



Integrating, Fun, Education & Health

**PARENT  
HANDBOOK**

# **Hilltop Children's Center**

## Director's Welcome Letter

### *Welcome to Hilltop Children's Center*

*We are very happy to have you and your child as part of our Hilltop Children's Center family.*

*This handbook will help orient you to our program, policies and procedures. We also have a comprehensive, updated website with additional information.*

*Our school staff is here to provide your child with a positive environment for learning and growth on every level. Let us know how we can be of further help to you and your child at any time.*

*Thank you for choosing Hilltop Children's Center for your child's education enrichment.*

*Sincerely,*

*Pooneh (P) Jahadi-Yazdi, PhD  
Hilltop Children's Center Director*

This handbook is provided to answer questions you may have about our programs. If there is any question left unanswered or unclear, please do not hesitate to contact the director at 512-966-1106.

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## *Philosophy and Mission*

The purpose of Hilltop Children's Center is to offer a high quality, positive, and fun place for children while accommodating the needs of working parents by being both convenient and affordable. We are dedicated to providing a safe, nurturing, and academically enriched environment for our children. Our program's focus is on balancing student learning, physical activity, and emotional growth for children in a stimulating and enjoyable atmosphere. Hilltop Children's Center maintains clear policies and procedures and actively encourages both open communication and parent involvement.

## *Curriculum Goal*

Our curriculum is designed to encourage social, physical and educational development that is age-appropriate and promotes growth, while taking into account each child's unique interests and abilities.

We strongly believe optimal learning takes place when we provide learning opportunities that build on the children's existing knowledge and prior experiences. Children first learn simple, concrete concepts and then use these concepts to understand more complex ideas. Through the interaction with peers, adults, and various materials, children strengthen social skills and continue to learn about the world around them.

## GOALS FOR CHILDREN

At Hilltop Children's Center we strive to create and maintain an environment where children can acquire knowledge and skills to become fully functioning human beings who:

- Grow in all area: socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively.
- Develop self-awareness and acceptance about their own physical, social, and emotional selves.
- Develop creative problem-solving skills.
- Grow in self-confidence and willingness to try new things.
- Become inner-directed.
- Become responsible.
- Become creative thinkers, aware of choices.
- Acquire a sense of unity, connectedness and belonging.
- Appreciate individual differences and cultural diversities.

## *Registration Process*

The registration packet for Hilltop Children's Center program includes:

- Completed Registration form
- One-time \$75 registration fee
- Child Assessment Form
- Enrollment Contract/Receipt of Handbook
- Emergency Release Form

- Signed DFPS Admission Information form & Physician Statement
- Updated Record of Immunization
- Discipline and Guidance Policy
- Annual \$50 supply fee and first-month tuition (maybe prorated by the director)

A few things to remember when registering:

- The registration packet must be completed and signed in its entirety before it will be accepted.
- The emergency contact must be someone other than the parent/legal guardian of the child and must be a local person and contact number.
- The registration form must be signed by the child's parent/legal guardian.
- Both the registration form and registration fee must be turned in to the Hilltop Children's Center office at least twenty-four (24) hours before the child begins at the center.

We will maintain confidentiality of this information. We will ask you to complete new admission form every August to make sure we have the most-up-to-date information possible. Please give us updated information whenever there is a change. We need to update your contact numbers, address, and emergency contact information as soon as possible. You may email your updated information or any other pertinent information to [htccenter@yahoo.com](mailto:htccenter@yahoo.com).

We will also ask you to sign a statement acknowledging receipt of a copy of this parent handbook, which obtains our operation policies. There is a copy of the handbook on our webpage at [www.HilltopChildrensCenter.com](http://www.HilltopChildrensCenter.com). If we need to change any of these policies you will be notified of the changes in writing before the change takes effect.

### *Operation Hours*

Hilltop Children's Center is open Monday through Friday from 6:30 AM to 7:30 PM. We offer a variety of programs and schedules to accommodate parents' different schedules and needs. We offer 2, 3, or 5-days program from 9 AM to 3 PM (Half-day) or 6:30 AM to 6 PM (Full-day).

The After-school program is open from 3:30 (or Liberty Hill bus drop off time) until 6:00 PM for Regular program or 7:30 PM for Extended program. **Early drop off (before school care) is available for After-School program and must be prearranged.**

At Hilltop Children's Center we follow all Liberty Hill ISD calendar and weather related closings. Care may be available during the school holidays and breaks for Kindergarten thru 2nd graders. Please let the front office or the director know at least 2 days in advance if you need to bring your child to the Camp. See attached calendar for available dates.

*Tuition and Fees*

A non-refundable registration fee is due at the time of registration. This ensures your child a place in the class and also covers the cost of supplies for your child.

The tuition is based on monthly payments and is due on or before the 1<sup>st</sup> day of each month or bimonthly on the 1st and the 15th of the month with an additional \$10 processing fee. Please note that tuition remains the same regardless of holidays, vacations, sickness, bad weather closing, and closings beyond our control.

<b>Program</b>	<b>Early Preschool (18 mo to 35 mo old)</b>	<b>Pre-school (3 yrs to 5 yrs old)</b>	<b>Include</b>
Half Day (9:00 AM – 2:30 PM)*			
🚦 2 Days (T & Th)	\$195	\$175	AM Snack & Lunch
🚦 3 Days (M, W & F)	\$275	\$245	AM Snack & Lunch
🚦 5 Days (M – F)	\$390	\$365	AM Snack & Lunch
Extended Care (6:30 AM – 6:00 PM)*			
🚦 2 Days (T & Th)	\$360	\$330	Breakfast, 2 snacks & Lunch
🚦 3 Days (M, W & F)	\$515	\$480	Breakfast, 2 snacks & Lunch
🚦 5 Days (M – F)	\$795	\$735	Breakfast, 2 snacks & Lunch
After-School			
🚦 After School Care Only		\$195	Snack
🚦 Before & After School Care**		\$250	Breakfast and snack
Daily Rate			
🚦 Half Day (9:00 AM – 2:30 PM)*		\$25	AM Snack & Lunch
🚦 Extended Care (6:30 AM – 6:00 PM)		\$50	Breakfast, 2 snacks & Lunch

\*The days or the times a child attends the Center may vary upon Director’s approval.

Pick up time is at 3:00 (half-day) or 6:00 PM (full-day and after-school). We realize that an unexpected event may delay your arrival to pick up your child. If you are more than 5 minutes late picking up your child, fee of \$5 will automatically be added to your account plus \$1 per minute past your child’s scheduled pick-up time. The late pick-up charge must be paid within five working days of the late pick-up. If previous arrangements have been made you may pick up your child by 6:20 for additional flat fee of \$49 per month.

Children must be fully toilet trained and be able to speak in order to move to the Preschool group. While a child stays in the Early Preschool rates apply.

Tuition payments should be placed in the tuition box provided at the front desk on or before the first school day of each month. All checks should be made payable to Hilltop Children’s Center.

If payment is not received by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> day of each month (or the 18<sup>th</sup> for the second installment), a late fee of \$10 will be charged for each school day payment is late. If the account is delinquent for more than one week, you may be asked to withdraw your child until the account is made current. The school cannot guarantee a child's spot will be held when a child is withdrawn due to non-payment of tuition. Any unpaid tuition fees may be sent to a third party collection agency.

Check or automatic deposits from your bank are acceptable methods of payment. If Hilltop Children's Center receives a check back due to insufficient funds a \$25 fee will be assessed, in addition to any late fee payments. Any non-sufficient funds check will be automatically resubmitted electronically up to three times. Fees will apply each time. Once a check has been processed electronically, the check is no longer negotiable and will not be returned. You will be responsible for the principal amount, all returned-check fees, and any late payment fees. You will be required to pay by money order for the next three months. If more than 1 check is returned, then all future payments must be made by cash or money order.

There is a \$50 supply fee due at the time of registration, and every September thereafter. You will also be asked to update your child's information every September.

There may be up to a 5% tuition rate increase each year effective September 1<sup>st</sup>. New tuition rates will be available for parents' review on June 1<sup>st</sup>.

### *Attendance Procedures*

The safety of each child is paramount to the staff of the Hilltop Children's Center. If a child will not be attending the program as scheduled, it is essential that the child's parent calls the Center at 512-966-1106 to report the child's absence from the program by 10:00 AM.

Unfortunately we cannot credit your account for missed days due to illness, vacation, or a weather related closing. You may reserve your child's space for any full week absence by paying 25% of regular week's tuition with 2-week advance notice to the Director, if possible, for up to 2 weeks. If you require more than 2 weeks, contact the director for possible availability.

As a service and thank you for your loyalty, after one year of enrollment you will earn a week vacation tuition credit per child. Please notify the director in writing 2-weeks prior to have your tuition credit applied to your account.

### *Immunization Requirement*

For the protection of your child as well as the other children in care, your child must have all vaccinations required by the Texas Department of Health. You must provide an immunization record upon enrollment and provide updates to the record whenever your child receives more immunization.

For more information about immunizations, please visit the health department's website at [www.tdh.state.tx.us/immunize](http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/immunize).

### *Tuberculin Testing Requirements*

TB tests are not required at this time.

### *Vision and Hearing Screenings*

State law requires vision and hearing screenings for four-year-old children. Please provide copies of your child's screening results within four months of the child's fourth birthday if you choose not to have your child screened at the Center.

### *Holidays*

We follow all Liberty Hill ISD calendar closings during academic year. All holidays will be observed in accordance with this school year calendar unless otherwise stated.

Care may be available on days LHISD is closed. Please let the front office or the director know at least 2 days earlier if you need to bring your child to the Non-School Day Camp. See attached calendar for available dates. Non-School Day Camp rate is not included in the monthly tuition and will be charged only if your child attends school on those days. Please see the director for current Non-School Day camp rates and to reserve your space.

The Center **will be closed** for a week during the Christmas Holiday.

We will also be closed on the following Holidays:

- January 31<sup>st</sup>, and New Year's Day
- MLK Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the following Friday

If any of these days fall on a weekend day, the Director will determine which day of the week will be observed. Please review Hilltop Children's Center Closed Schedule or the Parent Board.

### *Snow Days, Inclement Weather and Delayed Openings*

Hilltop Children's Center will be closed whenever Liberty Hill Schools are closed due to inclement weather. Credits will not be issued for days when school is closed due to snow, and no additional charges will be incurred for the bad weather make-up days.



### *Withdrawal & Termination Policy*

Registration for each child is a commitment of enrollment for the entire school year. Should you choose to withdraw from the program before the end of the school year, parent must give Hilltop Children's Center a **30 day WRITTEN (or email)** notice on the first day of the month. Without this notice, parents will be responsible for the payment of one month's tuition.

If you withdraw your child from the program and decide to re-enroll at a later date, you must pay the full registration fee.

**Hilltop Children's Center reserves the right to withdraw any child from the program at any time if behavioral and/or emotional problems with a child disrupt the day to day operations, if other person's safety is jeopardized, or if Hilltop Children's Center staff determine the child makes it unreasonably difficult to meet the needs of the other children in the program.** Please see Challenging Behavior section (page 12) for more detail. There will be no refund of tuition for the month of termination.

**A child may also be suspended if the required health and emergency documentations are not up-to-date/complete or payment is not received within one-week of due date.**

### *Drop-Off and Pick-up Policy*

In order to assure the safety of your child, we ask that you sign your child in and out each day. **This is a state minimum standards.** The sign-in sheet/computer is available at the desk in the lobby as you enter Hilltop Children's Center. After signing-in, please take your child to his/her designated classroom or area.

Hilltop Children's Center utilizes a checkout system to ensure that each child is dismissed to the proper person at the end of the program. Children will not be allowed to leave the Center unattended. Please speak directly to the teacher in charge when picking up your child from the Center. The children can help with this responsibility by getting in the habit of saying goodbye to their teacher. Children may not go into the classrooms alone; they must be accompanied by a parent or teacher at all times while on campus. Once your child has joined you in the lobby (uncarpeted area) he/she is considered "signed out" and are your responsibility.

Anyone that will be picking up your child needs to be on your authorized pick-up list and will need to bring their photo ID. If a staff member is unfamiliar with any person picking up a child, the staff member will ask to see a picture identification before the child is released. Please make us aware if an authorized person, besides yourself, will be dropping off or picking up your child. We will not release a child to someone who is not listed on the authorization form.

In the event that a parent or other authorized person arrives to pick up a child and he or she appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, Liberty Hill Police Department will be

called. A ride home, or other appropriate assistance, will be offered in order to ensure the safety of the child.

### *Illness & Exclusion Criteria*

Per state minimum standards, we cannot care for a child who:

- Cannot participate comfortably in the Center's activities
- Has an illness that requires more care than staff can provide without compromising the health, safety and supervision of other children
- Has a fever with an oral temperature of 101 F.
- Has had two or more episodes of vomiting or diarrhea
- Has rash, with fever or behavioral change, until a physician has determined the illness not be a communicable disease
- Has communicable disease
  - including head lice or scabies

If your child has a communicable, or contagious, disease, the parents are required to notify Hilltop Children's Center within 24 hours so that the parents of other children may be notified

The child can return to care if the child has been **free of symptoms for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication**, or if the child's doctor provides a statement verifying the child is no longer contagious.

Please do NOT administer a fever-suppressant and bring your child to the Center. This is unfair not only to your child but also to the other children and teachers.

We do understand that parents often find it difficult to miss work, but if we call you and ask you to pick up your sick child we expect you to do so as quickly as possible. Please make arrangements for your child to be picked up within one hour for the sake of their well-being as well as other children at the Center. We will keep your child separated from other children until you arrival.

### *Procedures for Dispensing Medication*

We will administer only prescription medication once a day. All medications will be administered by the director, or the designated person in charge. If your schedule allows, you may wish to come during the day and give the medication yourself. Bring the medication to the office and fill out the appropriate form. For the safety of the children, medication cannot be stored in the cubby or backpack.

Prescription medications must be in the original container labeled with the child's full name. You must sign a form that authorizes center staff to administer the medication.

**Authorization for medication form:** Medication forms can be obtained from a teacher or Director. The form must show the date, name of medication, dosage, time to be administered, number of days administration is to continue and must be signed by a parent or guardian.

All medication must be given to a teacher or Director along with instructions. Never leave medication in your child's cubby or lunch box. Please bring a measuring utensil with medication. All medication containers will be returned to the parent when no longer needed, empty and/or when the medication has expired.

### *Medical and Dental Emergencies*

A signed consent form for emergency medical/dental treatment is required for all children upon enrollment. In the event of a medical/dental emergency, depending on the severity of the illness or injury, 911 may be called. The staff, who are all CPR and First Aid trained, will apply First Aid and the parent will be called right away. In the event of a serious illness or injury if the parents or authorized emergency contact cannot be reached right away the school will obtain emergency medical/dental care without specific instructions from the child's parents or authorized emergency contact as agreed upon in the consent form.

In case of minor accident or injury:

1. Staff will administer first aid to the child
2. The child's parents or physician will be called, if necessary.
3. If any treatment is administered, no matter how minor, an injury report will be filled out by the teacher and signed by the parent. One copy will be placed in the child's file.
4. The Director will log injury

### *Clothing*

Children should wear clothes and shoes that will allow them to participate in all activities in the Hilltop Children's Center. Children go outside every day in our programs, as we consider outdoor play an essential element of the curriculum that supports children's growth. Schedules may be modified to accommodate inclement weather, which will include temperatures falling below 35°F and above 100°F. Please always dress your child in warm layers in cold weather and apply sunscreen and bug spray on hot days.

We do not allow children to wear short shorts, overly revealing shirts, and/or slogans that will encourage inappropriate behavior or comments. Underpants should be covered at all times. If a child is wearing a dress, they must have shorts or bloomers underneath. Also, should spaghetti straps be worn, they must fit correctly. Clothing "malfunctions", so to speak, often produce unnecessary, age inappropriate conversation.

Shoes should be comfortable and provide adequate protection for the feet during outdoor play. Flip-flops, open-toes sandals, jelly shoes and any shoes with heels are prohibited as they present a safety hazard. Please make sure the shoes are easy for your child to put on and take off. Most

of our preschoolers do not know how to tie their shoes, so it would be much easier for them if they wear Velcro tennis shoes.

All children, regardless of age, need at least one complete weather-appropriate change of the clothing (shirt, pants, underwear and socks) at the Center in case they have a spill or accident. Bring an extra pair of shoes if available. Please pack the extra set of clothing in a zip-lock bag with THEIR NAMES ON EVERYTHING. As the seasons change please check and change the outfits left at the Center. Young children may need several changes of clothing each day.

### *Toilet (Potty) Training*

The procedure of toilet learning at the Center typically takes place in the two-year-old classroom. When you feel your child is ready for toilet (potty) training, we ask that you begin teaching at home during a weekend or vacation. See our checklist “is your child ready to be potty trained?” We will follow through and encourage your child while in care with the understanding that it will only work if we work together.

Toilet training will be done in a relaxed matter with the cooperation of the family. Our approach toward toilet training is one of positive reinforcement and encouragement. Children are never humiliated or punished for having an “accident”, or shamed into using the toilet. The child’s inability or unwillingness to use the toilet for elimination is referred to as an “accident” and treated in a matter-of-fact sort of way. We recognize that toilet learning takes time and we do not rush the process.

Since we have carpets in most of our Center, we ask that children who have not fully learned to control themselves be in pull-ups at all time. Please make sure they have three changes of clothing and a bag of pull-ups at the Center during this time. Also please make sure they are wearing clothes that are easily pulled up and down to encourage self-help skills. NO OVERALLS, BELTS, ONESIES (shirts that snag in the crotch), ONE PIECE OUTFITS or ZIPPERS. An elastic waist is the best for kids and gives them a feeling of self-accomplishment when they can pull them up or down by themselves. Soiled clothes during any accident will not be washed at school. They are bagged and sent home. Please make sure to replace the clothes you took home with clean ones the next day.

Children 3-years old and up must be to use the bathroom independently and able to speak before they move up to Preschool group.

### **Is Your Child Ready to be Potty Trained?**

- Follows simple directions
- Remains dry for at least 2 hours at a time during the day
- Dry after naptime

- \_\_\_ Regular and predictable bowel movements (some may have bowel movements every day and some may have them less frequently)
- \_\_\_ walks to and from the bathroom, pulls down own pants and pulls them up again.
- \_\_\_ Seems uncomfortable with soiled or wet diapers
- \_\_\_ Seems interested in the toilet
- \_\_\_ Has asked to wear grown-up underwear.

If the child has most of the skills marked, you can assume the child is ready to start toilet training.

### *Tooth Brushing*

Children are provided an opportunity for tooth brushing to remove food and plaque. Toothbrushes and toothpaste are provided by parents and should be changed every 6 months.

### *Meals & Food Service*

#### PROGRAM PRACTICES

Written policies include the following:

- a) Liquids and food hotter than 110 degrees F are kept out of reach.
- b) Staff are educated on food allergies and they take precautions to ensure children are protected.
- c) On days that providers serve meals, prepared food that is brought into the program to be shared among children is commercially prepared OR prepared in a kitchen that is inspected by local health officials.
- d) That healthy snacks (as listed by the Texas Department of Agriculture) are available for school aged children as students arrived.
- e) That staff do not reward good behavior or clean plate with foods of any kind
- f) That, on days that providers serve meals, milk, fresh fruit and vegetables are available for children who bring lunches from home.

#### HOME LUNCH PRACTICES

- a) Include in written policies/procedures to ensure the safety of food brought from home, including refrigeration or other means to maintain appropriate temperatures.
- b) Programs have policies in place outlining strategies to educate children and their parents on nutrition.
- c) Programs provide parents with information about foods that may cause allergic reactions.
- d) Providers provide sample menus of healthful lunches for parents whose children bring food from home. Parents are encouraged to provide meals with adequate nutritional value.

Each day the children have a fun time together around the table as they eat. Meal time teaches patience, manners, independence, language development and nutrition. Our menu policies are structured to provide children with a variety of foods with different colors and textures to include whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables; less processed items; and foods that meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans established by the USDA. The menu is based on a 4-week rotating cycle, developed by Dr PJ Yazdi, a registered dietitian.

We serve a healthy breakfast at 7:15, and a morning snack at 9:00. Children who arrive after 9:00 AM should eat breakfast/snack at home. A healthy lunch is served between 11:30 AM to 12:00 PM. Afternoon snack is served after naptime (3:15 PM) for Preschoolers; and at 3:45 for our After-School Program when they arrive to the Center. Children in the Extended After-School Program, or those not picked up by 6:15, will be served dinner at 6:45 PM. Monthly menu will be posted on the Parent Board.

If your child is going to be late to school please let us know by 10 AM so we can count him/her in our lunch planning, or there may not be enough food to serve your child. Otherwise, please make sure to send lunch with them to school if they will arrive before 12. You may send a healthy lunch with your child but please remember we cannot refrigerate any outside food in our refrigerator. Therefore we ask you to put cold pack in your child's lunchbox to keep food at safe temperature.

If your child has any food allergies or dietary restrictions please let us know. We will try to accommodate his or her dietary needs to our best ability.

### *Physical Activity*

Hilltop Children's Center recognizes the importance of physical activity for young children. Implementation of appropriate physical activity practices supports the health and development of children in care, as well as assisting in establishing positive lifestyle habits for the future.

In order to promote physical activity and provide all children with numerous opportunities for physical activities that are appropriate for their age and are fun Hilltop Children's Center will provide a variety of play materials (both indoors and outdoors) that promote physical activity. Weather permitting, toddlers (ages 1 through 2 year olds) will be provided with at least 60-90 minutes of daily outdoor active play opportunities, whereas preschoolers and school age children (ages 3 thru 12 years old) will have at least 90-120 minutes of daily outdoor active play opportunities across 2 or 3 separate occasions. If weather limits outdoor time, indoor active play time will be increased so that the total amount of active play time remains the same.

### *Television Viewing*

Hilltop Children's Center provides an activity-focused early learning environment. We believe children learn best through active participation, hands-on experiences, interactive conversation, and exploration.

Generally, we do not use television or videos as part of our regular curriculum. There may be special learning occasions when a teacher may choose to show something that would follow a special topic she has covered with the children.

Children at Hilltop Children's Center under age two, will not have access to television viewing, which includes watching videos, or DVDs, playing with video games, and using the computer.

For children age two and older who are in care four or more hours each day, television screen time is only done just before naptime, no more than a half an hour at a time and is limited to PBS Kids. They may on very rare occasions watch a child appropriate movie on a rainy day.

### *Water Activities*

Your child cannot participate in any water activities without your approval and written permission. During the summer months we will have "Sprinkle Day" for our Mother's Day Out program. We will have a sprinkler set up on the playground and other fun things to do. Please send a swimsuit, towel, spray sun-screen, swim shoes, swim diapers if in pull-ups, plastic bag for wet items, and change of clothing to the Center with your child on these days.

### *Field Trips*

Your child cannot participate in any field trip without your approval and written permission. You will be notified in advance of any field trip.

### *Transportation*

Currently we have very limited transportation capabilities. After-School Program children at Liberty Hill ISD will be dropped off at Hilltop Children's Center by the school bus. We will be able to transport limited number of school-age children from Jim Plain Elementary School.

Staff and children must wear seatbelts when they are in the van. The van is equipped with fire extinguishers and first aid kits. The staff carries a cell phone for safety reasons. The staff person can carry a notebook with emergency numbers and other important information for each child.

Please call Hilltop Children's Center at 512-966-1106 as early as possible if your child will be absent. Please call the Center before 1:30 PM if your child will not be riding the van from the school to the Center.

### *Birthdays*

If you wish to celebrate your child's birthday at Hilltop Children's Center, please discuss your plans with the classroom teacher in advance. He or she can advise you of any food allergies or scheduling conflicts.

If you celebrate your child's birthday away from the Center, we cannot distribute invitations in the classrooms unless the entire class is invited.

## *Animals*

Currently we do not have any pets at school. We may occasionally have visiting pets, but we will notify you of those events as they are planned.

Please note that kids will try to pet the dogs next door. If your child has any allergies please notify the Director and/or his or her teachers.

## *After-school Homework Policy*

Hilltop Children's Center stresses the importance of homework and sets time aside every day for the children to complete their school assignment. They will have access to computer for school work, as well as reference materials. Staff members are available to supervise the homework area and to assist the children with their work, however, a child who needs individual help with his or her homework must ask. Private tutoring may be purchased separately.

Children who do not wish to use homework time to complete their homework may use the time to read a book.

## *Challenging Behaviors*

We believe all students and staff have a right to a safe and healthy environment. Where they can observe, learn, and practice the many social skills they need to get along and build friendships with their peers. We will discuss how to treat each other with kindness and respect.

If a child is having a difficult time maintaining positive behavior, the teacher, Director and parent(s) will have ongoing conversation with parent to express concerns and discuss strategies in addressing the behaviors. Conversations will be framed around school readiness and objectives of our program. Parents will be kept informed of their child's progress.

Challenging behaviors could be, but are not limited to: verbal (yelling, teasing, insulting, and threatening to cause harm), physical (hitting, kicking, spitting, biting), relational (excluding, turning friends against one, spreading rumors), cyber bullying (sending hurtful messages or images through internet) and sexual harassment.

Each behavior will be addressed on an individual basis and may include an "ouchie" or incident report, communication log, or other written document. The first time a behavior is observed at Hilltop Children's Center, we will warn the child(ren) with explanation of why the behavior is not acceptable and notify the parents of children involved in writing. The second time it happens, child will be removed from classroom and parent conference will be scheduled. Parents of all children involved will be notified in writing. Third incident will call for immediate action. Parents are notified and must pick up the child and take them home. An administrative meeting will be required to discuss the continuation of the child with the Center. We reserve the right to deny return of a child who is a risk to the safety and health of the staff and other children. Tuition will not be refunded for the month of termination.



## *Discipline & Guidance*

We emphasize the teaching of appropriate behavior, not the punishment of bad behavior.

Discipline at Hilltop Children's Center is:

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

Our staff only uses positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include at least the following:

- (1) Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
- (2) Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
- (3) Redirecting behavior using positive statements; and
- (4) Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.

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

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

## *Parent Conduct*

It is a proven fact that children learn from what they see. All Hilltop Children's Center staff are expected to be courteous to every person that enters this center. In return, we expect the same treatment from anyone that enters our Center.

Cursing, rude, obnoxious, degrading or sexual explicit language will not be tolerated in the Center or anywhere on the property of Hilltop Children's Center. Any person not adhering to this rule will be asked to leave the premises immediately. If the person(s) refuse to do so immediately, the Liberty Hill Police Department will be notified and charges may be filed. If the person(s) in violation of this rule have children that currently attend our Center, the child's care may be terminated. If anyone is heard to be speaking in the above matter to any child, including their own, he or she will be referred to Texas Department of Family Protective Services.

Hilltop Children's Center will not tolerate any type of physical abuse in our Center or anywhere on the property. Fighting of any type will not be tolerated. If the physical altercation involves a child, whether enrolled at our Center or not, the proper authorities will be immediately notified.

The only information teachers should share with parents, is information concerning his or her child. Conversations about other children, other parents, co-workers, supervisors, etc., are unprofessional and illegal.

### *Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting*

At Hilltop Children's Center we feel that child abuse and neglect is a very serious situation and we take all evidence of such behaviors very seriously. We strive to make our Center a place where all children feel safe and secure. All staff members of Hilltop Children's Center are mandated court reporters. We are required by law to report all incidents of child abuse, neglect, and/or deprivation to the Texas Department of Family Protective Services. Each staff member has been specifically trained to identify these particular behaviors in young children. It is neither our intent nor desire to judge anyone, but the safety and well-being of our students is our first priority. If any type of child abuse and/or neglect is suspected, the incidence will be immediately documented and reported to the proper authorities.

### *Personal Belongings*

Often children may want to bring in items related to the unit being studied or share items from a vacation. You should check with your child's teacher to see if there is a day designated for sharing such items. Please label all items brought to school.

We ask that children DO NOT bring the following items to Hilltop Children's Center:

- Toys and other items that may cause a distraction to the program in any way.
- Items such as toy guns, swords, knives and any other toy of this nature.
- Items of significant importance and value to your child or family due to possibility of loss or damage.
- Gum and candy
- Money
- Cosmetics and jewelry

### *Parent Communication*

Good communication is important in building a relationship between Hilltop Children's Center staff and parents. Please keep your child's teacher informed about any significant events happening in your child's life. We will keep you informed of any significant happenings at our Center through our monthly newspaper or on our Parent Board in the lobby.

It may not be possible for you to have a long conversation with your child's teacher at drop-off or pick-up times as the teachers are responsible for supervising all of the children in their care. If you have a special concern, a meeting or phone conference may be arranged.

One parent-teacher conference will be scheduled during the year (usually in February or March) to share your child's progress. Please remember that staff usually cannot converse with you at length during arrival and departure time, since they must give their full attention to the children in care. If there is a need for a long discussion outside of the conference times, please call the office at 512-966-1106, and we will arrange a convenient time for a meeting or phone call.

Children often receive minor injuries (small cuts, scrapes, and bruises) during the course of their active play. Staff member complete an "Ouchie" report for each minor injury and put a copy in your child's cubby to inform you about the injury.

We will contact you immediately in the unlikely event that your child sustains a more serious injury or is put at risk in any way. Licensing rules requires us to complete a written report on serious injuries and incidents. You will receive a copy of the report and will be asked to sign the report.

### *Open Door Policy*

In you have a question or concern that cannot be addressed by your child's teacher, please contact the director to arrange a meeting or call to discuss your concerns.

### *Parent Visits and Participation*

Parents are welcome to visit his or her child at any time without an appointment. We suggest visits not be made between 12 PM and 2 PM as this is naptime.

You may have a hobby or special interest that you would want to share with the children. Please talk to the director about volunteer opportunities. We have several parties to celebrate holidays such as Christmas and Valentine's Day. We welcome your assistance and attendance to our parties.

If you volunteer we will ask you to provide information for a criminal background check, complete a notarized affidavit about your background, and attend a short orientation session.

We are always looking for ways to improve our programs and we welcome your suggestions.

### *Electronic Communication Policy*

Children and staff members are not permitted to use cell phones on campus. Staff is not allowed to text children or take pictures with cell phones or "friend" them on any social media site. Children are not able to carry personal cell phones, iPads, or iPods and if they have one it will be turned off and placed in their back pack.

Parents are welcome to call Hilltop Children's Center to leave a message for their child when necessary but it is not possible for children to make or receive telephone calls at the After-School program.

### *Photos and Videos*

The Director is able to take pictures and videos of children for the program brochure, email newsletter, member newsletter and web page. All parents need to sign a consent form which is in the parent registration form.

You are allowed to photograph, videotape or audio record your child, but not other children, while she or he is at Hilltop Children's Center. However, this recording may only be used for lawful and private home use. You may not publish, publicly display or sell such recordings.

### *Gang Free Zone*

Any area within 1000 feet of Hilltop Children's Center is considered a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized activity are subject to harsh penalty. Please the Parent Board for posting related to "Gang Free Zone".

### *Firearms, Weapons and Drugs*

In accordance with State Laws, smoking, alcohol, illegal drugs, firearms, hunting knives, bows and arrows, and other weapons are NOT allowed on Hilltop Children's Center premises and/or parking lot.

Pursuant to section 30.06 and 30.07, penal code (trespassing by license holder with a concealed handgun or an openly carried handgun), a person licensed under subchapter H, Chapter 411, government code (handgun licensing law), may not enter Hilltop Children's Center with a concealed handgun and/or a handgun that is carried openly.

Law enforcement officials who are trained and certified to carry a firearm on duty may have firearms or ammunition on the premises of Hilltop Children's Center.

### *Emergency Preparedness*

When the decision is made to evacuate Hilltop Children's Center facility, the Director – or person in charge – will make the announcement in the most expeditious way possible that all persons are to evacuate to their assigned assembly area and await further instruction. The building is to be evacuated completely. The Director, or person in charge, will notify appropriate personnel and communicate what type of emergency is present. A binder containing parent and emergency contact telephone numbers for each child in care, authorization for emergency care for each child and attendance record information for children in care at the time of emergency will be taken to the designated safe area. The children will be relocated to the designated safe area by the staff. 911 will be called from a cell phone outside the building once the evacuation is complete and all parents will be notified. The designated safe area is Margarita's Restaurant located at 10280 Highway 29, Liberty Hill 78642, phone number 512-515-0808. We will be

conducting lock-down, fire, and storm drills on regular basis. An in-depth emergency preparedness plan is available upon request.

### *Breast Feeding*

Parents have the right to breast feed or provide breast milk for their children while in care. If your child is still being breast fed please let us know. The Center will provide a room with a seat for parents who would like to come in and breast feed their child.

Upon request, a compilation of breastfeeding education and support resources in the community is provided to the parents.

### *Policy Revisions*

Revisions to policies and procedures, contracts and forms we make maybe done with a minimum of 2-weeks' notice UNLESS it is a new regulation – these changes will take place immediately. Policies, contracts, and forms will be reviewed at least annually and updated, if necessary. We will notify parents in writing of any changes. All previous forms will become obsolete.

### *Reviewing Standards and Reports*

A copy of minimum standards is available for review in the office. Our most recent licensing inspector report is always posted on the Parent Board. You may also review the standards and our compliance history at [www.txchildcaresearch.org](http://www.txchildcaresearch.org).

### *Contacting Child Care Licensing*

We are regulated by the Department of Family and Protective Services. You can find out more about the regulation of child care facilities by visiting their website at [www.txchildcaresearch.org](http://www.txchildcaresearch.org). You may contact the local licensing office by calling 512-939-3561.

You may report the suspected abuse or neglect of children by calling the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800- 252-5400 open 24 hours/7 days a week.