



**Little CHUMS
Parent Handbook
2023 - 2024**



September 2023

Dear Parents:

Welcome to Colonial Hills United Methodist School. You have chosen a program that has specialized in Early Childhood Education since 1970. Educational excellence, developmentally appropriate learning, and a positive Christian atmosphere are all notable features of our school.

This handbook has been prepared to better acquaint you with our school policies. Please read and refer to this handbook as a guide to help you understand school policy, and your role as parent(s) in supporting our school program.

If you have questions, please call the school office at (210) 349-1092.

Sincerely,

Kristan Schrader
School Director

Colonial Hills United Methodist School does not discriminate based on race, color, creed, or national ethnic origin in the administration of programs or employment.

INTRODUCTION

Colonial Hills United Methodist School (CHUMS) offers quality Early Childhood Education in a Christian setting.

CHUMS was founded in 1970 as part of Colonial Hills United Methodist Church's ministry to children and their families. Currently our school serves students 18 months through Kindergarten.

CHUMS is managed by the School Director. The CHUMS School Board meets three times a year to approve the school budget and to set policy for the school. The board is composed of the School Director, Pastor, the Director of the Child Development Center, the Assistant Director, the Director of Family Ministries, CHUMC Finance Committee Representative, parents of currently enrolled CHUMS and Little CHUMS children, and one member-at-large from the CHUMC congregation.

HOURS OF OPERATION, HOLIDAYS, CLOSURES

The first day of school for the 2023/2024 school year is **September 5** and the last day of class is **May 24**. Please note that "Meet the Teacher" is held prior to the first day of class. A CHUMS calendar is published yearly in August after consulting both the Northside ISD and North East ISD calendars. Please consult our website at www.chums-sa.com for the most up to date school calendar.

Classes are held Monday, Wednesday and Friday, Tuesday and Thursday, and Monday through Friday, from 8:45 AM to 2:30 PM. Early Bird drop off is available Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 8:40 AM.

The school office is normally open from 8:00 AM to 2:30 PM on school days. If we are not in, please leave a message on the voicemail, and your call will be returned as soon as possible.

When inclement weather or another unexpected event requires special precaution, the school may be forced to close. If either the Northside or North East School District closes due to these circumstances, Colonial Hills School may also choose to close. Be sure you have downloaded the **Procure App** or listen to your local TV or radio for information about school closures.

ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

Before the child's admission to the school, proper forms must be completed and returned to the school office. The forms include the completed enrollment application, a copy of current immunizations, and the medical form which must be signed by the parent and a physician. **This medical form must be received before your child can attend class.**

A child is considered enrolled when their name has been written into the appropriate class list and the required enrollment fees have been paid. These fees include a registration fee and a yearly supply fee.

The school makes an effort to accommodate all children, but our school reserves the right not to accept a child whose needs require individual attention and/or resources that cannot be provided by our available staff. The school reserves the right to refuse care for a child if the parent's account is delinquent and if the parents have failed to pay outstanding charges.

Each parent must provide a current telephone number where he/she can be reached in the event of an emergency. Two alternate persons shall also be indicated and have a current number listed on both the enrollment form and emergency card. The emergency card will be sent home at the beginning of each school year.

REGISTRATION POLICY INFORMATION

2022/2023 registration is on a FIRST-COME FIRST-SERVE basis. When a class is filled, a waiting list will be established for

the current school year. The list will remain in effect through the 23/24 school year only.

The Little CHUMS enrollment fees are **NON-REFUNDABLE**. These fees include a registration fee and supply fee.

Tuition paid in advance will be refunded **ONLY** if the following criteria are met:

1. The school is given a 30-day notice that you are withdrawing your child.
2. The class is at capacity.
3. We can fill the place vacated by your child.

TUITION AND FEES

CHUMS is a nonprofit corporation. Our budget is set annually, and we are completely dependent on the tuition generated yearly for school operating expenses. Like any business, Colonial Hills United Methodist School has monthly operating expenses such as facilities usage, custodial fees, office expenses, and salaries on a twelve-month basis; therefore, tuition is based on a school year, and collected in nine equal payments.

Monthly tuition will be payable no later than the tenth day of each month. After the tenth day of the month a \$30.00 late fee will be charged. There are **NO** credits for illness, vacation time, or other events that require school closure. There is a \$25.00 fee for checks returned due to insufficient funds. Tuition payments may be paid in the office or mailed. Tuition is: two mornings \$300.00, three mornings \$395.00, and five mornings \$605.00.

Each January new tuition rates and fees will be published for the following school year once approved by the CHUMS School Board.

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

Student class assignments are made after thoughtful consideration for each child individually and as a class member. We are unable to guarantee individual teacher requests.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Our goal is to provide a program that combines developmentally appropriate teaching techniques and current educational philosophy with a secure and stimulating environment. Each child has the opportunity to grow creatively, physically, spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and socially at their own rate. Time and space are organized to encourage active exploration by each child. Freedom of choice and self-directed time are scheduled in addition to teacher directed time and structured activities. Children experience joy in learning and build positive self-esteem as they discover and explore. Concrete experience provides the conceptual background necessary for the later development of all abstract learning. Children learn by "doing." In the learning environment, each child's imagination, independence, curiosity and creativity is encouraged. Our curriculum encourages children to be actively involved in the learning process, to experience many developmentally appropriate activities, and to pursue their own interests while learning about life and how they relate to the community and to the world.

CURRICULUM

LITTLE CHUMS

Our toddler curriculum, *Reach for the Stars*, consists of hands-on activities that help children develop habits of observation, questioning, listening, creativity, and discovery. This fun and interactive program helps each child develop the skills necessary for success in preschool.

Your child will learn through their senses, interactions with caregivers, and their environment using child directed and carefully curated, center-based activities in each classroom. Multi-sensory learning and play opportunities encourage your child to develop more concrete ideas about his or her little corner of the world.

ENRICHMENT CLASSES

A Music class (M or W), Motor Skills, Library, and an Outdoor Classroom are provided for the Little CHUMS classes.

RELIGION

Christian holidays are celebrated. There is a special Bible Story Time daily in the classroom and the Christian way of life is modeled.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Colonial Hills United Methodist School strongly believes and supports the need for physical activity each day.

When children participate in physical activity every day, multiple health benefits accrue. Regular physical activity builds healthy bones and muscles, improves muscular strength and endurance, reduces the risk for developing chronic disease risk factors, improves self-esteem, and reduces stress and anxiety. Beyond these known health effects, physical activity may also have beneficial influences on academic performance. In addition, cognitive skills and motor skills appear to develop through a dynamic interaction. Research has shown that physical movement can affect the brain's physiology.

Our Little CHUMS program will participate a minimum of 45 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.

Opportunities for active play may overlap with outdoor play when weather permits.

CHUMS will promote all children's active play every day. Children will have ample opportunity to do moderate to vigorous activities, such as running, climbing, dancing, skipping, and jumping, to the extent of their abilities.

All children will participate each day in:

- Two occasions of active play outdoors when weather permits.
- Two or more structured or teacher-led activities or games that promote movement over the course of the day.
- Continuous opportunities to develop and practice age-appropriate gross motor and movement skills.

Physical activity may take place in the classroom or on the playground when weather permits.

When participating in physical activity, children's clothing should protect them from sun exposure and permit easy movement (not too loose and not too tight) that enables full participation in active play. Footwear should provide support for running and climbing. No CROCS please. Clothing should be appropriate for the weather that day. Hats may be worn to protect children from sun exposure.

When weather conditions prohibit outdoor play, physical activities will occur in the classroom or other indoor space during the scheduled outside time. Classroom teachers will have activities planned for "rainy days".

DAILY SCHEDULE

Each classroom has a daily schedule posted. The schedule has been designed to alternate between large and small group time and active and quiet activities as well as to allow sufficient time for centers and outdoor play.

COMMUNICATION

The primary source of communication will be through the Procure App. Please be in the habit of checking this frequently so that you don't miss out on important information about school. Procure is the preferred mode of communication from the teacher. Make sure you have downloaded this App prior to the beginning of school. Please note that a teacher may not respond to a message during the school day as their focus will be on the children. Contact the office should you need to get an important message to your child's teacher. You may also find information in your child's folder from time to time. *Please be sure to check your child's tote daily.*

CALENDAR

You will receive a calendar each month in your child's tote. Use this to promote conversation about your child's school day as well as staying current on special events, snack rotation, holidays, etc.

PARENT-TEACHER CONNECTION

Close communication between parents and teachers is essential. At Colonial Hills United Methodist School, we believe that parents and teachers are partners in the education of children. There will be a Parent-Teacher Connection offered during the school year for our parents. Students will have a holiday, but childcare for enrolled CHUMS students will be offered during your conference time. Parents or teachers may request additional meetings if the need arises during the school year.

COMING AND GOING

LATE ARRIVALS/VISITORS

Our check-in tables close at 9:00 AM. All visitors are required to sign in at the School Office.

If you arrive after 9:00 AM, you must check-in with the office to obtain access to your child's classroom. Please be respectful of your child's teacher and our office staff and do your best to arrive on time. This is for the benefit of your child and not having them miss out on valuable classroom time with their peers.

For breast feeding mothers, we offer a private space in room 4 in the Education Building. Please see the School Office for entry into this room.

SIGN IN/SIGN OUT PROCEDURE

When your child is dropped off each day, please sign in next to your child's name and indicate your time of arrival on the clipboard. At pickup, repeat the process by signing your name and time. If you carpool or have other people bring or pickup your child, please make them aware of this policy. Children can **ONLY** be released to your preauthorized list. If your child is going to a different teacher for Lunch Bunch, the morning teacher will sign your child out of their class and into Lunch Bunch.

AUTHORITY TO PICK UP

Staff members can release your child only to other adults who have been authorized in writing to pick up your child. Authorized persons are identified on the Enrollment form, Emergency Card, and the Pick-up Authorization form.

Please be mindful that it is the teacher's responsibility to be actively involved with the children at dismissal time, so we ask that you limit time talking with the teacher during this time. Parent conferences may be arranged for longer discussions.

LATE PICK UP

Children should be picked up promptly at 2:30 PM. Late pick up will be discouraged by a late charge of \$5.00 per five minutes late, beginning at 2:35 PM. If you are late, please pick up your child/children in the school office.

Please note if you are late more than three times during the program year, the charge will be raised to \$7.00 for every 5 minutes late and \$8.00 after six late pick-ups.

VISITING ALUMNI

As much as we have enjoyed having the opportunity to see and visit with our past alumni, we will no longer be able to allow alumni to stay in the classroom during the school day. Our School Board decided that not only can we not take on this added liability, but we also cannot increase our student/teacher ratios and still maintain our licensing standards. Our responsibility is to our enrolled children. We must always give them the most of their classroom experience and maintain their safety. Please see your teacher about making other arrangements to visit with alumni before or after the school day.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Never leave children unattended in your car. Also lock your car and do not leave your purse or other valuables in sight. This is for your safety and well-being, as well as for that of your children and possessions.

WHAT TO WEAR TO SCHOOL

CLOTHING

As you plan your child's wardrobe, consider the variety of activities that your child participates in on a typical day. Your child will use paint, markers, and other colorful items that may or may not leave a lasting impression on their clothing. We suggest comfortable and washable clothes that are free of complicated fasteners. The children will play in sand, mulch, and grass, so we recommend tennis shoes. **NO CROCS OR SANDALS PLEASE.** Boots are **NOT** allowed except during Western Week. In addition, please put a change of clothes (top, bottom, underwear, socks) in a labeled Ziploc bag in your child's tote. Please label children's jackets with your child's name. Tennis shoes are required for Motor Skills days.

*CHUMS t-shirts are worn the first day school day of each month for "Spirit Day". These may be purchased during Meet the Teacher or in our school office.

ILLNESS, MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS, AND HEALTH PRECAUTIONS

MEDICAL FORMS

Each child must have a current medical form on file in the office listing proof of immunizations. This form must be signed by you and your physician and must indicate the status of your child's immunizations.

MEDICATION

Medication may be administered to your child ONLY if the parent fills out the proper form in our School Office. Medication must be in its original container/packaging. The medication permission form includes the medication name, dosage, and time the dosage is needed. All medications will be stored in the School Office. If you need diaper ointment, please see your child's teacher for the appropriate form for this item. Sunscreen, and/or bug spray should be applied prior to your child coming to school.

EMERGENCIES

In case of accidental injury or severe illness, we will first contact the child's parents, then the designated emergency persons. If necessary, the school will arrange for emergency medical care. It is the parents' responsibility to keep the school records updated with current telephone numbers and emergency information.

ACCIDENTS

Parents will be informed of any accidents involving their child during school hours. A written report will be made and signed by the teacher and a parent or guardian. Such reports will be filed in the school office.

INSURANCE

Colonial Hills United Methodist Church carries liability insurance. The children are covered at school and on field trips.

ILLNESS POLICY

If a child is well enough to come to school, we will expect him or her to go outdoors with the class, weather permitting.

If your child becomes ill (a temperature of 100 or higher) while at school and you are called, **please pick up your child promptly.** We will not ask this of you unless it is necessary.

Children must be free of symptoms of illness for 24 hours before returning to school. These include:

- a runny nose that is not clear or opaque (yellow or green discharge indicates a probable cold or infection)

- cough, unless allergy related
- internal symptoms such as diarrhea, nausea, or vomiting
- fever higher than 98.6
- conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- sore throat or difficulty swallowing
- moist or open sore(s)
- mouth sores (including cold sores)
- rashes of unknown origin

Our teachers are authorized to refuse admittance to a child who has or has had, within 24 hours, those symptoms. We ask that you not put our teachers in that awkward position. If you are in doubt about bringing a child, call the school office and discuss the symptoms with the office staff. Your child's teacher will do a health check on your child daily.

1. Open and/or partially healed sores and scratches must be covered by a bandage. If bandages must be changed during the day, you must fill out a medication release form and provide the bandages and medication, if necessary. If sore(s) persist, we may ask for a doctor's note explaining the nature of the sore.
2. Cold and allergy symptoms can be confusing. A child's sinus discharge may be thick and cloudy in the morning. If the discharge does not run clear by mid-morning, we will contact you to pick up your child.
3. Report to the school any contagious diseases your child contracts, such as pink eye, the flu, or strep throat. The program, in turn, will notify you if any contagious diseases are present in your child's classroom.
4. If your child is unusually quiet, listless, distressed, or exhibiting unusual behavior, we will contact you and let you make the decision to pick them up or not.

Your child may return to school when he or she is symptom-free for at least 24 hours or has been on antibiotics for the appropriate time as determined by your child's pediatrician. If your child has been seen by a doctor and is told he or she may return to school sooner than 24 hours, please provide a note from the doctor.

Let's work together to keep our school healthy!

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parents are always welcome visitors at CHUMS. Various special events are held on the school campus, and parents are encouraged to attend. Parent volunteers also plan class parties, drive on field trips, assist the classroom teacher when needed, work on school fundraisers, and volunteer for other activities. Opportunities will be sent to you by your child's classroom teacher, room parent, or the school office.

ROTATING SNACKS

Parents take turns in each class to provide the midmorning snack. Please consult the "CHUMS Snack Suggestions" list on the following pages for ideas. **NO** tree-nuts, peanuts, popcorn, hard candy, or anything that could cause choking are allowed at school. Water is available throughout the day. The daily snack is posted outside each classroom daily and is kept on file for the 2023/2024 school year.

ROOM PARENT

Each class will need a room parent volunteer to help coordinate class parties, special snack, teacher birthday/end of year gift, and/or assist with teacher appreciation week. Teachers needs may vary depending on what works best for them. This position may also be shared with another parent.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are special occasions at CHUMS. You may bring a birthday treat for snack time. Please discuss the details with your child's teacher. Suggested treats are **store bought** small muffins, cookies, or lightly iced mini-cupcakes. Please no latex balloons or special entertainment during school hours. Birthday recognition during class time is meant to be low-key. If birthday party invitations are distributed at school, **ALL** children in the class must receive one.

CLASSROOM PARTIES

The students may have several holiday parties/special snacks a year that may or may not require parent involvement. These holidays include Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, Easter, and the End of Year. The parents may provide party refreshments, games and crafts, or other activities. Party favors are optional. Due to choking hazards, we request that you do not bring latex balloons. The classroom teacher or room parent will furnish a sign-up sheet and party guidelines. The teacher will also plan activities for other holiday celebrations.

In our Little CHUMS program, parents who come in for a "party" during the day can often lead to confusion with the child. They don't understand that you are not there to pick them up and it can cause a lot of distress in the child when the parent leaves. For that reason, we ask parents to please refrain from visits such as this for the well being of the child and the other children in the class.

SNACK AND ALLERGY INFORMATION

PEANUT AWARE AND NUT AWARE INFORMATION

To provide a safe environment for our students with nut allergies, CHUMS is a nut-aware school. Parents are asked to not send any food containing peanuts, tree nuts, or buy items that indicate on the nutritional label words such as "may contain traces of..." or "made on equipment that processes or manufacturers..." or "made in a facility that also manufactures..." The item should not be brought to school. This includes food for snacks, lunches, and class parties.

Additional Allergy Information

- Children's food allergies are on the rise and can develop over time. If your child develops an allergy during the school year, please be sure to notify the school office.
- 25% of children may have their first reaction at school
- Peanut and nut tree allergies tend to have more severe reactions. These reactions can be life-threatening.
- Always wash your child's hands before coming to school.



Little CHUMS SNACK/LUNCH SUGGESTIONS

Each child will be assigned to bring snack for the entire class on a rotating snack schedule. Your child may bring a store-bought sweet treat (**not homemade**) for his/her birthday, but all other snacks should be healthy. There is a good chance that one or more children in your child's class have a peanut/nut allergy. Not only do we want to protect our children who have life-threatening allergies, we also want to promote healthy eating habits. Please remember to read labels, even if you have purchased an item before! Manufacturers may make changes to where items are processed. Consult [Safe Snack Guide — Peanut and Tree Nut Free Edition - SnackSafely.com](#) for further information.

BREADS: (read labels carefully)

Crackers
Tortillas
Bread Sticks
Cornbread
Pretzels
Muffins
Dry Cereals
Sandwiches (no peanut butter)
Bagels
Pita Pockets
Graham Crackers
Teddy Grahams
Rice cakes

DAIRY PRODUCTS:

Cheese cubes/slices/string
Yogurt
Cream Cheese Spread
Milk

PROTEIN

Hard-boiled eggs
Ham/turkey lunch meat
Turkey/Chicken wraps
Tacos (bean/cheese/egg)
Beef Jerky
Turkey/Chicken Wraps
Sunflower spread

FRUITS: *(must be washed and sliced)

Bananas (do not need to be sliced)
Grapes - must be sliced*
Apples – sliced*
Raisins
Pears – sliced*
Oranges – sliced or peeled*
Cantaloupe – sliced or cubed*
Fruit Kabobs
Canned and dried Fruit
Avocado and guacamole
Clementines
Berries
Kiwi-sliced*
Plums, peaches, nectarines – sliced*
Tangerines
Honeydew - sliced or cubed*
Watermelon - sliced*

VEGETABLES (must be washed and sliced)

Celery
Carrots
Cucumbers
Sweet Peppers
Broccoli
Edamame
Cherry tomatoes (sliced)
Cauliflower
Sugar Snap Peas

*Plan for the snack to represent two food groups (for example: cheese and crackers)

*Please remember, no peanuts or nuts, no popcorn, and no hard candies are allowed at school.

*Due to choking hazards, grapes and tomatoes must be sliced lengthwise; hot dogs must be sliced lengthwise and in half, carrots must be cut into matchstick slices.

*Water will be served as the drink

****CHUMS is not responsible for the nutritional value of snacks and lunch that are brought from home.***

STAFF

The school is staffed by caring, educated, or otherwise exceptionally well-qualified teachers. We are fortunate to have experienced teachers who have a genuine commitment to teaching young children. All CHUMS Staff participate in a yearly in-service training as well as receiving a minimum of 24 hours of Early Childhood Continuing Education hours each school year. The entire staff is also required to be trained in CPR and First Aid.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

Our **CHUMS program** is for children 3 years old through Kindergarten. The hours are 8:45 AM to 12:10 PM or 2:30 PM, Monday through Friday.

Our Little CHUMS **Early Bird Program** is offered Monday through Friday for those CHUMS students needing extra care. Early Bird is from 8:00 AM – 8:40 AM.

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES

Colonial Hills United Methodist Church extends an invitation to your family to visit our Worship Services. Worship Services are held on Sunday's at 8:30 AM, and 11:00 AM. Our Lead Pastor is Dan Harrington. For more information about the church and its programs, call (210) 349-2401.

COLONIAL HILLS UNITED METHODIST SCHOOL'S CONFLICT RESOLUTION POLICY STEPS USED TO SOLVE A PARENT/SCHOOL CONFLICT

1. Parent/Teacher conference (problem discussed)
2. Director/Parent/Teacher conference (problem discussed, action decided)
3. Problem resolution: reasonable time limit set
4. Take matter to the School Board if appropriate/necessary
5. Mediation with Church panel is required. (Panel consists of Church Administrator School Director and others decided by Church)
6. If conflict cannot be resolved, the school reserves the right to expel said student(s)
7. **NO** refunds of any fees paid.

LICENSING INFORMATION

We are licensed by Texas Health and Human Services. You may view our license and our most recent Licensing Inspection Report in the School Office. Our local licensing office may be reached at (210) 337-3399 or at [DFPS - Texas Child Care Licensing \(CCL\) \(state.tx.us\)](http://DFPS - Texas Child Care Licensing (CCL) (state.tx.us)).

WATER ACTIVITIES

Parents must grant permission in the Parent Agreement Form for their child to participate in water activities such as wading pools and sprinklers.

POLICY ON CHILD SAFETY

At CHUMS, we believe children will do well if they can. If a child is having difficulty, it is up to parents, teachers, and professionals to determine the cause of the upset and seek appropriate help.

Modeling expected behavior, redirecting children to an acceptable activity, and setting clear limits are methods of positive guidance techniques used at CHUMS. Children are given opportunities to develop social skills such as

cooperating, negotiating, and talking with the person involved to solve interpersonal problems. Children are taught to express their feelings in a socially accepted manner. In cases of extreme inappropriate behavior or continuous behavior problems, parents will be notified. Cooperative plans for resolution will be developed. Colonial Hills United Methodist School believes in a positive atmosphere for learning.

Our school strives to provide a stimulating, age-appropriate environment that supports the social emotional needs of young learners. The school incorporates the classroom management techniques of Dr. Becky Bailey and Conscious Discipline. The Conscious Discipline curriculum promotes social emotional health in our children. Conscious Discipline empowers us to be conscious of brain-body states in ourselves and our children. It then provides us with practical skills we need to manage our thoughts, feelings, and actions.

If a child is upset or angry, our staff is trained to help them work through their brain states, back to a feeling of safety. We practice different breathing techniques daily, when the children are happy, so that when they are in their “brain stem”, they have the tools to work their way back out. We will often utilize our Safe Place center where children and teachers can go to change their inner state from upset to composed in order to optimize learning. It is the centerpiece of our self-regulation program.

Should behavior ever become more of a concern, whether it be disruptive, aggressive, or anger, your child’s teacher will notify the School Director and will arrange a time to discuss this with you. A consistent home/school plan will be put in place in working with your child. The child will be given clear expectations for their behavior and an appropriate consequence. Teachers will document the child’s behavior as well as any triggers that may be involved. Should the behavior become a pattern lasting more than two weeks or one that requires more resources than our school has available, the School Director will call the parents to pick up the child immediately. If the behavior continues, a child will be asked to take a break from school while the parents work on it at home. In the event that serious behavior problems cannot be resolved, the student will be dismissed from CHUMS.

DIAPERING

In following with state-mandated licensing procedures, when changing diapers, our teachers must always:

1. Use a specific mat or area designated for diaper changes
2. Wear gloves
3. Use disposable wipes and discard after cleaning the child’s diaper
4. Dispose of the dirty diaper in individual plastic bags
5. Use a sanitizing solution to sterilize the diaper changing area after each use
6. Wash the children’s hands after each change

TOILET TRAINING

Our teachers are well-trained and familiar with potty training, and they can provide support and helpful information during this time. There is no pressure put on the children and our teachers follow the parent’s lead when a child is training. However, if a child does not show an interest in using the toilet while at school, we will still encourage but not require.

When your child is ready to tackle using the potty at home **and** school, we prefer that you use and send the thicker training pants instead of regular “big kid” underwear to Little CHUMS. We hope that this does not interfere with your personal preference, but thinner cloth underwear and present a sanitation concern when accidents “spill” through onto chairs and the floor.

BITING: EVERY PARENT’S WORRY

Biting is probably the one behavior that upsets parents more than any other. What is interesting to note is that toddlers are very forgiving and can usually be seen, several minutes later, playing side by side with the biter as though nothing took place.

There is always a chance that your child may be bitten. Put yourself in the place of the parent who has a biter and put yourself in the place of the parent who has a child that has been bitten. Either way evokes strong emotions. It is important to remember that the biter parents will be as mortified as the parents of the bitten child are angry. The fact is that biting is usually experienced in social settings where issues of sharing or power arise that aren't present at home.

However, when a child bites, parents and caregivers must be consistent in how it is handled. The adult must stay calm and not over-react and be firm but friendly. Tell the biter, in a firm voice, "No biting!" Since this is a learning process, the biter needs to be engaged in helping the child that was bitten. This helps them see that their actions hurt another child. "See his tears? It hurt him." Helping hold the warm cloth or bandage can allow them to both see first-hand the problem their reaction caused.

Two notes of caution: avoid over-rewarding the victim. This can lead to a dependency issue. Also, do not expect or ask the biter to apologize. Being "sorry" is not a concept they understand yet.

Why Do Infants and Toddlers Bite?

Young toddlers bite for different reasons than older toddlers. Teething and oral exploration, two hallmarks of infancy, can cause a child to bite. It's also possible that they are mimicking behavior such as kisses, or an older sibling or another toddler's true bite. Reminding them to "touch gently" or "close your mouth when you give kisses" can guide them through the rough spots.

Older twos often bite because they are seeking attention or are unable to express their thoughts verbally. It is rarely done vindictively.

EVACUATION and RELOCATION PLAN

In the event of an emergency requiring relocation, you will be notified through Procure. Children will be transported to St. Matthew Catholic School and Church located at 10703 Wurzbach Road, San Antonio, TX 78230 - (210) 478-5000. Permission for this relocation plan has been given by the Principal, April Hallfrisch. The children will be transported by CHUMS staff and parents using large vehicles. The vehicles will continuously transport children until the relocation is complete. All children will be accounted for using the class rosters. CHUMS staff will supervise the children at St. Matthew Catholic School in the gym directed by the Principal. Activities will be available for the children. The Director or appointed supervisor will remain at CHUMS until all children and staff have been relocated. Students will remain under the supervision of their teachers until they are picked up by their parents or designated adult.

NEGLECT AND ABUSE

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) has a central place to report:

- Child abuse and neglect.
- Abuse, neglect, self-neglect, and exploitation of the elderly or adults with disabilities living at home.
- Abuse of children in child-care facilities or treatment centers.

Abuse of adults and children who live in state facilities or are being helped by programs for people with mental illness or intellectual disabilities. These are run by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) or Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS).

If you suspect neglect or abuse of a child, call the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services at 1-800-252-5400 or go to the Texas Abuse Hotline www.txabusehotline.org.

REQUIREMENTS FOR GANG-FREE ZONES

For Child Care Centers

As a result of House Bill 2086 that passed during the 81st Legislature, Regular Session, Chapter 42 of the Human Resource Code includes section 42.064, effective September 1, 2009. This new statute requires that information about gang-free zones be distributed to parents and guardians of children in care at licensed childcare centers. The following is a tip sheet to assist in complying with the new law. This information may be posted at your childcare operation or copies may be provided to parents.

What is a gang-free zone?

A gang-free zone is a designated area around a specific location where prohibited gang related activity is subject to increased penalty under Texas law. The specific locations include day care centers. The gang-free zone is within 1000 feet of your childcare center. For more information about what constitutes a gang-free zone, please consult sections 71.028 and 71.029 of the Texas Penal Code.

How do parents know where the gang-free zone ends?

The area that falls within a gang-free zone can vary depending on the type of location. The local municipal or county engineer may produce and update maps for the purposes of prosecution. Parents may contact their local municipality or courthouse for information about obtaining a copy of a map if they choose to do so.

What is the purpose of gang-free zones?

Similar to the motivation behind establishing drug-free zones, the purpose of gang-free zones is to deter certain types of criminal activity in areas where children gather by enforcing tougher penalties.

What does this mean for my day care center?

A childcare center must inform parents or guardians of children attending the center about the new gang-free zone designation. This means parents or guardians need to be informed that certain gang-related criminal activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of your center is a violation of this law and is therefore subject to increased penalty under state law.

When do I have to comply with the new requirements?

The law is already in effect, so providers should begin sharing information regarding gang-free zones immediately. Licensing staff will offer technical assistance to facilitate compliance until rules are proposed and adopted, which is estimated to occur in March 2010. In the meantime, providers should update their operational policies and procedures to include providing the information mandated by this law to the parents or guardians of the children in care.

For further information please contact your licensing representative or your local licensing office.

Child Care Licensing/jr

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