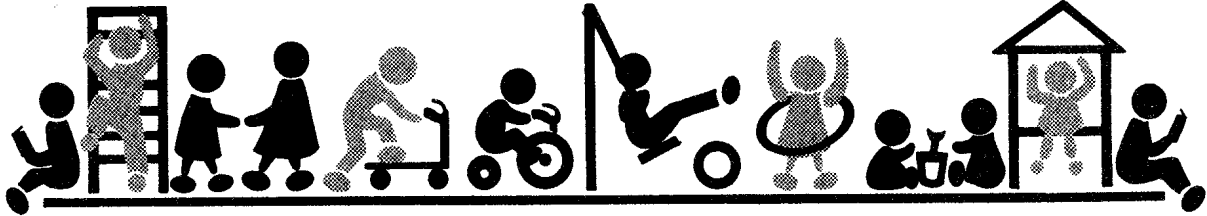


FAMILY HANDBOOK



UNIVERSITY PRESBYTERIAN CHILDREN'S CENTER (UPCC)

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FAMILY HANDBOOK

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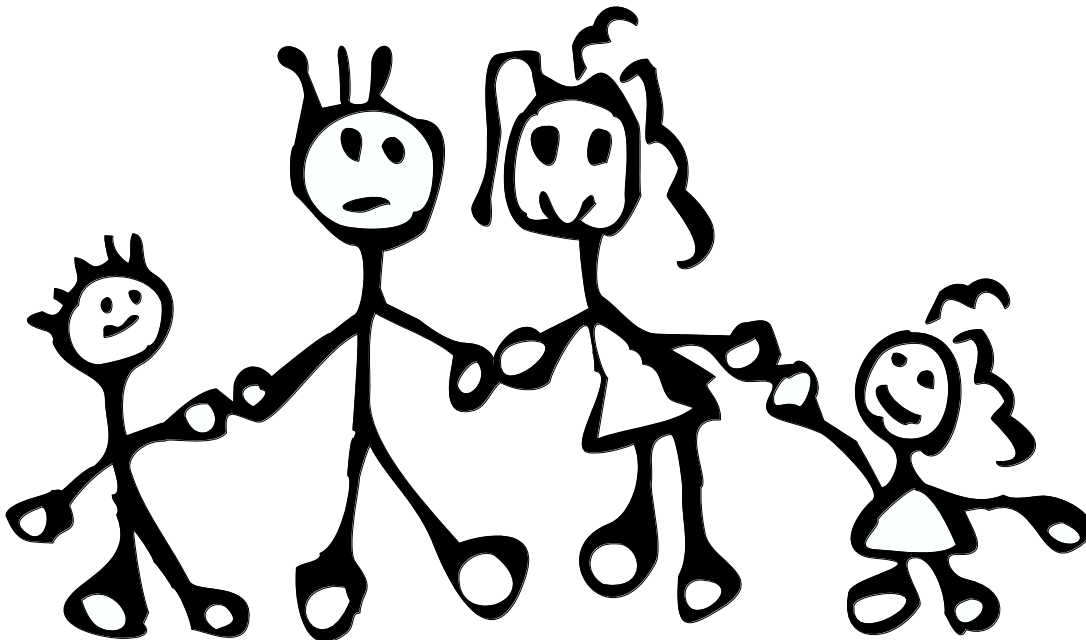
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I.

PROGRAM ORIENTATION

Purpose

Education at University Presbyterian Children's Center (UPCC) develops young children's minds, bodies, emotions, and assists in the development of individuals who are self-directed, lifelong learners by:

- **GENERATING** a relaxed atmosphere of openness, spontaneity, creativity, joy, love and respect for children and families of all backgrounds
- **PROVIDING** an array of stimulating activities to promote and enhance aesthetic and cultural awareness, language development, academic readiness, motor development, social-emotional skills and an appreciation of the natural world.
- **ENCOURAGING** independence, feelings of self-confidence, respect for self and others along with a sense of belonging and sharing in a group.
- **OFFERING** loving support to each child and family through a positive, reciprocal relationship based on trust.

Philosophy

We believe that early childhood experiences provide the foundation for one's lifetime. The UPCC program provides individualized experiences based on authentic assessment to promote the optimal social, emotional, physical, cognitive, language and spiritual development of each child.

We believe that young children learn through direct and concrete experiences as well as through teachable moments, with an emphasis on learning about, with and in the natural world. Ongoing opportunities for discovery, exploration and experimentation are provided to encourage children to think, reason, question and experiment through intentional activities planned by the teachers and those that emerge from the interests and needs of the children and families.

We believe that a child's self-perceptions are influenced by the attitudes of significant others in his/her life. Adults involved in the child's life are viewed as partners and are encouraged to actively participate in the educational experiences of the child. The UPCC program strives for a positive and accepting social-emotional environment for children, families and staff to work together and feel supported and nurtured.

We believe that each child, family and staff member is unique. Individual needs and differences are valued and celebrated in order to promote tolerance and respect for the diversity found within the school and in the larger society.

Goals

The Children's Center Program provides a variety of activities and materials based on proven developmentally appropriate practices that emphasize concrete experiential learning in order to achieve the following goals:

- Foster positive self-concept.
- Develop social-emotional skills.
- Encourage children to think, reason, question, and experiment.
- Encourage language and cognitive development.
- Encourage and demonstrate sound health, safety, and nutritional practices.
- Enhance physical development and skills.
- Encourage creative expression and appreciation for the arts.
- Promote a respect for the cultural diversity of staff, children and their families.
- Be responsive to individual family home values, beliefs, experiences and languages as well as to the individual learning needs of all children.
- Encourage children in their discoveries in nature to assist them to form a close connection to and respect for the natural world.
- Support early spiritual formation based on trusting relationships, acceptance of and a concern for others and our world.

Church Affiliation

The University Presbyterian Children's Center is a primary outreach of University Presbyterian Church to provide a quality early childhood program for children and families in the community. The atmosphere of the school is intended to communicate God's love---spiritual growth is enhanced through themes emphasizing caring for the natural world and acceptance of others, by prayers at mealtimes, the observation of some of the faith traditions reflected in the families of the classroom, and bi-monthly Spiritual Enrichment with the Pastor or Director of Children's Spirituality at University Presbyterian Church. Spiritual Enrichment incorporates spiritual practices of moments of silence, deep breathing, singing, sharing of celebrations and joys and a faith related story emphasizing God's love and acceptance of all, and a brief prayer of thanksgiving. The goal of the spiritual enrichment program is to be developmentally appropriate for young children and assist the UPCC staff in providing for the whole child -- body, mind and spirit.

School Board/Session

The ultimate responsibility of University Presbyterian Children's Center lies with the Session of University Presbyterian Church, the ruling body of the church. The UPCC Board oversees the affairs of school and reports to the Session through the Christian Education Committee of the church. The Board consists of the church pastor, a Session representative, church members and current and/or former UPCC center parents. Meetings are held typically bimonthly and the scheduled meeting times can be obtained from the school office.

Licensing/Accreditation

UPCC adheres to the Minimum Standards for Day Care Centers and is licensed by Child Care Licensing of the Texas Health and Human Services. A copy of the Minimum Standards is available for review in the Children's Center office or at the childcare licensing website of the Texas Health and Human Services www.hhs.texas.gov or <https://hhs.texas.gov/services/safety/child-care> or by contacting the Child Care Information Line at

1-888-963-7111. Families may also request to review the Children’s Center’s most recent licensing inspection reports located in the office.

UPCC has been **accredited by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs** of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) consistently since 1987. Accreditation by NAEYC represents the consensus of the early childhood profession regarding the definition of a high-quality group program for young children. Detailed information about NAEYC accreditation can be found at www.naeyc.org/accreditation/early-learning/process. A copy of the *NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria* can be obtained from the office and parents may also review the program and classroom portfolios required by accreditation. Additionally, the UPCC Staff and Board of Directors adhere to the **NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct** (www.naeyc.org/resources/position-statements/ethical-conduct).

UPCC received national recognition with the Sarah Hill Brown Award from the Presbyterian School of Christian Education for **Excellence in Early Childhood Education**.

In 2016, the Explorers’ Backyard (preschool side) was recognized as a Nature Explore Outdoor Certified Classroom while the Little Explorers’ Yard (infant/toddler side) received outdoor classroom certification in 2020. The outdoor classroom certification process with **Nature Explore** (www.natureexplore.org) recognizes centers committed to providing outdoor spaces that promote nature-based play and use the natural world as integral for all learning areas.

In 2024, UPCC received recognition as a Texas Rising Star Center with the **Texas Workforce Commission through their Texas Rising Star (TRS)** program. Texas Rising Star program is a quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) for childcare programs participating in The Texas Workforce Commission’s Childcare Services Program.

Note: At times childcare licensing, the health department and/or the state or local government may mandate emergency requirements that may be more restrictive due to the health and safety concerns within the city of San Antonio or state of Texas. In turn, these mandated changes may result in temporary changes in the program and/or classroom routines to meet the emergency criteria.

Grouping

UPCC enrolls children that can be as young as 2 months through 5 years of age at the beginning of each school year in early August or early June for the summer programs. Children are grouped according to chronological age and developmental level. The teacher-child ratios vary according to age. All classrooms consist of at least two qualified teachers, with at least one serving as the lead teacher. The staff-child ratio will not exceed the following (ages based on the beginning of the school year, with possible updates mid-year as the ages increase) during the morning program and NAEYC accreditation ratios will be maintained for inside, outside, nap time and late afternoon:

1. **Infants and Young Toddlers** (@2 months - @12 months at beginning of the school year in August or June/July Summer Sessions)
1 teacher to 3-4 children; group size not to exceed 8-9 depending on youngest age
2. **Toddlers** (@12 months - @23 months at the beginning of the school year)
1 teacher to 4-5 children; group size not to exceed 12
3. **Two Year Olds** (@24 months - @36 months)

- 1 teacher to 5-6 children; group size not to exceed 12
- 4. Two and a half Year Olds to Young Four Year Olds
1 teacher to 7 children; group size not to exceed 14 depending on youngest age
- 5. Older Threes - Five Year Olds
1 teacher to 9 – 10 children; group size not to exceed 18-20

For continuity of care, the children in all age groups (infants, toddlers and preschoolers) stay with their designated teachers and group for the entire school-year from August to late May. The children attending the summer program often transition to their next age group depending on staffing and enrollment patterns. The goal for all classes is continuity of relationships between teaching staff and children and among groups of children and their families with children staying together as a group with the same teachers for at least 9 months or more. When possible for children under 3, one of the classroom teachers may “move” with the children for the summer program and/or for the school year to help with their transition to the new room and teacher.

Program Description

UPCC is staffed by administrators and teachers specially trained in early childhood education, earning a minimum of 30 hours of continuing education and training in early childhood education, health and safety, special needs, working with families of diverse backgrounds as well as communication and leadership. The staff members not only bring their professional background and experience to the program but also a genuine concern for children and families. The programs emphasize small group and one-one interaction with teachers during play and explorations and during caregiving routines, such as mealtimes.

The daily program is orderly and yet also flexible and responsive to the individual needs of the children and group. It provides for a variety of experiences, levels of difficulty, and individual pacing. There is a balance of: indoor/outdoor, quiet/active, individual/group, large muscle/fine motor and child initiated/staff-initiated activities. The indoor and outdoor classroom spaces are set up into learning centers for preschool age and activity zones for infants and toddlers involving the following “hands-on, hearts-on and minds-on” experiences with an emphasis on activities to help the children and families form a deeper connection to the natural world:

Art: Media such as markers and crayons for drawing, finger painting, easel painting, and items for collages, including natural elements for ephemeral process experiences, that allow the child to experience satisfaction with manipulation, experimentation, and exploration of the materials as well as providing outlets for the expression of ideas and emotions.

Blocks: Building with various types and sizes of blocks, accessories, including ramps and balls, and nature items, such as tree “cookies” and stumps provide opportunities for dramatic play, social interaction and cooperative activities with peers, problem solving as well as emphasizing explorations in perceptual, spatial and STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) learning concepts.

Concept Development: Young children are actively engaged in the process of forming an understanding of many concepts about their world. Through themes developed in the learning centers and zones, the teachers provide experiences to expand each child's knowledge, cognitive skills, language, curiosity, and problem-solving skills. Additionally experiences in the learning centers helps the children develop an awareness and

understanding of diversity of values, beliefs and experiences within the school community, larger community of San Antonio and society.

Dramatic Play: Role playing and pretending enables the child to reenact the experiences in the world in order to understand and explore their meaning. With the help of props, a child may explore a number of roles - from being a parent caring for a small baby, a doctor giving shots, an entomologist, a chef to even exploring diverse family traditions and activities.

Language Arts/Emergent Literacy: Experiences with books, flannel boards, discussions, puppets, storytelling, and other activities aid in language development, help the children learn about the world, and promote an early appreciation of literature. The teachers converse with the children during their play, routines and at mealtimes to promote language acquisition as well as experience with other languages spoken in the homes of the children in the classroom. Daily exposure to Spanish is provided to the children through the daily interactions in the classroom during play, mealtimes and care giving routines as well as teachers reading books and singing songs in Spanish. The early literacy skills of all ages are promoted throughout the day by reading stories in small and larger group, extensive classroom library areas, print rich environments, opportunities to use markers, crayons and other writing materials as well as writing centers for preschoolers to explore pre-writing concepts and skills.

Large and Small Motor Activities: Climbing, running, pushing and pulling are a few of the large muscle activities encouraged by the availability of wheel toys, wheelbarrows, large items in the loose parts to lift, climbing areas and other gross motor activities. Cutting and pasting, art activities, woodworking, puzzles, and other manipulative materials, including nature items, provide opportunities for the practice and development of small motor skills.

Nature Inspired Curriculum and Materials: A deeper connection to nature and environment awareness is promoted in all age groups through the introduction of natural elements in indoor learning centers, exceptional natural outdoor classrooms, nature walks and nature inspired curriculum themes to learn in nature and about a variety of nature concepts.

Music: Singing, listening, experimenting with various instruments, and the exploration of various types of music in the classrooms and during weekly Music and Movement Times with a resource teacher to introduce children to musical concepts, moving to the beat, and an appreciation of song and dance.

Self-Help Skills: Activities tailored to the developmental abilities of each group and individual child, such as helping with cleaning up, washing hands, serving water are introduced into the daily activities and routines to encourage independence and promote self-esteem with an "I can" attitude.

Sensory Play: Sand, water, playdough, fabrics and other sensory media, including a wide variety of natural elements, enable the children to explore textures, qualities of objects, changes, and concepts such as empty/full, more/less as well as providing an outlet for sensory exploration and relaxation.

Science & Math: Experiences offering firsthand opportunities for scientific discovery and understanding of number and quantity include cooking, sensory play, using manipulatives and games, planting seeds, tending the garden, counting objects, number songs and stories as well as nature activities and STEM activities. Some classrooms may

have a small pet (limited to gerbils, hamsters, fish, hermit crabs, etc.) that the children will be able to observe and help with its feeding and care and both outdoor spaces have gardens.

As the child freely engages with the intentionally planned activities within the learning centers both indoors and outdoors as well as unplanned naturally occurring learning activities, numerous opportunities occur for cognitive, language, physical (large and small motor), spiritual, and socio-emotional development at the child's own level and interest along with social interaction with peers and staff.

Guidance and Discipline Policy for Working with Challenging Behaviors

During the early childhood years, children are beginning to learn how to handle their own emotions and frustrations as they adapt to the behavioral expectations of families, school and society. As educators working with young children, UPCC staff know that challenging behaviors will happen at times in our setting. At UPCC, we define challenging behaviors as actions that:

- interferes with children's learning and development as well as interactions and play with others.
- can be harmful to the individual child, other children, or adults.
- could potentially place a child at a higher risk for later problems socially and in school.

Challenging behaviors can be direct (such as hitting, pushing, or biting) or indirect (such as ignoring rules or requests, teasing, excluding others, destroying items, or temper tantrums). The UPCC staff understand that at times children will display their emotions in inappropriate ways and/or try to achieve their goals through immature or challenging ways. A significant part of learning, especially in a setting with other children and adults, happens through problem solving social conflict and difficult behaviors.

The guidance and discipline approaches vary according to the circumstances and age group but do have the following principles in common:

- Adults model positive behavior by labeling feelings and responding to strong emotions in clear and non-aggressive ways, staff let children know that we are not afraid of intense emotions and will not withdraw from them.
- Teachers design physical settings to minimize conflict by providing duplicate toys and materials, defining classroom and outdoor play areas clearly to allow for both active and quiet play as well as appropriate level of noise and stimulation.
- Educators maintain age-appropriate expectations for each group of children and individual child by minimizing wait and transition times, limiting the length of large group and teacher-director activities according to the developmental levels. The focus for each group is to maintain significant time frames of uninterrupted time for children to make their own choices from the activities and materials provided in the learning centers indoors and outdoors.
- Teachers establish clear expectations and simple rules for the classroom, such as "Be Safe and Be Kind." Older preschool children will participate in the process of developing the wording for rules at the start of the school year. As issues develop, the adults and children in the group will be able to reference the classroom guidelines as reminders of what is expected in the setting.
- With the lower teacher-child ratios and group sizes at UPCC, the teachers will be able to closely supervise and observe the children's activities and interactions to better monitor and problem solve the issue behind social conflict or challenging behavior.
- Educators help children verbalize their feelings and the issue or concerns through a problem-solving approach of guiding the children through describing the problem, generating possible solutions and then considering the logical

- consequences of their choices. In an effort to promote cooperation and learn more peaceful interactions, the teachers and adults help the children explore options rather than directly solving the problem for the children.
- When usual guidance and attempts at problem solving have not been effective, children exhibiting extreme behaviors that endanger themselves or others will be supervised in the setting or classroom away from other children. This is not a “time out” approach but a “time away” from the conflict or issue so that the child can find a sense of calm and then process the issue verbally with the teacher before returning to the group activity. An adult will stay near any child emotionally out of control and needing time to settle down.
 - UPCC staff use positive techniques of guidance that include choices, problem solving, anticipation of and elimination of potential problems, encouragement of acceptable alternatives through redirection of behavior. The goals of the guidance techniques utilized by the staff are to encourage self-esteem, self-control and self-direction. The staff abstain from humiliation, shaming, coercion, physical punishment, corporal punishment, or frightening discipline techniques including all forms prohibited by the Texas Department of Health and Human Services Childcare Licensing and NAEYC Accreditation Criteria.
 - When challenging behaviors persist in such a manner that they continue to endanger self, others, or property and/or significantly disrupts the classroom program, the educators and director will work with meet with the family to:
 - assess the underlying function of the behavior or possible unmet need;
 - help find suitable solutions based on an individualized plan developed with the family, staff and possibly outside professionals to address the challenging behavior that meets the needs of the child and the other children in the group;
 - the individualized plan will include positive behavior support strategies such as modifying the classroom setting or schedule as well as the presence of additional support staff as a temporary measure;
 - if needed, a referral for outside support and/or additional services;
 - and if the individualized plan and additional supports do not reduce or resolve the challenging behaviors, the director and educators of the child will meet with the family to discuss possible exclusion from the program as a last resort if it is agreed that it is in the best interest of their child and/or the children in the group;
 - if exclusion from the program is deemed as best for the child and necessary, the center staff will offer the family assistance in accessing services and an alternative placement for their child.

A copy of the UPCC Child Guidance and Discipline Policy based on licensing and NAEYC criteria requirements that staff must sign and follow can be obtained from the UPCC office. The goals of the UPCC Guidance and Discipline Policy is to support educators in their work with children as challenging behaviors arise and to limit or eliminate the use of suspension, expulsion and other exclusionary measures. The UPCC Guidance and Discipline Policy complies with federal and state civil rights laws.

Admission Policies

UPCC does not discriminate on the basis of religion, race, ethnicity, culture, gender or ability.

Preference for admission will be given as follows:

1. Church families.
2. Children presently enrolled and/or children of staff.
3. Siblings of children presently enrolled.
4. Siblings or children of children who graduated from UPCC.
5. All others on the waiting list based on a combination of availability of days, schedule desired, appropriateness of classroom for the child's age and/or development and date of placement on waiting list by visiting the program.

A waiting list is maintained to fill any openings that become available.

Registration, Enrollment and Orientation Process

Registration: Registration for the following school year and summer sessions takes place in the winter. After the "in-house" registration period for families already enrolled in the program (typically early January), "open" registration begins for families on the mailing list (usually late January). Registration fees are due upon registration and are non-refundable. **The registration process is complex involving a combination of factors taken into consideration when placing children in individual classrooms** including but not limited to: chronological age, appropriateness of a class based on developmental and readiness factors, number of days enrolled and/or schedule desired and days available. The program understands individual preferences for specific classrooms/group, but the center is not always able to honor such requests or can not guarantee the placement of teachers or teaching teams prior to the start of the school year or summer program. While the bulk of the registration process is completed through the forms provided by the center and returned by the family, the director will contact individual parents/guardians to discuss any special circumstances, individual scheduling concerns, developmental placements or specific situations before the registration process is completed. Families should also notify the director in writing of any special circumstances, scheduling concerns or special needs.

Enrollment: Upon enrollment, each family will receive the University Presbyterian Children's Center Family Handbook. Parents/guardians must sign a form stating that they have received, read, understand, and agree to the policies set forth. This form will be kept on file in the UPCC office and updated as needed.

By the first day of attendance, each student must have on file the following completed and signed forms:

- *enrollment form
- *emergency authorization
- *emergency card
- *medical form with current immunizations and statement of recent examination by the child's physician
- *confidentiality statement
- *medical/allergy alert, if applicable
- *severe allergy action plan signed by parent and physician, if applicable
- *any court orders pertaining to the life of the child, such as visitation rights, if applicable

The emergency card, emergency authorization, and medical form must be updated annually. Parents/guardians should provide the UPCC office in writing any changes to the emergency card, including contact information, emergency contacts,

University Presbyterian Children's Center

Family Handbook
Revised 3/2024

names of those authorized to pick up the child, and medical/allergy updates as well as any updates of any immunizations that occur during the year.

Orientation: Families entering the program for the first time are encouraged to attend a pre-enrollment meeting with the director to discuss the philosophy, policies and other highlights of the program. An Open House and Family Meeting to share information about the UPCC will be scheduled within the first month of the school year for new and returning parents and guardians.

UPCC will schedule an orientation time for new and returning children and families to visit the classroom and meet the teachers prior to the start of the school year in August. For summer enrollees, a time will be scheduled to bring their child to visit the teachers and classroom in late May. Children already enrolled in the program will visit their new classrooms in late May with their teachers if they will be moving to the next age level during the summer sessions.

Funding

Tuition, fees, fundraising, and contributions fund the UPCC. The program is sponsored by the University Presbyterian Church, serving as a significant mission of the church for families with young children in the San Antonio community since 1971.

In 2023, UPCC became a Childcare Services regulated provider and can receive reimbursement funds through the Texas Workforce Commission for qualifying families.

II.

PROGRAM POLICIES

Absences

Parents and guardians should notify the office by 9:00 AM if their child will not be attending school to help us account for each child. Additionally, please let the office know if your child is absent due to an illness so staff can be notified of the situation. There are no make-ups for absences.

Accidents

Accidents/First Aid: UPCC staff maintain current certifications in Pediatric First Aid and Infant, Child and Adult Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). The staff will follow basic first-aid procedures for injuries. Scrapes, cuts and other wounds will be cleaned using only soap and water; the staff do not use antibiotic ointments as these require parental permission. Parents will be notified of any accidents requiring first aid at school through a written accident/incident report, which they will be asked to sign to verify that they have received the information about the accident.

Should further emergency action be needed beyond basic first aid, staff will provide immediate care and call the parent/guardian, the child's physician and/or EMS as needed. The center is not able to transport an injured child and will utilize EMS if transportation is necessary.

Address, Telephone, Email and/or Other Changes

Any changes in address, telephone number, email or other related changes must be reported promptly in writing to the UPCC Office. Telephone numbers of emergency contacts and individuals authorized to pick up the child must also be kept current.

Afternoon Program – Rest Time /Late Afternoon Program

All children staying for the Afternoon Program will be required to rest for a period of time as required by Texas HHS Child Care Licensing Minimum Standards. The children have participated in a busy morning filled with numerous activities and all ages need time to relax their bodies. Early risers and non-nappers will be provided quiet activities, such as books, puzzles, drawing, etc. after a brief rest time. The children will play outdoors or inside following nap/rest time. All children (except those sleeping in cribs in Room 1) must furnish their own cloth nap mats, which can be purchased from the UPCC office. For children over 12 months, blankets or "snugglies" may also be sent for the child's comfort and warmth and will be stored with the child's mat. Mats and blankets/"snugglies" will be sent home at the end of the week for laundering.

The following sleeping requirements for infants have been recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics and required both by Texas HHS Minimum Standards and NAEYC accreditation.

All children under 12 months of age will be placed on their back for sleeping position, without the use of sleep positioners, unless ordered by the child's physician. Infants will be allowed to sleep on their side or tummy only if the child has turned to that position on their own. No other sleeping items allowed in the crib or sleep equipment such as a mat, including blankets of any type, pillows, sheepskins, stuffed toys or any other soft or sleeping products per minimum standards for children under 12 months of age. Additionally, infants are not permitted to be swaddled. Any exceptions to this guideline pertaining to "Back to Sleep" position for sleeping must come in writing from the child's physician on a sleep exception form obtained from the office.

Additionally, if infants arrive to the program asleep, or fall asleep, in equipment not specifically designed for infant sleep, such as a car seat or infant carrier, the infant is removed to and will be placed in the appropriate sleep equipment.

Children staying for the Extended Care Program, which oftentimes is a mixed-age group program, will have the opportunity to choose among various indoor and outdoor activities during this time. The program provides for needs of relaxation as well as participation in planned activities.

Children not regularly scheduled for the Afternoon or Extended Care Programs may "drop-in" on a space available basis. "Drop-ins" should be scheduled by 12:30 by phone for the Extended Care Program to ensure appropriate staffing and to inform the child of the change in schedule. Please refer to the yearly fee schedule for the rates.

Arrival and Departure Procedures/Sign In-Sign Out:

The program begins at 8:45 a.m. with departure times at 12:30, 3:15, or 5:30 based on the individual schedule for each child/family. Families needing to adjust their regular schedule for an earlier arrival or later departure time must make arrangements with the office for an additional charge. Upon arrival, children should be taken to the designated classroom or playground where the teacher or a staff member will be on duty. At the scheduled departure time, children will be picked up by the designated parent/guardian/caregiver from the classroom or playground.

Parents/guardians/caregivers must make a verbal or visual contact with the child's teacher at arrival and departure to ensure the teacher or staff member is aware of the presence of the child. The teacher or staff will record the arrival/departure time with the adult's name on the classroom sign in/sign out sheets. Children arriving for early arrival and/or extended care program will also be signed in and out on the appropriate sign in/out sheets. Since the staff must continue to assume supervision of the child until the child physically leaves the playground or classroom, the staff will indicate the departure as the time the child and adult depart and not the time the adults arrived to pick up the child or the scheduled departure time.

For the safety of all during arrival and departure, UPCC requests that adults close all gates behind them and maintain stringent supervision of their child in and around the parking lots, grassy area around the church premises, and church buildings. Children should not be allowed in any classrooms or church buildings or to wander the premises without an adult supervising them closely. (Please note that classroom doors and gates will be locked after the departure of the last child and the last staff member after the 5:30 departure.)

Despite the aura of safety felt around the church and school campus and even though the parking lot can be seen from many of the classrooms, **adults must not leave any infant or child under the age of 10 in the car at any time of the year, even for a few minutes to drop off a sibling, since it is considered leaving a child in a potentially dangerous situation, especially due to extreme weather in South Texas and the incline of the parking lot.** UPCC will make every attempt to work with the special needs (for example, physical limitations) of families as best as possible if assistance is needed during arrival and departure as long as request has been made to the school office.

Every attempt is made for every family to have the opportunity to talk face to face with at least one of their child's teachers when arriving to the classroom and/or when leaving at the end of the day. Yet, arrival and departure times can be hectic, confusing times for parents, children and teachers. The center asks that parents refrain from lengthy conversations with teachers and understand when teachers need to end a conversation in order to tend to and supervise the children. Extended discussions between parent and teachers should be reserved for telephone contact, family conferences, or at a scheduled time when the teacher is not responsible for the supervision of children.

The policy for release of children will be strictly followed as stated below:

1. A child will be released only to a parent/guardian or another adult designated by the family in writing authorized to pick up the child on the emergency card, emergency authorization, by letter, email and/or fax.
2. If a person authorized to pick up a child is unknown to the staff, the staff member or teacher will require the individual report to the office to have a copy made of their driver's license or picture identification before allowing the child to leave with the individual. Children will not be released without picture identification.
3. If a parent calls to authorize the emergency release of a child when a written note/letter/email/fax is not possible, the center will verify that the caller is actually the parent by calling one or both parents back at work or home only with the phone number indicated on the emergency card.
4. UPCC is unable to release children to older siblings or caregivers under the age of sixteen.

5. UPCC reserves the right to not release any child to any previously approved adult that appears to be under the influence of alcohol or other substances that impairs their ability to safely transport their child home. The staff member in charge will contact the other parent or another adult indicated on the emergency card to pick up the child if this circumstance arises.

Assessment and Screening of Children's Development

The teachers and/or director of the Children's Center will routinely assess the growth and physical, social, emotional, cognitive and language development of each child while attending the center using a variety of formal and informal measures. Assessment will occur within the natural setting of the classrooms and playgrounds during the children's ongoing interactions with others, playful explorations, the use of the materials and engagement in planned activities. In addition to being shared with the parent/guardian during Family Conferences in the fall and spring, the information from the assessments for each child will be integrated with the curriculum goals and planning to support individual learning styles and needs. The educators and director at UPCC that have earned degrees in early childhood education have all completed college coursework in developmentally appropriate observation and assessment. If a lead teacher has not completed a college course in observation and assessment, the educator is required to complete at least 6 hours in professional development in this topic before conducting formal assessments of the children on their own.

Assessments:

Within the first three months of placement in a class for the school year, the overall development (language, cognitive, gross motor, fine motor, and social-emotional) of each child will be screened using a simple **Rating Scale**, such as Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment or the Ages and Stages Questionnaire that is completed for the parents or guardians. The same or a similar rating scale will then be used again towards the end of the school year in the spring prior to the child moving to the next age group. Any developmental "red flags" or concerns indicating possible delay determined from the rating scale will be discussed with the parents. Whenever an area of significant concern emerges, the teachers and/or the director discuss those concerns, share documentation, will make recommendations for next steps and/or assist the parents or guardians with professional contacts for further assessment or diagnostic evaluation. The rating scales will be kept locked in the child's permanent file in the office.

Assessment Portfolios, consisting of work samplings, observations, checklists, and other methods used to assess and record development and abilities, will be maintained by the classroom lead teacher every year for each child and updated regularly. The Assessment Portfolios will be shared and discussed at the family conferences in the fall and spring and as requested at other times during the year. The Assessment Portfolios are kept in a locked cabinet in the classroom and will be sent home at the end of each school year. A sampling of the items in the assessment portfolio will also be copied to be kept in the child's permanent file in the office for review as needed.

Parents and guardians are given the opportunity to provide their input regarding their child's interests, strengths and abilities emerging at the beginning of each year on the Family Information Form in addition to prior to and during the family conferences in the fall and in the spring. The input from the parents is combined with the information obtained from the Rating Scales and Assessment Portfolios to guide the teachers' in their

planning for activities to meet the individual developmental needs and interests of each child and to determine the effectiveness of their teaching strategies.

Screening for Hearing and Vision:

All children who turn four years of age by September of each school year are required by the State Health Department to have a hearing and vision screening by a licensed physician, qualified professional, or certified screener. The screening must be completed by November 30 of the school year and a record of screening must be turned in to the UPCC office by this date.

A licensed speech therapist may be at UPCC in the fall to screen children's speech and hearing. A volunteer group may be at the school to do vision screening in the fall, usually at no cost. Forms will be sent home explaining procedures and costs. Families may choose to have their child's hearing and vision screened at school when available or to have it done privately. Most pediatrician offices screen hearing and vision around the 4th birthday.

Birthday and Holiday Celebrations

Families may talk with their child's teacher if they would like to recognize their child's birthday with a special nutritious snack. The teacher must know of such plans at least 2-days in advance so that all necessary approval can be obtained from the office and each child's parent. **All foods sent for the class must be pre-packaged and nutritious; sugary snacks, cakes and candy are not permitted.** Suggestions include: ingredients for a cooking project, chalupas/tacos, fresh fruits, yogurt, cheese and crackers to name a few. Please refer to the section on snacks and the **Nutrition Policy on pages 25 – 27** for more detail concerning special birthday snacks. While families are not allowed to host a "class party" in honor of their child on site during school hours, certain special events of educational value may be allowed with prior approval of the director.

Another suggestion for celebrating your child's birthday could be a contribution to the scholarship fund or a donation of a children's book, CD, or special item to UPCC with your child's name and birth date recorded on the item so he/she may get recognition every time it is used. If you have another idea, please check with the program director and/or your child's teacher.

Holiday traditions of the families, including some Christian celebrations, may be observed during the year, with the emphasis on family gatherings, traditional foods, songs, dance and symbols. Parents and guardians are encouraged to share their individual family traditions with the class by sending a traditional food at snack, reading a story, telling about and showing items related to the celebration. (As stated in the section on nutrition policies and snacks, treats high in sugar and salt as well as candies are not permitted and all foods must have approval from the office in advance).

Note: At times, some classrooms may not be able to allow for outside snacks for all the children to share or celebrate an event due to food allergies and other medical needs in the group.

Building Security/Access/Safety

While parents, guardians and caregivers known by the staff typically may go directly to their child's room, family members and caregivers the staff have not met before must first go to the UPCC office for a copy to be made of their identification and compared with the approvals on the child's emergency card. Visitors and volunteers to the center must also report to the UPCC office, sign in the volunteer log, and wear a name tag

during their time on campus. Volunteers must also complete the paperwork for a criminal background check prior to assisting in the classrooms.

The gates to the Children’s Center will remain locked at all times. Staff and families will receive a passcode that allows access into the gates, playgrounds, and classrooms. Families that have others picking up their child should relay their family code to those individuals to allow them access as needed. Codes are only given to current families of the Children’s Center. Once a child/family has left the program, the family codes are removed from the access system.

Additionally, drugs, firearms, weapons, and other items deemed dangerous are not permitted on the premises at any time. The entire school and church campus is a smoke-free, including e-cigarettes and vaping, at all times.

During times of health and safety concerns, UPCC as well as childcare licensing and other regulating bodies may require the center to limit the individuals that can be on campus to the staff, children, emergency personnel and regulating body inspectors.

Calendar

The Children's Center follows a “school-like” calendar running late-August through May and summer sessions, but not the exact calendar of a specific school district. The school will be closed: most federal holidays; two weeks for a Christmas Break; one week for a Spring Break; one week for a Teacher Workweek in late summer as well as a few additional days for maintenance, staff development and/or teacher workdays in between the end of the school year and start of the summer sessions. Please refer to the current school calendar for exact dates each year. The current school calendar is also available on the church website at <https://upcsa.org/upcc-calendar/>

Cancellations for weather and other emergencies

During the regular school year, UPCC will follow the San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD) for any closing for inclement weather or other emergency situations. During the summer months, the program will continue to follow SAISD if the school district is in session and/or Alamo Community College District (ACCD). Listen to local radio or TV stations for SAISD and/or ACCD’s decision to close. Information about the closing of UPCC will be emailed to the families if possible, posted on social media, classroom parent communication tools and will be provided to the local news stations in hopes that it will be added to their list of closures.

The University Presbyterian Church session and/or UPCC board may also cancel school for emergency health and safety concerns in the community.

Cell Phones

Parents, guardians and caregivers are encouraged to refrain from talking on their cell phones as they drop off or pick up their child. The arrival and departure times need to be a special 1-1 time between children and parents or guardians to say good-bye and to reconnect after a long day. Taking into consideration the view of the child, it can give your child the message that work or the other person on the phone is more important than they are when parents are talking on the phone as you say goodbye in the morning or greet your child at the end of the day.

Child Abuse and Neglect/Policy for Reports Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

Remember: Never shake a baby or young child

Because of our continuing concern about the welfare of children, we have provided the following information for families on the indicators of possible child abuse and/or neglect of a child. Parents and guardians are encouraged to discuss discipline procedures as well as child abuse and neglect concerns of any type with the director and/or their child's teacher. Even with or without concerns expressed to the director or child's teachers, it is important for even suspected abuse or neglect to be reported (toll-free Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400) so that specialists can intervene before more harm is done and for the ultimate safety of the child:

Abuse includes the following acts or omissions:

- Physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, or genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child
- Failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent an action by another person that results in causing substantial harm to the child
- Mental or emotional injury to a child, causing or permitting the child to be in a situation that results in an observable and material impairment in the child's growth, development or psychological functioning
- Sexual conduct harmful to, or failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent, sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional or physical welfare

Neglect includes:

- Leaving of a child in a situation where their child would be exposed to a substantial risk of physical or mental harm, without arranging for necessary care for the child
- Placing the child in or failing to remove the child from a situation that requires judgment or actions beyond the child's level of maturity, physical condition or mental abilities and that results in injury or substantial risk of harm to the child
- Failure to seek, obtain, or follow through with medical care for the child, with the failure resulting in an observable and material impairment to the growth, development or functioning of the child
- Failure to provide the child with food, clothing, or shelter necessary to sustain life or health of the child, excluding failure caused primarily by financial inability unless relief services had been offered and refused

Policy for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect of a Child

- UPCC is committed to compliance with the Texas law on reporting abuse and neglect of children. The law requires any person – including personnel at a school or childcare facility- who has cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect by any person – whether a parent, family member, UPCC staff member or anyone else – to make a report to the appropriate authorities at Child Protective Services at 1-800-252 -5400. Staff who report suspicions of child abuse or neglect are immune from discharge, retaliation, or other disciplinary action for that reason alone unless it is proven that the report is in bad faith. UPCC is required by law to cooperate with any investigation of child abuse or neglect.

- This report must be made immediately when and no more than 48 hours after, a person suspects abuse or neglect. The report should reflect the person's belief that a child has been or may be abused or neglected, and should also include the name and address of the child and the person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child, and other pertinent information about the alleged or suspected abuse or neglect of the child.
- It is a criminal offense under Texas law to knowingly fail to make a report of abuse or neglect. In most cases, the identity of the person making the report is confidential, and a person acting in good faith who reports or assists in the investigation of a report of child abuse or neglect or who testifies in the legal proceeding is immune from civil or criminal liability. There is no immunity however for a person who reports his or her own abuse or neglect of a child or who acts in bad faith or with malicious purpose.

Clothing and tote bags/backpack

Children should be dressed in comfortable, washable clothing that they can easily manipulate for toileting since we encourage children to do things for themselves.

Our program promotes exploration and direct experiences of many kinds, especially outdoors with natural elements including wet sand, mud, and water. Please understand that this kind of philosophy is not consistent with a concern of staying clean and spotless; thus, it helps if children's clothing for school is selected with this in mind.

Rubber soled shoes are best for active young children on the outdoor classrooms. Families may provide "water shoes" to be left at school for use outside with water and in the Mud Kitchens. Boots, dressy shoes, flip flops, sandals or similar shoes can be hazardous and are highly discouraged. Shoes are required for all children, including those not yet walking, to wear on the playground. At times and in some classes, such as the infant and young toddler rooms, shoes worn outside may not be allowed to be worn in the classroom so the children may need a pair of shoes for indoors.

In some classrooms, children may need to bring a tote bag or back pack with his/her name clearly marked on the front or inside. A **complete change of clothing, preferably two changes**, must be kept in the bag or in the designated classroom space/cubby at all times for all age groups. Due to a shortage of space, tote bags should not exceed 12" X 12."All articles of removable clothing (jackets, sweaters, hats, etc.) should be clearly **labeled** with the child's name.

Confidentiality Policy

We take confidentiality seriously at UPCC and all staff and board members abide by the *NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct*. A copy of the Code of Ethics can be obtained from the school office. We will not only make every effort to protect the confidentiality of your child and family and also of every child, family and staff member of the school.

The confidential files of the enrollment forms, medical forms, accident forms, screenings, assessment forms and other records of each child are kept in a locked room behind the school office. Families grant authorization to review the files by staff, the child's current teachers, and regulating authorities of licensing and health department in addition to any other family members indicated by the parent on the Authorization for Access Form and a copy of the authorization is kept inside the child's individual file.

Each child's current ongoing Assessment Portfolio consisting of work sampling, anecdotal observations, notes, developmental screenings and/or checklists will be kept in a secure location within the child's classroom or in the school office. Online assessment tools, such as Teaching Strategies Online, are maintained by the classroom teacher and director with individual log-ins and passcodes.

At times other schools, therapists, and/or other professionals may request information about your child as part of an enrollment process or while providing care for your child/family. Such information will only be provided with additional written permission from the parent or guardian. Release forms may be provided by the individual/school requesting such information or the family can send approval in writing by email or a letter to the office.

Consumer Product Safety Recall Notices

In the school office, UPCC posts and maintains copies recent Consumer Product Safety Commission Safety Recalls notices within the last year of toys, clothing and other items that could pose a danger to children for both families and staff to review. At times, the center may also email the recall notices with critical information to both families and staff. The Consumer Product Safety Recalls for all items can be viewed online at www.cpsc.gov/Recalls

Diapering

Children who wear diapers must bring an ample supply of disposable diapers for each day (usually 4 - 6 depending on hours in care). Cloth diapers are not permitted due to the requirement for individual storage and space limitations. The school will supply the wipes. Families are welcome to send their own brand of wipes if they prefer. Diaper rash ointment, if desired, must be provided by the parent and clearly labeled with the child's name. A medication form must be filled out for use of diaper creams.

Eco-friendly Practices

With a focus on health and the environment, UPCC adopts current eco-friendly practices that include, but are not limited to:

- 3rd party certified (www.epa.gov/saferchoice), least toxic and EPA-registered cleaning products when possible. In addition, scented cleaning products and scented air-freshers are not used in the school for the protection of the children and staff.
- UPCC purchases non-toxic art supplies and classroom materials for all age groups.
- UPCC monitors for air quality alert days through “The Weather Channel” app updates and the City of San Antonio alerts. On air quality alert days, the classes will not go outside after 12:00 noon and possibly in the morning depending on the alert recommendations. We encourage families to also follow guidance on air quality alert days for their family and limiting practices such as refueling of vehicles and lawn care.
- The church and school both participate in paper, cardboard, plastic and glass recycling with the assistance of Trinity University. Many of the classrooms also involve the children in recycling paper and plastic as appropriate for the age group.
- Throughout the year, the classrooms will “up-cycle” materials to make classroom materials and art activities. As needed, the educators will notify the families of clean, recycled materials for these special activities.

Emergency Evacuation

As required by licensing, UPCC conducts monthly fire drills in addition to quarterly severe weather drills, quarterly active threat drills and other emergency procedures with the children. All emergency cards, emergency medications (Epi-Pens, Inhalers, etc.), and

emergency backpacks are carried on all drills and evacuations. Families must make sure all contact information and medications for children are kept current in case of any emergency.

In the event the center must be evacuated due to an environmental (gas leak, toxic fumes or chemical release) or similar emergency, the staff will do one of the following depending on the location of and type of problem:

- walk to **LANDA LIBRARY** (233 Bushnell; phone 210-732-8369)
- walk to the **THOMAS LIGHTNER DORMITORY** at Trinity University (the high rise located just south of the Children's Center on Shook)
- *if a neighborhood evacuation is ordered by the fire or police department, UPCC reserves the right to follow the evacuation and transportation orders for the children and staff to the emergency location determined by the authorities. Parents would be notified of the location by local authorities through appropriate news sources.*
- UPCC will notify families of evacuations through email and the communication app utilized by the teachers.

Field Trips

Given the legal requirements and liability issues for volunteer drivers on fieldtrips along with costs of criminal checks for volunteers, UPCC no longer takes fieldtrips that require driving. The preschool classes may take fieldtrips to locations within walking distance, such as a puppet show at Landa Library or a musical performance or children's play on the campus of Trinity University. The teacher will send a permission slip home for such trips. Parents and guardians are welcome to volunteer for any of the walking fieldtrips. Parents and guardians volunteering on the field trip to help with children other than their own child may be asked to provide the UPCC office the information required by licensing for criminal background checks. Adults volunteering to help on field trips should serve as role models and talk with the children about the activities on the trip to promote the learning and meaningfulness on the field trip. UPCC maintains lower adult-child ratios than the established classroom teacher-child ratios on some walking fieldtrips for the safety of the children. Volunteers are crucial to the success of field trips and help sustain the adult-child ratios.

Permission slips will not be sent home for nature walks around the neighborhood, around the Trinity University Campus or to the Landa Library grounds as these are routine experiences we provide for the classes. Permission from the parents for such outings are provided on the enrollment form. On all walking fieldtrips and walks around the neighborhood, the teachers will have access to all emergency contacts for the class, a cell phone, first aid supplies, and emergency medications such as Epi-Pens and Inhalers for any emergency that may arise while the class is off campus.

Grievance Procedure

Families are encouraged to first talk with their child's teacher and/or the director with any concerns, issues, or difficulties that arise in the interactions between families and the program staff. If needed, parents and guardians should request a time to speak with the teacher at a time when he/she is not responsible for the care of children. The director is generally available during the day, but parents and guardians are encouraged to set a time to meet in advance. Concerns or issues may also be expressed at the Open Forums or Brown Bag Times held periodically. The goal will be to resolve the conflict at this initial level in a satisfactory manner for both the parent and the school.

If the director is not able to adequately resolve the difference with the family, the parent or guardian may seek input from either the church pastor and/or the school board

chairperson. With some issues, a letter to the UPCC Children’s Center Board may be appropriate after the director, church pastor and/or chairperson have attempted to resolve the conflict. If the above channels of communication do not resolve the issue, the family may ask to meet with the executive committee of the school board, which consists of the church pastor, chairperson, vice chair, treasurer, and secretary. The executive committee may refer the issue to be discussed by the entire school board or the church session as appropriate.

While some issues may not be able to be resolved in the manner requested by the family, UPCC recognizes that all families should be given ample opportunities to voice their concerns. Throughout all levels, the goal will be to resolve the issue in a satisfactory manner for both parties.

Hand washing

All children must wash their hands upon arrival to the program. Throughout the day, children and staff will wash their hands upon arrival to the classroom, before all snacks and meals, after toileting/diaper changes, after playing outside, before and after water play and other times as required by accreditation criteria and licensing. We encourage families to also have their child wash their hands when departing the program.

Parents or visitors that plan to stay longer than a brief departure must also wash their hands according to posted hand washing guidelines (using soap and water, rub hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds, dry hands and use a paper towel to turn off the faucet).

Health and Safety Policy

For the health and safety of children, families, and staff, we ask your help with the following:

- ◆ UPCC does not allow smoking in any form or the use of tobacco product, drugs, firearms, or weapons on any kind in the classrooms, playgrounds or the UPC church premises and parking lot.
- ◆ For the safety of the children, adults should not bring cups of coffee or hot beverages, even those with a lid, into the classrooms or playgrounds.
- ◆ **Please do not leave any infant or child under the age of 10 unattended in the car at any time of the year, even for a few minutes since the child would be left in a potentially dangerous situation.**
- ◆ **UPCC encourages parents, guardians, and caregivers to follow all car safety guidelines by using seat belts for all passengers, appropriate car seats and/or booster seats for young children, avoiding transporting children in the front seat of any vehicle and not using cell phones while driving.** The school office has additional resources on car safety guidelines.
- ◆ The staff use latex and non-latex gloves in changing diapers, first aid for cuts that have blood, and as needed throughout the day. Please let the office staff and teachers know if your child has an allergy to latex products and/or sensitivity to band-aids.
- ◆ All toys, paints, and other materials used at UPCC are lead-free.
- ◆ The Children’s Center receives updates of toys and/or foods recalled by Consumer Product Safety Commission that are posted in the school office and at times, the recall information will be sent out to parents by email.

Health Policy/Illness

Children and staff will have a brief health screen and wash their hands upon arrival to the classrooms. A child who has fever of **100 or higher and/or is otherwise ill or generally not feeling well must be kept at home until he/she has been free of fever without fever-reducing medication or other symptoms for at least 24 hours unless a doctor has cleared the child in writing to return to school earlier than 24 hours, such as in the case of an ear infection. Please contact the director for guidance on specific illnesses and questions as needed. In some circumstances and at times, the fever free time period may be required to be longer according to licensing and/or CDC guidelines.**

UPCC will not administer medications, such as Tylenol, to reduce a child's fever, and children must be kept at home if medication is needed to reduce their fever. A child's parent/guardian or other emergency contact will be notified so the child can be taken home if a child has any of the following symptoms:

- ◆ a fever of 100 or higher
- ◆ frank diarrhea (more than two in a two-hour period and/or is not able to be contained within a diaper or underwear with the child's own toileting)
- ◆ vomiting
- ◆ generally not feeling well, severe pain, general malaise, or other symptoms of discomfort that prevent the child from participating in the activities while at school for the well-being of the child and others in the program.

Parents/guardians of children with chronic symptoms of colds and/or allergies, including significant mucous, may be asked to have their child checked by a physician to rule out any infection. **The guidelines set by Texas HHS childcare licensing, health department, Center for Disease Control and NAEYC accreditation recommendations in *Healthy Young Children* will be followed for the exclusion and re-admission policies for children and staff with transmissible illnesses.**

Families will be notified if their child is exposed to a contagious disease while at school according to health department and licensing guidelines as well as NAEYC accreditation recommendations. Likewise, parents/guardians should notify the school if their child has been exposed to or has been diagnosed with a contagious disease, such as but not limited to pink eye (conjunctivitis), pin worms, head lice, ringworm, scabies, chicken pox, coxsackie ("hand-foot-mouth), strep throat and other viral illnesses.

In addition, the Children's Center has adopted Infection Control Policies and Procedures to promote a safe and healthy environment for the children, families and staff. A copy of the policies can be obtained from the office.

Home Languages, Spanish in the Classrooms, and Language Preferences

The UPCC staff will make every effort to work with families that speak a language other than English in the home and/or are bilingual. As needed, a staff member or volunteer that speaks fluent Spanish can join in with the teacher or director for the enrollment process, family conferences and other meetings as needed as well as written materials provided in Spanish when available. For languages other than Spanish, UPCC will make every attempt to provide written materials in the other languages and identify staff and volunteers that can provide oral translation when possible.

Generally, there is usually at least one Spanish speaking educator in each class so that at least one of the teachers is able to converse with the children in Spanish during play, meal and routine times as well as reading to and singing songs. We feel this provides a natural setting and the most developmentally appropriate way for children to experience a second language rather than a weekly Spanish class for 15 minutes. If there is a teacher fluent in Spanish in a class, the family may request "Spanish only" conversations for their child with that teacher with the understanding that she will be speaking both Spanish and English with the other children. Families that speak

languages other than English and Spanish are encouraged to share simple words and phrases for the teachers to use in conversations with their child as well as CDs of music and stories in the language.

UPCC will provide the opportunity for families to provide the staff and teachers with home language preferences in names used for family members and roles (grandparents and caregivers for example), gender pronoun preferences, parts of the bodies, bodily functions and other preferred words as used by the child and family. Family language preferences will be incorporated into the daily interactions and learning activities for the child(ren). Additionally, some of the infant/toddler educators know and use “infant signs” with the children. Families may request the use of “infant signs” if the educators in the classroom know how to use “infant signs” or the family can provide the signs for key words for the teachers to learn and use with their child.

Hours of Operation

- 7:30 a.m. - 8:45 a.m. Early arrival
- 8:45 a.m. - 12:30 a.m. Morning Program (Rooms 4,5, and 7), includes the lunch mealtime and a morning snack provided by the family.
- 8:45 a.m. - 3:15 p.m. Rooms 1, 2, and 3: Infants and Toddlers, includes lunch mealtime and a morning and afternoon snack times with food provided by the family.
- 12:30 a.m. - 3:15 p.m. Afternoon Program for those enrolled in the morning, includes an afternoon snack provided by the family.
- 3:15 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. Extended Care Program

Immunization Records/Medical Records

Annually, each child must have the UPCC medical form completed by a licensed physician that states that the child has been seen by the physician within the past year and is physically able to take part in the school program. UPCC highly recommends that upon enrollment in the program children must have current immunizations according to immunization schedules of the San Antonio Metropolitan Health Department and Texas HHS Minimum Standards. The dates for the required immunizations and TB test, if required by the health department, must be documented on the child's medical record in the office.

UPCC will accept medical exemptions for immunization when recommended by the child’s physician in writing. When possible, please also provide the schedule in writing for the plans to have the children become current on immunizations. To claim an exclusion for reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, the child's parent, legal guardian, or a student 18 years of age or older must present to the school or child-care facility a completed, signed, and notarized affidavit on a form provided by the department stating that the child's parent, legal guardian, or the student declines vaccinations for reasons of conscience, including because of the person's religious beliefs.

Any child(ren) that is under-immunized for medical reasons must be excluded when a vaccine-preventable disease to which the child(ren) are susceptible to occurs in the program. Families will be notified by the office when this occurs and asked to keep their child(ren) at home until the incubation period has fully passed.

Lost and Found

Labeling all belongings (coats, sweaters, gloves, hats, lunch boxes, tote bags, etc.) is the best asset in loss prevention. Check the lost and found area in the classrooms and/or near the office for misplaced items. Lost and found articles will be cleared out periodically during the year and unclaimed items will be given to a charitable organization at the end of each school year.

Medication Policy

The UPCC staff **prefers to not administer medication** to children and will not give the first dose of any medication. UPCC will not give fever-reducing medications to reduce or “mask” a child's fever (children with a temperature over 100 degrees will be sent home). For children with a history of febrile seizures, UPCC will provide fever reducing medications with written orders from the physician to keep the child’s fever in check only until the parent arrives.

When it is absolutely necessary for a child to receive medication during the day, the staff will strictly adhere to the following guidelines for administration of medication set by Texas HHS Childcare Minimum Standards:

- Prescription medications will be administered only when it is in the original container labeled with the child's name, date, expiration date, directions and prescribing physician's name. The medication will be administered only as stated on the label directions and only with written permission from the parent or guardian on a signed medication authorization form (obtained from the teacher or in the office).
- Nonprescription (over the counter or OTC) medication and homeopathic remedies will be administered only if they are in the original container with an expiration date, labeled with the child’s name and accompanied with a signed note from the child’s physician indicating the appropriate dosage and instructions. The physician’s office may email this information to childrenscenter@upcsa.org for a standing order for OTC medication. The OTC medications or homeopathic remedies also require a written medication authorization form signed by the child’s parent or guardian.
- Non-prescription skin protectants and cosmetics such as sunscreen, insect repellent, diaper creams, lotion or lip balm only require a parent/guardian’s written consent by using a medication form.

Please give all medications to the office for safekeeping. The office staff or child’s teacher will document each dosage/time for the medication administered. Medications will be stored in locked chest in the office or in a medication box in the refrigerator in the church community room. **It is the parent's responsibility to retrieve the medication at the end of the day.**

Nutrition Policies/Snacks and Lunches

Menus and nutritional needs:

Parents/guardians provide all of the food for their own child for all snacks and the lunch mealtime on a daily basis except for periodic special snacks, tasting activities, or cooking projects. Parents/guardians will be given the opportunity to approve in advance all foods served for special snacks and cooking projects. Plans for periodic cooking

projects and special snacks or meals are provided in the newsletter and posted in each classroom monthly. Copies of previous monthly special snacks and cooking projects menus for each class are kept on file in the office.

Families should send servings of foods for their own child's snacks and lunch that meet the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and other government child nutrition guidelines of daily recommendations for young children. Please refer to the My Plate (www.myplate.gov) food serving guidance for young children. **See below for additional guidance for children under the age of 4 in regard to choking hazards as indicated by the Texas HHS Childcare Licensing, NAEYC Accreditation, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.**

The Texas HHS Childcare Licensing Minimum Standards and NAEYC Accreditation criteria require that children in school for six or more hours a day get at least one-half of their daily food needs. This can only be accomplished with the cooperation of the families. The staff will work individually with families as needed with concerns about the nutritional needs of their child. The food not consumed by the child for the snacks and lunch will be sent home at the end of the day.

Additionally, nutrition education is an important aspect of the UPCC program. We strive to increase the children's awareness and acceptance of a wide variety of foods and to promote good eating habits for optimal physical and mental development through mealtime discussion of healthy foods, periodic cooking projects and tasting activities, gardening, and classroom activities related to health and nutrition.

For infants to toddlers under 24 months: Families with infants and toddlers may obtain additional feeding guidelines recognized by the USDA for children under 2 years of age from the UPCC office upon request. Infants and toddlers will be held if unable to hold their bottle on their own or provided their bottle while sitting as accreditation guidelines do not permit children to have bottles while laying down.

The following are licensing and accreditation guidelines that we must adhere to for infants 12 – 15 months and under:

- ◆ Bottles and feeding schedules provided to the teacher will need to be updated at least monthly.
- ◆ Bottles will only be warmed with tap water or a bottle warmer; a microwave is not allowed for warming bottles or infant food.
- ◆ Cow's milk should not be sent for children under 12-months; only whole milk should be sent for children 12 – 24 months of age. Written dietary instructions from the child's doctor must be provided if the child is to continue formula or other alternatives to milk after 12 months of age.
- ◆ All formula and baby food should be sent in factory-sealed containers and will be prepared according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- ◆ Bottles cannot contain any medication or solid foods, unless the child's doctor provides written instructions to do so.
- ◆ All bottles must be labelled with the child's first and last name.
- ◆ The teachers will discard any formula or human milk that is served but not completely consumed or not refrigerated after two hours.
- ◆ UPCC supports breastfeeding. Teachers will work individually with families who desire to send breast milk and/or desire to come nurse their child while in our care. Please label bottles containing breast milk with the child's full name (first and last) and the date the milk was expressed. Breast milk will only be served in a bottle and not a sippy cup.

Choking Hazards and Food Safety:

As required by the Texas HHS Childcare Licensing and NAEYC Accreditation, the following foods present a choking hazard and **should not be sent** at any time for children under the age of 4:

hot dogs (whole or sliced into rounds)	spoonfuls of peanut butter (including dipping cups of peanut butter)
whole grapes	raw chunks of carrots, vegetables or meat larger than can be swallowed whole
nuts or peanuts	raisins, dried fruit (for children under 2)
popcorn	
raw peas	
hard pretzels	

The teachers will not serve any of the above items if any are sent for a child under the age of 4.

All lunch boxes must be labeled with the **child's name and last initial**. Teachers will check expiration dates on pre-packaged foods and will not serve if the expiration date has already passed. The expired food will be discarded and the family notified.

"Blue ice" must be included in lunch boxes with foods that need to be kept cold, such as cheese and yogurt. Foods heated up at home can also be kept at the appropriate warm temperature in a thermos for lunch as UPCC staff are not permitted to heat up any foods in a microwave. Please send any utensils needed and a cup as needed in your child's lunch as well as a cloth napkin in your child's lunch to be used as a placemat.

Children are not permitted to crawl or walk around with food, bottles or sippy cups and will be asked to sit at a table to finish their food or drink even if they arrive with food or a sippy cup in hand in the morning.

Snack Guidelines:

Snack time provides an excellent opportunity for working towards these goals. Good snacking habits can be developed by eliminating foods high in refined sugars, sodium and excess fat, which are often associated with snacking, and replacing them with a variety of nutritious foods from all four food groups. **Foods that are high in refined sugar, sodium and excess fat should not be sent for snacks (doughnuts, cupcakes, candy, etc.) and for birthday or special treats.**

Families will need to send a small morning and afternoon snack for their child each day. Parents/guardians may want to label the snack AM (served around 9:30) or PM (served around 2:30) if they want the child to have it at that time of day and package it separately so the food can be distinguished from the lunch.

Suggested snack ideas include:

Fresh fruits	Cheese and crackers, yogurt
Steamed vegetables and dip	Peanut butter crackers, goldfish,
Applesauce	Crackers
Breads, muffins, bagels	Fruit bars

Birthdays & Holiday Snacks/Treats:

All treats for birthdays and holiday snacks must adhere to the UPCC nutritional guidelines and must be cleared in advance with the classroom teachers to make sure there are not any food allergies or other concerns present in the class as well as to give ample time to obtain authorization for each child to have the special snack. All special food sent for sharing with other children must be in an unopened sealed

container and prepared in a restaurant or grocery store rather than homemade per health department guidelines. Parents/guardians should NOT send sugary snacks or treats (cakes, cupcakes, doughnuts, etc.) even for birthday or holiday celebrations. Birthday candles can be put in any type of food or "playdough cake" if needed.

Suggestions for birthday or special snacks include:

*muffins or fruit breads,
waffles with fruit topping
yogurt or frozen yogurt with
fresh fruit toppings*

*an ethnic dish
tacos, chalupas, pizza
a special cooking project or your
child's favorite nutritious snack*

All foods sent for sharing with other children must be in unopened, pre-packaged containers or from a restaurant. Homemade foods are not permitted.

Holiday treats (no candy or sugary items), if a family desires but not in any way necessary, may be sent only if they are **appropriate to the class' developmental level**, such as stickers, pencils, small packages of snack crackers, etc. **Balloons, candy and other sugary treats are not permitted and will be returned. All items must be cleared with the office or child's teacher and must include each child in the class.**

Please refer to the previous section on Birthdays and Holiday Celebrations on page 16 for additional and preferred ways to recognize these special events with the class.

Lunch Guidelines:

Lunches should be nutritious with servings from the four basic food groups and include water, non-flavored milk or 4 ounces or less of juice (100% fruit juice, not a fruit drink). Per licensing guidelines, UPCC is not allowed to serve children any flavored milks or more than 4 ounces of juice a day. Water will be available to the children at all snacks and meals as well as outside and throughout the day. Please refer to the previous section on menus and nutritional guidelines to help us meet the nutritional needs for your child. Items high in sugar and salt from "other" food group (chips, fruit roll ups, chocolate covered granola bars, candy, sugary cookies, etc.) are discouraged for nutritional reasons. Sugar consumption can cause restlessness in many children and may prevent them from being able to sleep. Teachers are not able to warm up foods but parents may send hot food in a thermos that will be warm at lunch time for their child.

The following should be included in the lunch box each day:

- *blue ice (there is no refrigerator space for lunches)*
- *spoon and/or fork if needed*
- *plastic cup*
- *cloth napkin for use as a "placemat"*
- *cloth or paper napkin for use as a napkin*
- *water bottle*

Please clearly label the lunch box as well as all cups, spoons, plastic containers and water bottles with your child's name and last name. Uneaten portions of food that can be easily re-packaged will be sent home so families can monitor their child's consumption.

Outside Play

Outdoor play and physical challenge are key components of UPCC's nature immersed program. **All classrooms play outside for at least an hour in the morning and again in the late afternoon every day, weather permitting.** UPCC uses the Childcare Weather Watch guidelines to determine if the temperature is cool/warm enough and for how long for the children to play outside. The website chart can be found at: <https://www.c-uphd.org/documents/wellness/weatherwatch.pdf>

UPCC classrooms also take walks around the church campus and at times the Trinity University campus, Landa Library or the neighborhood bordering the school and church. Families provide permission for these walks on the enrollment form. While exploring in the outdoor settings on the school and church campus, children are permitted to challenge themselves physically by climbing, jumping, running, lifting heavy objects and other gross motor skills while the teachers and caregivers monitor the safety of the children individually and as a group. Children will not be placed in positions or locations, such as up on a tree, that they did not get into themselves.

If a child is not well enough to play outdoors, he/she must be kept home or picked up prior to outside play so that both teachers can be with the class outside since the teacher-child ratios must be maintained while the children are outdoors. In extremely hot weather (over 100 degrees) or extremely cold temperatures (under 35 degrees or on cold days that are wet and windy), the children may go outside only briefly for a short walk and fresh air. Classes will not go outside in the afternoon on air quality alert days, in excessive afternoon heat or as recommended by local health authorities.

Please take the weather into account when dressing your child for school (coats, mittens, and/or knit hats for the winter and sun hats for the summer). In addition, send your child in clothing and shoes conducive to active, outdoor activities in the Outdoor Classrooms with Mud Kitchens as well as the extensive sand and water play areas. Play clothes, tennis shoes or rubber soled shoes work much better than dressy outfits and dress shoes, boots or flip flops. Parents/guardians can send a pair of "water shoes" to be kept at school for the Outdoor Classroom explorations with water, wet sand and mud.

Parking Lot

Please observe the one-way traffic flow in the church parking lot. Enter through the south entrance and exit through the north exit. Parking is not permitted along the sidewalk curb as this is a fire lane. Please refrain from parking in the handicapped spaces as well. As posted on signs in the parking lot as a reminder, parents/guardians and caregivers should refrain from leaving their car idling while parked as the drop off and pick up their child(ren), except if the vehicle needs to idle in extreme heat or cold to maintain the entire or engine temperature.

Payment Policy, Fees and Tuition

- **The Payment Policy for tuition is as follows:**

The school year tuitions are pro-rated over the year and thus tuition remains the same each month from August – May, including December. Summer session tuition is the same as the school year. Afternoon and late afternoon tuition will be prorated each year according to an average number of days the school is in session so that monthly charges remain the same each month. Please refer to the annual fee schedule for current fees and tuition.

1. Tuition is due in the Children's Center Office **on the 1st of each month.** Please make checks payable to UPCC. **After the 10th, a late fee will be charged each month until the tuition is paid.**

2. Families may also choose to have their tuition automatically drafted from their bank account; paperwork on file for the ACH draft information will be kept in a locked and secure location in the school office. Cash payments are also accepted. Due to the convenience charges, UPCC does not take credit cards.
3. As indicated of the annual tuition and fee information, a service charge will be charged for returned checks.
3. If an account becomes 30 days delinquent, the office staff or a board member will contact the parent to discuss their account. If special circumstances have caused this problem, a payment program may be arranged.
4. If an account becomes 60 days delinquent, the family is in jeopardy of not being able to continue with the program. Another contact will be made to discuss payment in full or a promissory note may be executed. A family may not begin a school year or summer session with a severely delinquent account.
5. If an account is 90 days delinquent, the family will no longer be able to attend the Children's Center.

- **Fees**

All fees are non-refundable. The first part of the registration fee for the school year and summer is due upon registration. The second part of the registration fee will be charged to the account in the spring.

- **Late Charges**

A late pick up charge will be assessed **for every 10 minutes past the designated departure time (12:30, 3:15)**. In the extended care program ending at 5:30, there will be a late charge at a higher rate **for each minute for late pick-up past 5:30**. Please refer to the yearly tuition and fee schedule for the late fees. Parents will be asked to sign a late pick-up slip to verify the time of their arrival.

Personal Items from Home/"Sharing Time"

Children may bring personal items from home which are necessary for their security during special times of the day such as separation from parents and nap time. They will be asked to keep such items in their tote bag or with their nap mat when not necessary for their comfort once they have adjusted to the program. Children whose class observes a "sharing day" are asked to bring items that are related to the unit of study or that have educational value. Toy guns or weapons, gum, candy, or money are NOT allowed at school at any time.

Pets/Animals

Some classrooms may have a small pet such as a gerbil, hamster, hermit crab and/or fish for the child to observe and help with feeding the animal. If any child in the room has an allergy related to or symptoms are worsened by the presence of the small pet, the animal will be moved to another classroom. Families are encouraged to let the teachers know of any potential allergies.

Pets from home should not be brought to school for a short visit unless it is cleared by the teacher in advance (making sure that there are not any children present with allergies to the animal). The animal must be in good health, current on all vaccinations and under the regular care of a veterinarian that can document that the animal is suitable

for contact with young children. Pets may only stay for the sharing time with the child's parent/guardian supervising the animal the entire time.

Reptiles are not permitted as classroom pets or for visits to the classrooms due to the risk of salmonella infection.

Sanitation and Cleaning of Room and Facility

UPCC follows the NAEYC Accreditation recommended schedule for sanitation and disinfection of classroom spaces and materials. The classroom's hard surfaces, such as tables, furniture, faucets, and toilet handles, are cleaned and sanitized by the teachers throughout the day as needed. The floors and bathrooms are cleaned and disinfected every evening by a custodian. The carpets are cleaned on a monthly schedule in the infant/toddler Room 1, quarterly in the preschool classrooms and sooner as needed. Toys and mouthed items in the infant and toddler rooms are washed and sanitized daily with a diluted bleach solution and at least weekly and as needed in preschool classrooms. Washable toys, pillows, etc. are washed weekly and more often if needed. During periods of higher health concerns, the cleaning, sanitizing and disinfection schedule for classrooms and materials may be increased as needed.

Using the model of Integrated Pest Management, the Children's Center makes every effort to prevent children from being exposed to pest and pesticides. While pesticides protect children and property from pests, such as insects, rodents and weeds, under some circumstances the pesticides may also pose a hazard to children and staff. To minimize potential pesticide exposure to children and staff, pest control practices will involve a variety of non-chemical and chemical methods.

A licensed exterminating company treats the church and school buildings and playgrounds with pesticides for common household pests on a quarterly basis. The treatment is always done after school hours, typically on a Friday, and under the supervision of a staff member. Further information about the pesticides and treatment schedule can be obtained from the church office if requested.

Save and Send

Periodically during the year families will be encouraged to save and send certain items, such as empty plastic containers, leftover sewing and craft items, fabric scraps, that are needed in the classrooms. All "trashable treasures" are appreciated.

Used toys, clothes, and other items for use on the playgrounds and classrooms can be donated to UPCC at any time. Metal and plastic pots, pans, and muffin tins are a welcome addition to the Outdoor Classroom Mud Kitchens. Items that the school cannot use will be given to local charitable organizations.

Scholarship Fund/Tuition Assistance

The UPCC and Good Shepherd Scholarship Funds provide tuition assistance for families with high financial need. Parents/guardians may request consideration for a scholarship each year through submission of an application form and documentation of income scholarship committee of the school board. The UPCC scholarship committee consists of church members that do not have children attending the school and all requests are kept confidential through a coding system. Requests should be made during the registration process, if possible, since a limited number of funds are available each year. The requests for tuition assistance tend to always exceed the availability of funds so donations for scholarships are always welcome. **Tax deductible donations can be made to the UPCC or Good Shepherd scholarship funds at any time during the year**

for recognition of birthdays, memorials, and gifts of appreciation. The Good Shepherd Scholarship Fund has annual donation drives with the church and the school.

Separation Anxiety and Adjustment Process

Separation anxiety is a very real fear for some children. There are many reasons that children are not as comfortable having their parents, guardian or significant caregivers leave them. There are many degrees of separation anxiety may be expressed...from simple clinging, quieter than usual to tears, temper tantrums or even screams of fear.

The teachers and the director have had a lot of experience dealing with children's adjustment processes and separation anxiety is very common among young children, especially for younger toddlers and 2-year-old children. Families should not be embarrassed if their child cries when they leave and are welcome to call the school office to check on their child.

Our recommendation for most families in helping their child adjust to school is to:

1. Talk with the child about school, the activities, the teachers, the other children prior to coming to school.
2. Bring the child into his/her classroom, as matter of fact as possible, with a positive attitude. Children are very tuned into their parent's feelings of anxiety.
3. Reassure him/her that you will return, stating a time in terms of activity such as after nap or lunch.
4. Kiss him/her good-bye...then leave. Linger can be as upsetting to your child as much as hastily leaving. **Do not sneak out on your child** as it is frightening for all children. Be sure to tell your child goodbye. The teacher will comfort the child if needed and help them get involved in an activity.

Sometimes the anxiety continues for a few weeks. Sometimes it does not begin until after the child has been in school for some time. Yes, separation anxiety always ends...even in extreme cases.

Special Events

UPCC will schedule special activities and events throughout the year. Because of the varied days of attendance of some children, some activities will take place on days some children are not in attendance. In these cases, the children are welcome to participate in the special event if accompanied by their parents or other special adults.

Some of the special activities/events may include concerts with a children's musician, storyteller, puppet shows, community visitors, walking fieldtrips, parades, fire department visit, and Week of the Young Child activities. Parents are always welcome to join in any of the special events with their child. (See section III E for Parent Volunteer Guidelines). The program asks that parents joining for special events make sure the child and teacher are fully aware of their departure after the event.

Special Needs and Supporting Inclusive Services

The UPCC staff recognize that any child at any time may have "special needs" due to family emergencies, divorce/separation, moving, medical concerns, allergies, etc. The program requests that parents keep the classroom teachers and/or director informed of any situations that may be upsetting to the child or causing disruption in the child's

regular routine or typical behavior. The program welcomes the input and suggestions of families in such instances to help us better meet the needs of your child and family. Conferences with the director and/or classroom teachers can be also arranged as needed throughout the school year.

As required by the licensing standards of the Texas HHS Childcare Licensing, children requiring special dietary considerations (such as severe food allergies, food sensitivities, vegetarian/vegan) must have a written statement from the child's physician or a registered dietitian stating foods that must be avoided and required emergency treatment if exposed to the allergen. The staff will post the food allergy/sensitivity/nutritional needs or other medical needs of the child for all staff caring for the child to review only if written permission to do so has been given by the parent/guardian. With severe food allergies, such as to peanuts or nuts, a letter to all of the families in that room will be sent out to advise them of the severe allergy and ask for them to take it into consideration when preparing their own child's snacks and lunches.

After routine assessments and observations by the classroom teacher and possibly the UPCC director, the program will also discuss with parents/guardians any developmental or behavioral concerns, explanation for the concern based on assessments and observations, review documentation, and if needed make suggested next steps that may include appropriate suggestions for referrals to professionals for further screening or diagnostic evaluation for determination of any developmental delays and/or the need for additional services.

To best meet the individual needs for children with identified disabilities or special learning needs, families are required by Texas HHS Childcare Licensing to share the Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP's)/Individualized Education Programs (IEP's), and/or any specialized learning plans or recommendations from the doctor, therapist or school district. This information along with input from the family will be used to help us plan individualized learning activities and assess the needs of the child while in our care so that we can better meet their special needs. Likewise, the UPCC director and/or teachers will also provide information to therapists, doctors, school districts and/or private schools about the behavior and abilities demonstrated by a child while in our care and/or copies from the child's assessment portfolio when requested with written parental permission.

Specialized consultants, including speech, occupational, and physical therapists and other professionals as needed are welcome to arrange with the director to observe the child while at the program and to use a classroom or meeting room to provide therapy for the child on site at UPCC with written permission from the family and payment made directly to the therapist by the family. If the therapist will be taking the child out of the classroom setting, the family will need to submit written permission. Therapists are also welcome to provide therapy within the classroom setting with the teachers and other children present. The UPCC staff welcomes the input of specialized consultants in helping us meet the special needs of a child under their care. The director has the contact information of several agencies, consultants and therapists in the San Antonio area that the center has worked with in the past as well as others that can provide support services for children with special needs.

The Children's Center does not discriminate on the basis of abilities and attempts to be inclusive of all children. The program will work as best as possible with families with children with identified disabilities and special learning or developmental needs by making developmental placement, adjustment in staffing patterns or schedule, additional staff training, and/or modification within the physical environment within reasonable limits. The reasonableness of the adjustments needed for the specialized needs of the individual child in addition to meeting the needs of all the children enrolled will be seriously considered by the director, church pastor, school board and/or church session before making any final decision. The center may request that the parent share or fully cover the cost of any additional staff, specialized training, modifications to the environment or other adjustments needed to accommodate their child.

Sunscreen/Sun Protection, and/or Insect Repellant for Outside Play

Since the classes play outside each day in the morning and afternoon weather permitting and given the intensity of the South Texas sun, families are encouraged to send their child with protective clothing for the sun, such as sun hats, and/or apply sunscreen on their child before school. For children staying for the afternoon program, teachers will reapply sunscreen after nap if parents provide the sunscreen with at least a SPF of 15 or higher. The sunscreen must be labeled with the child's name and written permission/request to reapply must be given on a medication request form.

As desired, families may also want to apply insect repellant to their child prior to arriving to school. Teachers will reapply repellant only if the parent/guardian provides the repellant labeled with the child's name and given written permission/request to reapply on a medication form. Insect repellants with DEET should be sent if recommended to be used by the local health authorities because of a high risk of insect-borne disease.

All insect repellant and sunscreen must be kept in a locked cabinet in the classroom and cannot be kept in the child's bag or cubby. Families should send non-aerosol sunscreen and insect repellent.

Telephone/ Messages/E-mail

Due to the physical layout and size of the program, it is sometimes difficult to ensure that someone is always available to answer the telephone in the school office. A telephone answering system will take messages when no one is able to answer the telephone or if the line is already in use. Messages are checked regularly throughout the day and calls returned as soon as possible. The teachers are generally able to talk with parents over the phone in the afternoon from 1:00 - 2:30 with a request made to the office so that staffing requirements can be maintained.

In an emergency or matters needing immediate attention and the UPCC office staff is not available, parents may call the church office at 210-732-9927 (open 9:00 – 3:00 most days) to have a message delivered to UPCC staff member in charge. Parents/guardians should make note of this number in their records in case they should need it in an emergency. Families may also contact the teacher through the communication app but the teacher is not always able to check the app if busy with the children.

The school's primary e-mail address is childrenscenter@upcsa.org. Since the children are our priority, email and/or communication apps at times may be only checked a few times during the day so email should be used only for information or needs that do not require immediate attention. The school does have access to a fax (210-734-6354) machine through the church office.

Termination of Enrollment

Partial Withdrawal/Reduction of Scheduled Days/Times:

When a family drops one or more of the scheduled days in the morning program or reduces the number of scheduled hours, the parent/guardian must make the request in reduction in days/times in writing to the UPCC office at least 30 days in advance. The parent/guardian will still be responsible for any tuition due for the days/hours for 30 days after written notice. All requests for reduction in days should be made by email or in writing to the school office.

Complete Withdrawal From UPCC:

A thirty-day written notice, given to the director in writing or by email, is required for complete withdrawal from the program. The family is responsible for 30 days of tuition after such date. As budget and staff decisions are greatly impacted by enrollment

changes, we would very much appreciate notice of complete withdrawal as early as possible, so we can attempt to fill the slot.

Termination of Enrollment:

In extreme situations, a child's enrollment may be terminated by the Director and/or UPCC Board after informing the parent or guardian of the problem through conferences over time, trying to work with the family to resolve the issue through various efforts, and giving adequate notice and suggestions for other arrangements or referrals. A child's enrollment may also be terminated if the family account is 90 days or more delinquent as stated under the section on payment policies on page 29-30.

Toilet Learning

Teachers will work with families whose children seem ready to learn to use the toilet. Children new to the toilet learning process should bring several extra pairs of underwear as well as two complete changes of clothing, including socks and shoes. Toileting accidents will be dealt with in a calm and casual manner.

Children vary widely in the age for toilet learning with 2 ½ years of age being an average and some not until after 3 (most often for boys). Some will show interest at school and not at home and vice versa. The staff will work individually with each child and their family when the child is showing clear signs of readiness.

Some of the typical signs of toilet learning readiness include:

- *interest in using the toilet*
- *ability to indicate need or desire to use the toilet*
- *awareness of physical cues prior to using the toilet*
- *can stay dry for at least two hours at a time*
- *often wakes up dry after nap*
- *usually off the bottle*
- *wants diaper dry; dislikes soiled or wet diaper*
- *some interest and ability in dressing*

Tooth brushing

Given that UPCC only has lunch as a mealtime, the center is not required to give the opportunity for children brush their teeth. If requested by the child's dentist, the staff can work with children individually on brushing their teeth after meals. The family will need to provide the toothbrush and cover if tooth brushing is needed. The child's toothbrushes must be replaced every 3 months or as needed (such as if the child has strep throat). Toothpaste is not needed.

Transition to Next Room/Next School

Every spring prior to the end of the school year, the director and a few of the lead teachers will provide an information session for families on helping their child adjust to changes in classroom placements and new schools. Prior to moving to a new classroom for the summer or at the beginning of the school year, the child and family will have the opportunity to visit the new room to meet the teachers and see the room as well as receive pertinent information about the routines and expectations in the classroom.

For children transitioning to a new school/Pre-K or kindergarten program, the UPCC staff will complete information forms or letters as requested as long as written permission is received from the parent. For children transitioning to kindergarten in the

next year, families will receive information on registration procedures at nearby school districts. The UPCC director and teachers are also available to meet with families needing information about schools, both public and private, for their child.

Visitors

Families may drop off and pick up their child at the classroom doorway rather than routinely entering the classroom to limit the distractions of the children's play. Parents and guardians may visit their child's classroom for a longer period, such as to eat lunch with their child, to volunteer to help in the classroom, or to share a special talent with the children as long as they are free of signs of illness, wash their hands upon arrival and follow the routines of the classroom. Parents and guardians do not need to check in with the office if they have already met the classroom teachers. Family members and friends who are unfamiliar to the staff should check in with the office and obtain a nametag when visiting the center. It is most helpful if the classroom teachers know of the plans to visit in advance.

Weather-related Cancellation

For any weather-related cancellations, UPCC follows San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD) for weather related cancellations during the school year and Alamo Community College District (ACCD) during the summer if SAISD is not in session. UPCC will notify families of cancellations through email and the communication app utilized by the teachers.

III.

FAMILY SUPPORT AND INVOLVEMENT

Parents, guardians, and other significant adults involved in the child's life are viewed as partners by the University Presbyterian Children's Center teachers and staff and are highly encouraged to actively participate in the educational experiences of their child.

Home-School Communication

We believe that direct, effective communications are at the heart of a stimulating, safe, caring program for young children. Families are encouraged to discuss any concerns about day to day operations, the program, or their child's care with the teachers or the director. At times, the teachers may ask a parent or guardian to discuss their concern during naptime or over the phone during their break since the teachers' primary task during program hours is to supervise and interact with the children.

The families in the older infant/young toddler (Room 1) will receive a “**Daily Report**” giving them specific information on their child's day, such as sleeping and eating patterns. Families in the toddler classrooms will receive a Daily Report until their child turns 3 or oftentimes longer. The Preschool classrooms (Rooms 4 – 7) that the lead teacher does not see or talk with either in the AM or PM during the week will receive a “**Weekly Report**” for their child. While our goal is to establish ongoing oral communication with the families, parents may also request a weekly report as needed throughout the year.

All classroom teachers utilize a communication app, such as SeeSaw, to post photos, videos and notes the learning activities on a weekly basis. Classroom reminders will also be posted on the app as needed.

- **Please check your child's cubby or bag/lunch box** as notes, newsletters, and general announcements may be given to you in this way in addition to some information by email and/or the family communication app. Invitations to parties or activities outside of the program may only sent out through the children's message file if every child in the class is included. Anything sent out by families through the UPCC mail file must first be cleared with the office, must be school related, and can be placed in the children's files by school personnel only. The office can provide a list of addresses and/or phone numbers of the children in the classroom if permission has been granted by the family that parents may send out invitations to children in their child's class through the mail or over the phone. The message file will also be the place where the school and families can send information to other families about child-centered community events sponsored by local organizations.
- The **memo boards near classroom door** will have reminders about school-wide events and the small memo boards outside the classrooms will have updates as to specific activities in the individual classrooms.
- Every classroom has a **family bulletin board** with lesson plans, daily schedule, newsletter, leader of the day schedules, and menus of any special snacks served, and other pertinent information. Parents should check the memo and bulletin boards regularly to keep informed about the activities school-wide and in their child's class.

Newsletters

A monthly class newsletter and school-wide updates will be sent home and/or emailed on a regular basis. We highly encourage parents to read both newsletters as they contain news pertinent to what is going on in individual classrooms as well as the school. We feel that it is very important for every family to stay informed! Additionally, brochures and articles will be sent home at times to provide families tips for raising young children.

Family Conferences

Conferences with parents and guardians will be scheduled in the fall and spring to discuss their child's development, activities at school and home and any questions the teacher or parent may have. Teachers will share the child's Assessment Portfolio consisting of work sampling, checklists, observations and other screenings utilized to assess and record the child's development with the parents at the conferences. Parents and guardians are highly encouraged to schedule an appointment with the teacher at this time. The teachers and/or director will be glad to schedule a conference at another time if requested by the families or as needed during other times during the year.

Family Meetings, Workshops and Socials

Parenting sessions and/or "Brown Bag" Special Topics will be scheduled periodically to cover child-rearing and other subjects relevant to child development. Workshops will be held at various times of the day (usually morning or evening) and child care will usually be available for a nominal cost. Families are always welcome to also suggest topics and /or speakers.

Periodically, the director and a board representative will be available for a scheduled "Director Open Forum" or a "Brown Bag" with a specific focus. The Open Forums and Brown Bags are intentionally open-ended to provide a time for parents to share any

issues, concerns, and questions as well as new ideas for the program and to get to know other parents.

In the fall and spring, the classroom room parents and staff typically schedule family socials for the families to spend time together on the outside spaces getting to know one another and at times, helping with planting the UPCC herb, flower, and vegetable gardens.

Parents and Guardians as Volunteers and Resources

Parents, guardians, and other adults serving as volunteers and resources add to the quality of the UPCC program through sharing of their talents, resources and time. Please talk to your child's teachers if you have a special interest, family tradition, talent or profession you can share with the children. Possible parent volunteer activities include: helping with a special event, preparing a cooking project on their child's assigned snack day, sharing an art or craft activity, joining in on a parade, reading a book, eating lunch or snack with their child or joining music time or Spiritual Enrichment.

When serving as volunteers in the program or attending a special event, parents and guardians must foremost recognize that all children in the program are worthy of respect, attention and acceptance. Parents and guardians should refrain from passing judgment on individual children or making comparisons with their own or other children. Parents and guardians should familiarize themselves with all sections of the Family Handbook and the Volunteer Standards and Guidelines brochure prior to serving as a volunteer. Individuals serving as volunteers will not be left alone with the children except for possibly their own child and will serve as a volunteer under the supervision of the regular school staff at all times.

While parents and guardians are welcome to interact with the children during play and routines, the teachers in the classroom will handle all guidance and discipline, first aid and safety issues with the children. Please note that evacuation procedures are posted by each classroom door should an emergency arise. Parent volunteers must refrain from disciplining any child, including their own child, in manners inconsistent with the Children's Center guidance techniques (see section I: I). **Volunteers must wash their hands upon arrival and follow the handwashing procedures posted by each classroom sink.** Please ask the classroom teacher the best place to store and lock up your personal belongings to keep them out of children's reach.

Parents and guardians who wish to serve as volunteers on a regular basis will need to have further orientation and provide the information requested for a criminal check and possibly have a fingerprint check done as required by Minimum Standards.

Parents and guardians who volunteer as **Room Parents** assist in communicating information to families within the class, help with special activities, school events, and any other services needed by the classroom teacher or parent volunteer chairperson of the University Presbyterian Children's Center Board. As often as possible, classrooms will have co-room parents to help with the duties.

Note: At times it may be necessary to limit parents and guardian access to the classroom or outdoor spaces, such as with community wide health concerns.

Program Evaluation and Feedback

At least annually families will be asked to evaluate the effectiveness of the overall program, the administrators and their child's teachers individually and in terms of meeting the needs of the children and family. The families, staff, UPCC Board of Directors and the University Presbyterian Church session will be provided a copy of program-wide feedback and summaries. Parental feedback provides valuable information on the strengths and weaknesses to help the center make improvements and/or

adjustments to program policies, procedures as well as a guide for professional development planning.

Referral and Community Resources

To effectively serve our children and families, the UPCC director and lead teachers are knowledgeable about the use of other professionals and agencies in the local community both as a supplement to the program's resources and as a referral source for community child and family support services. As desired, please contact the office to set a time to meet with the director and/or teachers about support services in the San Antonio area. The office Resource Library also has lists of community services and resources available in English and Spanish.

Resource Library

The UPCC office maintains a resource library for parents and teachers with books and brochures on child development and special topics, such as toilet learning, effective child guidance, arrival of a new baby, sibling rivalry, helping a child process divorce or death of a loved one, and more. Parents and guardians are encouraged to check out any books which may be helpful as well as recommend any books for the library that they have found beneficial.



TEXAS
Health and Human Services

ATTENTION PARENTS

**You are entitled to see the following information.
You may ask the director to show you the most recent copy of:**

- The minimum standards for this licensed center
(also available at <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/providers/protective-services-providers/child-care-regulation/minimum-standards> or access the QR code below)
- Parent's Rights
- The investigation or inspection report from Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or Health and Human Services (also available at www.txchildcaresearch.org or access the QR code below)
- Documentation of liability insurance that complies with Human Resources Code, Section 42.049
- The fire marshal inspection report
- The health department sanitation inspection report
- The gas pipe inspection report
- The licensed center operational policies



Minimum Standards



Search Child Care



Texas Health and Human Services Commission
Child Care Regulation Department

Revised 12/2023 Non-Form J-800-2957

Parent Notification Poster for Center-Based Care

20D0553

The most recent copy of the Family Handbook can be located online at:
chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://upcsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Family-Handbook-2023-update-PDF.pdf

Please return a copy of this page found on separate sheet paper clipped to the front of the Family Handbook.



I have received and read the University Presbyterian Children's Center Family Handbook, understand the information and will abide by all policies, including particular attention to:

- **Guidance and Discipline Policy for Working with Challenging Behaviors**
(pg. 9-10)
- **Emergency Procedures and Plans** *(pg. 20-21)*
- **Arrival and Departure Procedures** *(including policies for release of children) (pg. 13-15)*
- **Health Policy** *(Including procedures for health checks and illness exclusions) (pg. 22-23)*
- **Safe Sleep** *(pg. 13)*
- **Grievance Procedures** *(pg. 21-22)*
- **Medication Policy** *(pg. 25)*
- **Nutrition Policy for Snacks and Lunches** *(pg. 25-28)*
I understand that I must follow the nutrition policy of the school and will be providing all food for my child. Therefore, the University Presbyterian Children's Center is not responsible for meeting the daily nutritional needs of my child. I understand the center will provide information on children's nutrition as needed.
- **Outside Play & Extreme Weather Conditions** *(pg. 20, 29)*
- **Payment Policy** *(pg. 29-30)*
- **Special Needs and Supporting Inclusive Services** *(pg. 32-33)*
- **Parent and Guardian as Volunteers and Resources** *(including visiting the center) (pg. 38)*
I understand that I must fully follow the Parent and Guardian Volunteer Guidelines for helping in the classroom as stated in the Family Handbook and Volunteer Standards Brochure provided with orientation when requesting to be a regular volunteer at the school.
- **Guide to Parent's Rights** *(pg. 40)*

(Print name)

(Signature)

(Date)

