or something, has used profanity or inappropriate language will be suspended from *Amazing Beginning Childcare Center*, for 1 day or more days depending on the severity of the situation. If after the suspension the student continues to misbehave, use profanity, refuse to listen to the teacher instruction, prohibits the teacher from focusing on the learning environment, the child will be dis-enrolled from *Amazing Beginning Childcare Center*.

Forms

The following forms are required for all children enrolled at *Amazing Beginning*:

- **Admission Information** – Please include your Child information, Parent Information and Contact phone numbers.
- **Written Authorization to Release Form**- Please make certain all the names of persons authorized to pick up your child are included. Please **list at least TWO persons** other than the mother and father in case of an emergency. **Your child will not be released to anyone not listed on your form.** If there is a change in the person to pick up your child, you must notify the school in **writing**. There will be NO EXCEPTIONS.
- **Authorization for Emergency Medical Attention** - In case of a medical emergency, it is required that this form be notarized and the name of the hospital be listed.
- **Health Requirements**- This includes all immunization and must be signed by your doctor. Your child must also have been examined by the doctor within the last six months before registering at *Amazing Beginning*. You are to notify the school in writing each time your child receives an additional immunization so we may add this information to his/her file.
- **Parent Acknowledgement Form** - This is a state requirement that indicates you have received information about childcare.
- **Parent Discipline and Guidance Form** – This is a form signed by the parent per minimum standards regulations.
- **Food Program Enrollment Forms** – This is a government funded program that helps us administer the proper amounts and nutrition to your children according to their age.
- **Infant – Sleep Exception** – This is a form signed by the parent and health care professional if the healthcare professional determines that it is medically necessary for an infant to sleep in an alternative position other than their back.
- **Infant – Safe Sleep** – This form provides safe sleep recommendations for parents and must be signed by parent, staff member and director.
- **Consent Form** – This is a form signed by the parent allowing the childcare facility to apply ointment, sunblock, insect repellent, etc. when/if needed.

Change of Address Information

Parents must keep the school and teachers informed of any change of address, telephone numbers, cell phone numbers, etc. of your families' home and work information. Please write and date the new information and give it to your child's teacher and the office to be included in their files. Current information is vital in case of an emergency.

Releasing Your Child from School

Amazing Beginning will release your children only to those persons designated by each child's parent on the *Written Authorization to Release Form*. **Your child will not be released to anyone**, including neighbors or friend of the family, **not listed on the form unless the school is notified in writing**. The note must include the date, child's name, the name of the person who will be picking up your child that particular date, and signed by you, the **parent** of the child. **There will be no exceptions to this rule**. Make arrangements now for emergencies and add people to your list before it becomes an emergency.

Fees

- **Registration Fee** – A \$85.00/per family registration fee will be issued at the time of enrollment and again for every year the child is enrolled. The registration fee is non-refundable and payable again if child is dropped from roll, then re-enrolled.
 - **Tuition** – Tuition is Non-Refundable, and is Payable in Advance Monday Morning by cash, check or money order. After Tuesday Evening Tuition is considered Delinquent and a \$15.00 Fee is assessed for each Day Delinquent.*
 - **Tuition for “Part-Time”**- is due on the day the child comes in. The full amount of the part-time is due in advance.*
 - **NCI Families**- Your parent fee is due on the 1st of the month for that whole month * No Exceptions
- *We reserve the right to terminate our service, at any time, when an account is more than one week past due.**

Returned Check Policy

On each occurrence, a \$35.00 fee will be assessed; after the second occurrence, parent must pay tuition and fees by cash or money order in addition to the \$35.00 returned check fee. Please remember that this is a business designed to help you and your child.

Overtime

Our School is open from 6:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. After 6:30 p.m. there is a charge of \$1.00 per minutes per child to be paid upon arrival.

If your child has not been picked up by 6:30 p.m. we will attempt to contact the parents first, then we will proceed to the numbers provided on the authorization form. After 7:00 p.m. if your child has not been picked up we are required to contact Texas Department of Family Protective services to assume responsibility of your child. 3 late pick-ups will result in termination of care.

Refunds

Our budget is based on full enrollment; therefore, fees and tuition cannot be refunded in case of illness or absence. Tuition is due in full whether or not your child attends, unless vacation is scheduled.

Withdrawal Policy

Parents must notify the school in writing two weeks prior to withdrawing their child/children from the school.

Vacation Policy

Children, who have been enrolled in our school for one full year, may take one week vacation per year at no cost. Vacation must be taken in a one week block. Written notice must be given two weeks prior to the vacation. After you have utilized your week, you must pay half of the tuition to hold your child's place.

If you remove your child from *Amazing Beginning* and then return, you will be required to pay the \$85 enrollment fee. Please do not ask us to hold a place for your child if tuition is not current.

Dress Code

Children should come to school in clothes that are comfortable and easy for the child to handle in the bathroom. Tennis shoes are recommended for running and climbing on the playground. Sandals and other types of open shoes may hinder your child's playtime and be dangerous when running and climbing. Although we try to protect clothing, accidents can happen with paint, so children should be dressed appropriately.

Potty Training

It is expected that children entering a three-year-old Preschool class will be potty trained. If parents feel that this will be a problem for their child, they should discuss the situation with the Director as soon as possible. Children in Preschool will wear regular underwear, not diapers or disposable training pants. The school will be happy to work with parents on potty training. If a child is not fully potty trained before entering Preschool, often the routine and structure of the school day will encourage cooperation.

Sick Children

The Policy for *Amazing Beginning* regarding sick children is:

1. Children need to be free of fever for 24 hours before returning to *Amazing Beginning*;
2. Children who have thick, discolored nasal mucus must stay home until mucus is clear;
3. Please notify the school if your child has a contagious illness, so we may notify other parents;
4. Your child will not be allowed to attend *Amazing Beginning* if he/she:
 - Has fever of 99 degrees or over;
 - Has diarrhea, or more than two loose stools during the day;
 - Has symptoms of a communicable disease;
 - Has sore throat or constant cough;
 - Is unable to participate in the program.
5. If your child is sent home with a fever, he/she may not return to school until he/she is free of fever for 24 hours.
6. If a child is not well enough to remain at school, a parent or someone listed on the release form will be contacted. We will expect the sick child to be picked up from *Amazing Beginning* within the hour after being called. Please make arrangements now in case of an emergency.

Administering Medication

All medication administered by *Amazing Beginning* must be doctor prescribed.

Prescription medication is to contain the pharmacy label with the child's name, the physician's name, the name of the medication and directions for use, time and dosage.

Medication must stay in the office/ kitchen if needed to be refrigerated. Parents will be required to fill out a Medication Log and must be completed to administer dosage.

Most medicines should only have to be given once during the time the child is in the school. If the prescription calls for three times a day, then a dose should be given before coming to the school and one after leaving the school. Any medicines to be given twice a day should be given at home.

All medications will be administered at 10:00 a.m. and again at 2:00 p.m. to avoid confusion and miss handling.

Vision and Hearing

Children four and five years old are required by the state licensing department to have their vision and hearing screened. The screenings may be done by your family doctor; a copy of the results must be sent to school.

Nutrition

Children need a variety of breads, cereals, rice and pasta each day, along with fruits and vegetables, dairy foods and meat products. Fats and sweets should make up a very small portion of the child's diet. Please do not send candy, carbonated soft drinks or too many sweets.

Food should never be used for a reward, withheld for punishment, or used to comfort a fussy or hurt child. These actions can influence your child's attitude toward food. Snack time can be a learning experience. It is an opportunity to encourage the children to try new food, take turns, share responsibilities, count, learn colors and gain skills.

The school will provide cold water to drink because it contains no sugar, it's not sticky, does not stain clothing and is good for the children.

Amazing Beginning Childcare Center is proud to serve the following meals:

Breakfast 7:00am – 7:45am, Lunch 11:00am – 11:45am, PM Snack 3:00pm – 3:30pm, and Dinner 5:00pm – 5:30pm.

If your child is not present during the meal times please note that they will not receive a meal per Texas Department of Health Food regulations; a child can only be served during the scheduled meal times. Please also note that per health regulations *Amazing Beginning Childcare Center* is not allowed to feed children with any meals brought outside after meal hours.

School Parties/Birthdays

On special occasions, you may check with your child's teacher to plan party foods, special treats and fruit juices. Your child's birthday will be recognized in his/her class, and you are welcome to make arrangements with your child's teacher to send special birthday snacks. We ask that the snacks brought to school are store-bought, so we may be in compliance with the Health Department. We ask that you not send invitations to school for birthday parties unless all children in the class are included. This is only to make certain that all the children are included and treated equally.

Field Trips

Amazing Beginning Childcare Center schedules field trips, June and July. Field trips are for ages 5 years and older. If there are "in-house" fieldtrips scheduled, students of all ages are welcome to attend the field trip. Field trip permission slips must be signed by a parent or guardian in order for the student to be able to attend the field trip. If the parents or guardian fails to sign the permission slip, the student will NOT be able to attend the field trip for that day.

Transportation

Amazing Beginning Childcare Center transports school age children before and after school. Please talk to the Director regarding the schools to which the childcare provides transportation.

Safe Sleep for Infants

Infants are placed in their individual beds on their backs when they are sleeping. If a healthcare professional determines that it is medically necessary for an infant to sleep in an alternative position a, “Infant-Sleep Exception Health-Care Professional Recommendation” document will be attached to your admission packet for your healthcare professional to sign.

Breast Feeding

Mothers are welcomed to breast feed in the Amazing Beginning facility. Any unoccupied classrooms are available for breast feeding privacy. A rocking chair is available upon request. Otherwise mothers are allowed to choose where they feel more comfortable breast feeding in our facility.

Enrollment Requirements

- **Food Program Form**
- **Admission Form;**
- **Written Authorization to Release / Emergency Information Form;**
- **Physician Statement Form / Health Requirements;**
- **Authorization for Emergency Medical Attention Form;**
- **Parent Discipline and Guidance Form**
- **Parent Acknowledgement;**
- **Infant Sleep Safe / Infant Exception form;**
- **Consent form**
- **\$85 Registration fee; and**
- **First week’s tuition.**

Daily Schedule

Amazing Beginning will be open Monday through Friday: 6:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Our daily schedule will be a balance between working independently and working with group-quiet activities as well as indoor and outdoor play.

It will include development of moral values and social skills, as well as math, language, art, music/rhythm, songs and physical development.

Physical Activity

Children of all ages engage in outdoor play 2 times a day, if the weather permits.

30 minutes in the morning and 30 minutes in the afternoon. If the outdoor recess area cannot be used, alternative physical activities will be held inside the childcare facility.

Inside the facility children will be able to do aerobics, yoga, stretching, relay races, etc. while being supervised.

Applying Cream/Repellent

Upon enrollment a consent form for the application of ointment, sunblock, insect repellent, etc. will be signed by the parent or guardian of child.

Immunization Requirements

At this time *Amazing Beginning Childcare Center* does not require proof of employee vaccination record.

Abuse and Neglect

Our staff works closely with students to ensure the safety and well-being of each child. Our staff also undergoes training in abuse and neglect. If a staff member or individual working at *Amazing Beginning Childcare Center* has reason to believe that a student under our care shows signs of abuse and neglect, we have the obligation/duty to report to a DFPS representative, call the Texas Abuse Hotline and 9-1-1.

A parent may also call the Texas Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-5400 to report abuse or neglect. The hotline is answered by the DFPS Intake Specialists (who are all degreed professionals) 24-hours a day, 365-days a year.

Parent comments, concerns, complaints and praises.

The Director, teachers and staff are here to provide quality care, developmental and positive learning experiences for each child at *Amazing Beginning*. It is very important to maintain open communications so we may be aware of your concerns, NO MATTER HOW SMALL. We must hear your concerns and questions in order to continually improve upon our educational processes. The Director, teachers and staff encourage you to call and/or make an appointment to discuss matters in need of attention. Your praises are welcomed too.

Accessing Minimum Standards and Operational Policies

Parents have access to the state minimum standards by going to the link:

www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care.com

You may access *Amazing Beginning Childcare Center* inspection report online at Dfps.state.tx.us or it can be found in the reception area along with other reports.

Emergency Plan/Procedures

Fire Procedure Plan

Call 911

Pull alarm (notify Staff)

Evacuate the Building (meet at the Amazing Beginning Playground) with roll sheets to count for all children and Emergency contact information. Also bring your emergency kit.

If it is a small fire use the Fire extinguisher.

Re-enter the building only after the fire department says it is ok to re-enter

Phone parents I needed

Tornado Procedure Plan

Notify Staff

Go to an interior hallway or other enclosed area away from windows, tall furniture, anything that may fly and hit children and staff.

Have the children line up against the wall with their heads between their knees. Account for all children, all teachers should have their roll sheets and emergency contact numbers.

Hurricane Procedure Plan

Notify Staff

Go to an interior hallway or other enclosed area away from windows, furniture anything that may fly and hit them.

Have the children line up against the wall with their head between their knees. Account for all children, all teachers should have their roll sheets and emergency contact numbers.

Amazing Beginning Emergency Contacts

Emergency Number 9-1-1

Sheriff's Department: 281-463-2648

Cy-Fairs Fire Dept: 281-656-3845

Texas Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222

North Cypress Medical Center: (832) 912-3500

21214 Northwest Freeway Cypress, TX 77429

Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400

Licensing Office: 713-940-3009

Licensing website: www.dfps.state.tx.us

If organized criminal activities happen within 1000ft of the childcare center, parents will be informed verbally. We are a gang and smoke free zone, where any criminal offences are subject to harsher penalties under the Texas Penal code.

