



GARDEN OAKS

EARLY LEARNING CENTER

2024 Parent Handbook

Our Mission:

At Garden Oaks Baptist Early Learning Center, we are dedicated to providing your child with a developmentally appropriate environment. We strive for this environment to create a thirst for learning in the child, introduce them to the God that created them, shape their moral integrity, encourage a sense of joy, and build upon their natural curiosity and wonder for the world around them.

Our Philosophy:

We believe each child is fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 129:14). Therefore, each child begins developing their own unique personality at a very young age. Early experiences at home and in the child care center encourage children to increase their self-awareness as they begin to explore, respond, create, and make choices. We strive to provide a loving, nurturing, and creative environment for children; an environment that allows children to discover their own talents, sense of identity and personality. We provide a physical environment that is safe, clean, healthy, and child friendly.

At Garden Oaks ELC, we strive to create an environment that is responsive to their social, emotional, intellectual, physical and spiritual needs; an environment that allows each child the freedom of self-expression. Helping a child to discover and explore the world around them will help them grow mentally. Basics such as colors, shapes, numbers, and alphabet will be introduced in a way that makes learning fun. We use the ABEKA and FrogStreet Curriculums which provides developmentally appropriate activities that focus on the process of learning while also allowing the children to enjoy their successful experiences. We encourage not just learning, but the love of learning.

Our Policies:

The following policies are in place to help us care for your child to the best of our ability. In no way are these policies a limiting factor to the excellence in care we will strive for daily with our students. These policies are subject to change at any time under the discretion of Garden Oaks Early Learning Center leadership and governing authorities. When able, a one week notice of policy changes will be given to parents. Questions or concerns regarding the following policies should be taken directly to the ELC Director.

Operation Policy and Late Pickup:

Days and hours of operation (year-round):

Days: Monday through Friday

Hours: 7:00 am — 6:00 pm

No early care will be available prior to 7am. A late fee of \$1 per minute will be charged for pick up after 6:00pm with no exceptions given.

Planned Closure & Holidays:

New Years Eve

New Year's Day

MLK Day

Good Friday

Memorial Day

Juneteeth

4th of July

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Day, the Wednesday before Thanksgiving and the Friday after Thanksgiving

Christmas Break – Will vary depending on when Christmas Eve and Christmas Day fall within the week. Please refer to this year's Academic Calendar for exact Christmas Break dates.

Other planned closures can be found in our Event Calendar

Registration and Supply Fees:

A one-time registration fee of \$225 for the first child and \$100 for each additional child will be charged upon registration.

For all students, a supply & curriculum fee of \$175 per child will be charged in the month of August for the new school year.

Tuition:

Infants - 6 weeks to 18 months

2 days/week (T/Th) - \$619

3 days/week (MWF) - \$759

5 days/week (M-F) - \$1049

Toddlers - 18 months through 2 years old

2 days/week (T/Th) - \$519

3 days/week (MWF) - \$659

5 days/week (M-F) - \$949

3 year through 5 years old

2 days/week (T/Th) - \$429

3 days/week (MWF)- \$580

5 days/week (M-F) - \$849

A sibling discount of 10% will be given on more than one child's tuition. Tuition is subject to annual review and increase as needed.

Late Tuition Fee:

- Tuition is due on the first of every month. A grace period will be given until the 10th of each month.
- A \$35.00 late fee will be assessed after the 10th of each month.
- Tuition is due in full every month regardless of illness, holidays, vacations and or inclement weather.
- Students will not be permitted to attend if account goes 45 days past due.

Refund Policy:

Registration and Tuition fees are **non-refundable** after enrollment is secured.

Meals

Garden Oaks ELC serves two (2) meals per day (breakfast and lunch) and one (1) healthy snack (in the afternoon.) Meals and snacks are prepared in compliance with governing federal and state guidelines to assure nutritional value. A monthly menu is posted for inspection and comment as well as sent out to all parents. Breakfast will be served between 8am-8:30am each morning, but not after 8:55am. You are welcome to send in food from home for your child to replace meals we serve. Please note, all food must be clearly marked with your child's name and the date. Any food sent from home, will not be heated in a microwave or stored in a refrigerator at school. We do not allow anything that contains peanuts in our facility.

Release of Children:

For safety reasons, children will only be released to that child's parent unless prior written or verbal permission is given. Parents will need to notify the center of additional persons authorized to pick up their child either by a Pickup Authorization Form found in your registration packet, or with written or verbal confirmation prior to the child's pickup. All authorized pickup persons will be asked for a photo ID for verification of identity before the child will be released to them.

Parent Visits to ELC Campus:

Garden Oaks ELC welcomes parents to our campus and to step into our classroom at any time. We have an open-door policy. Additionally, mothers with infants are welcome to join their child in the infant classroom to be able to breastfeed your child at any time. When arriving on campus, parents should check in at the front office before you go into a classroom.

Breastfeeding Mothers and Infant Feedings:

All breastfeeding mothers are welcome to come and feed their child at any point while in our care. We will provide a safe space for you to feed your child upon your arrival. All babies will be given the option of breast milk provided by their parent/guardian, or formula provided by their parent/guardian. An Infant Feeding Form will be given to the parent/guardian every 30 days and kept on file and will be followed by all staff that are caring for your child.

Inclement Weather Notifications:

Due to inclement weather, it may be necessary for Garden Oaks ELC to open late, close early, or close for the entire day. We will make every effort to open the Center; however, safety of our staff, children, and families is of utmost concern. In the event of inclement weather, and in most cases, our Center will follow HISD closings schedules. We will work to notify you regarding closings as soon as we know one is necessary. Please look for updates on the HISD website, our Garden Oaks ELC Facebook Page and an email that will be sent out from our Center staff when closures happen.

Fire Drills and Emergency Preparedness Plan

Fire drills are performed once a month. Children are taught how to exit the building quickly and safely and to stay with their class once outside of the building. Infants are evacuated in cribs.

Disaster drills will be conducted every 3 months. Disaster drills include but not limited to shelter in place emergencies, hurricane, flood or tornado. If relocation is necessary or enforced by the proper authorities, everyone will be transported accordingly to the Emergency Designated Location below:

Business Name: Gabby's BBQ

Address: 3101 N Shepherd Dr.
Houston Texas 77018

Contact Info: (713) 864-5049

Water Activities:

Children ages 12 months and older may participate in sprinkler play during the summer months. This will take place on our playground and will be supervised by the appropriate staff. Parents will always be notified of water days prior to the activity date. If you wish your child to not participate in water activities, please contact the front office.

Confidentiality:

Information relating to your child is confidential and will not be released unless written authorization is provided by a parent or legal guardian. All records are kept in a locked file. An exception will be made in the event of suspected child abuse. Any such suspicion will be reported to the Director for immediate investigation and action with the appropriate authorities. Records may also be accessed by an authorized parent, staff member, Texas Department of Family and Child Services, and law enforcement.

Grievance and Communication

Occasionally there may be questions, problems or grievances that arise. It is our policy to follow the Matthew 18:15-17 principle. The teachers and administration of Garden Oaks ELC want to help you resolve any issue that may arise. With this in mind, we ask you to please follow the guidelines below:

- Bring any and all questions and criticisms to the person most directly involved.
- If there are questions or concerns about a specific classroom action or procedure, contact the appropriate teacher.
- If a satisfactory conclusion is not reached, request a meeting with the Director.

The guidelines and policies of the ELC have been established to insure a peaceful, God honoring Christian school environment for students, faculty and families. The faculty and administration of Garden Oaks ELC are intent in helping you resolve any concern you may have. However, we must have your assistance in accomplishing this goal. We want to have open and clear communication at all times. If we do not address the situation head on and talk a situation out directly with those involved, an issue can rarely be resolved. We appreciate your help in making our center better by openly communicating with us directly.

Toilet Training

It is our goal to have children from our older two-year old's class on up be toilet trained. We are happy to work with them to achieve this important milestone regardless of their age. We focus on positive reinforcement (e.g., praise and stickers.) We feel there is a window of opportunity that comes at approximately 2 ½ years of age which is where our center will start focusing on this training. We try to maximize this opportunity. We will do our best to support your at-home initiatives and desire to communicate well regarding toilet training and work together toward this goal.

In most cases, students are required to be fully toilet trained by the time they enter the 3's class. Contact our front office if your child will require specialized attention for this training.

Texas State Licensing & Emergency Contact Numbers

Garden Oaks Early Learning Center is a fully licensed daycare facility through the Texas State Department of Family Protective Services. You are welcome to view all licensing reports at www.dfps.state.tx.us or at your local Texas State Department Licensing office.

Garden Oaks Early Learning Center also fully adheres and strives to not only meet but exceed the minimum standards for daycares required by the Texas State Department. You are able to view a copy of the Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers by going here: www.hhs.texas.gov

In addition, below are listed the emergency contact phone numbers for our facility.

EMS, Law enforcement, Fire Department: 911

Poison Control: (800) 222 – 1222

Texas Abuse & Neglect Hotline: (800) 252 – 5400

Childcare Licensing Office: (713) 940 – 5200

Fire arms and other weapons

(DFPS Chapter 746-3707 Subchapter S Safety Practices Division) Only law enforcement officials who are trained and certified to carry a firearm on duty, may have fire arms and/or ammunition on the premises of the ELC. Additionally, all toys that explode or that shoot (such as BB guns, darts, fireworks, etc.) are prohibited within our center.

Gang Free Zone: Under the Texas Penal Code any area within 1000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to a harsher penalty.

Employee First Aid/CPR and Health Checks

All ELC staff members are certified in first aid and infant/child CPR. All staff members go through additional continuing education classes and safety procedures annually.

Additionally, employees strictly comply with protective procedures that include but are not limited to:

- An employee will wear gloves when handling or cleaning body fluids such as wiping noses, mouths, or bottoms, and tending to sores.
- An employee with open wounds and/or any injury that inhibits handwashing such as casts, bandages, or braces, will not prepare food or have close contact with children as prohibited by their injury.
- An employee will wear a mask when they have any type of respiratory symptom to reduce the spread of droplets to surrounding areas.
- An employee will wear a mask when taking care of children with respiratory symptoms.
- An employee will remove gloves and wash hands immediately after each task to prevent cross contamination to other children.
- An employee will be asked to leave the center when they have any signs or symptoms of illness and will not return for 24 hours after they are symptom free.

In addition, all children will be closely monitored for any evidence of illness daily. Children showing signs of fever, diarrhea, vomiting or communicable diseases will be separated from the rest of the children in their class and will be sent home upon the first sign of symptoms.

In the event an Epi Pen must be administered to a child, the Epi Pen will be disposed in a marked Hazardous Waste container located in the front office Medical Center. Any and all hazardous waste from medical emergencies will be disposed of following hazardous waste protocols.

Injury and Emergency Medical Procedures

In the event of non-life-threatening medical emergencies, we will contact the parents first. If we cannot locate parents or designated adult, we will call the child's physician. If he/she cannot be reached, we will call for emergency medical assistance.

In the event of a life-threatening medical emergency every effort will be made to stabilize the child and

emergency services are contacted right away. After which, Garden Oaks ELC Director will notify the parents.

Policy on Biting

Biting is a natural development stage that many children go through. It is usually a temporary condition that is most common between thirteen and twenty- four months of age. The safety of your child is of primary concern to our staff.

The following steps will be taken if a biting incident occurs at our center:

- The biting will be interrupted with a firm “No, we don’t bite our friends!” We will remain calm and not overreact.
- The bitten child will be comforted and the biter will be removed from the situation and given something to do that is satisfying.
- The wound of the bitten child will be assessed and cleansed with soap and water and ice will be applied.
- Appropriate forms will be filled out.
- Both parents will be notified of the incident.

Confidentiality of all children involved will be maintained at all times.

The following steps will be taken if the biting occurs on a **regular basis**:

- The biter’s parents will be notified that their child bit and injured the skin of another child.
- If the biting behavior continues, parents will be asked to remove the child from the center until the biting behavior has passed.

Every child is unique and special. Subsequently, every biting situation will be handled on an individual basis. The ELC Administration and staff will stay in close contact with parents and every effort will be made to guide the child through this developmental stage.

Medical Records:

Each child in the program is required to have current medical and immunization records on file in the office and regularly updated in compliance with state law. Children 4 years or older must be screened for possible hearing or vision problems within 120 days of enrollment. The required report must be signed by a licensed professional.

Your child cannot attend without proper medical records on file!

Illness:

Because of our concern for the health of your child and all other children in the center, Children will not be permitted to attend the ELC with the following signs or symptoms of illness:

- A fever of 100.4 within the previous 24 hours
- Vomiting/diarrhea with the previous 24 hours
- Any symptoms of a contagious diseases such as scarlet fever, measles, mumps, chicken pox or whooping cough.
- Unexplained rash or skin infection
- Pink eye or other eye infections
- Head lice (child should be free of all nits before returning)

Children who become ill during the day will need to be sent home. In all cases, the Center reserves the right to send home a child with suspicious or prolonged symptoms. Re-admittance is at the discretion of the ELC Director but in most cases is permitted once a child is symptom free for 24 hours or has a doctor’s note. When

a child is absent due to illness, please notify the ELC as early as possible so that we can watch for symptoms with other students in your child's class.

Medication Policies

Garden Oaks ELC will only administer medications that are dated and labeled and that have a Medical Authorization Form on file with the front office. All medication policies are subject to state regulations.

Prescription medication must be in the original container and labeled with the child's complete name, the medication name, recommended dosage, time intervals for administration, method of administration, expiration date and physician's name and license number.

Topical ointments may be applied as needed for protection against the sun or diaper rash under written parental instructions. Topical ointments should be given to your child's teacher and never left in cubbies. All topical ointments will be kept beyond the reach of children at all times. Parents must sign a Garden Oaks ELC medication authorization form for each individual medication.

Consumer Product Safety Commission:

No items that are listed on the Consumer Product Safety Commission recall list will be allowed in Garden Oaks Baptist Early Learning Center. You can check the CPSC's recall list by visiting www.cpsc.gov or the Texas Department of Family & Protective Services web site—www.dfps.state.tx.us

Infant Sleep Policy:

Infants not yet able to turn over on their own must be placed in a face-up sleeping position in the infant's own crib, unless you have a completed a Sleep Exception Form that includes a signed statement from a health-care professional stating that a different sleeping position for the child is medically necessary. In addition, infants are only allowed to sleep in a CPSC approved crib. Infants must not sleep in any restrictive devices, or be swaddled while sleeping. Documentation from a health care professional is required for an infant to sleep in a device other than an empty CPSC approved crib. Please contact our front office to make accommodations like this for your child.

Outdoor Policy

Children will be outdoors every day that weather conditions permit. Weather permitting means everyday unless there is active precipitation, extremely hot or cold conditions or public announcements that advise people to remain indoors due to weather conditions such as high levels of pollutions, extreme cold or heat that might cause health problems. Weather that poses a significant health risk shall include wind chill at or below 15°F and heat index at or above 90°F, as identified by the National Weather Service.

The following is our policy:

Our teachers provide the children with the opportunity to go outdoors daily. In the winter, we take the children outside if the temperature, including wind chill factor, is above 32°F. When it is between 32-40°F we limit time outdoors to 10-15 minutes maximum. When the temperature is above 40°F, we remain outside for the normal allotted time. If the temperature is below 32°F (including wind chill) we do not go outside. In the winter, we carefully bundle up the children with their coats, hats and mittens or gloves.

In the summer, we take the children outside if the temperature, including heat index, is below 100°F. When the temperature/ heat index is 96-100°F or a Code Red Air Quality, outside time will be limited to fifteen

minutes. Also, cold water is provided during outside time. Anytime children are not able to go outside to play, they will be taken to our indoor gym for recreation time.

Insect Repellent and Sunscreen Policy

If you would like for your child to wear sunscreen or insect repellent while on the playground or during outdoor recreation, please make sure to send in a bottle of each to keep at school in the classroom. Our teachers are asked to put sunscreen on the children before they go outside for more than a 15-minute time period and insect repellent at the parent's request. All bottles must be FDA approved and labeled with your child's name. We are unable to share products between students. Please provide each child with an individual labeled bottle.

Withdrawals

Parents may withdraw a child from the ELC program at any time. A 30 day notice is required. Parents wishing to withdraw their child who fail to provide a 30 day notice will be liable for the last month's tuition.

Student Behavior Agreement:

All students at Garden Oaks ELC are expected to abide by our below Student Behavior Agreement. This is important to maintain a good learning atmosphere for all of our students as well as the wellbeing and safety of all of our students and staff members. Failure to adhere to this policy can affect the eligibility of your child for our program. If adherence to this policy is not kept, Garden Oaks ELC reserves the right to dismiss your child from enrollment in our center.

As an enrolled student of Garden Oaks Baptist Early Learning Center, I agree that:

1. I will not damage the school, church, or other student's property.
2. If I do damage the above-mentioned property, I will replace or repair it.
3. I will be truthful.
4. I will use proper language.
5. I will be obedient to the authorities of the school (teachers and staff).
6. I will be courteous and cooperative toward teachers, staff and other students.
7. I will do my work to the best of my ability.
8. I will keep my hands to myself and not bring harm to other students or staff members.

Conferences:

Parent-Teacher conferences are an important part of our program. These conferences serve as a good communication medium between the home and the classroom. We encourage parents to come in and wish you to know that our teachers and Director are available to discuss pertinent matters. Should you desire a Parent-Teacher conference, we ask you not go to the classroom to make arrangements as this may interrupt the class time. Instead, we ask that you call the office first to schedule a time.

Discipline Program

One of our goals is to help your child develop a positive self-image. We recognize that children need clearly defined limits set in a non-threatening yet firm manner. Children are encouraged to be self-directed and exhibit self-control. In order to achieve these goals, we apply principles that build self-esteem and avoid any shaming practices. As such, we accomplish order and thus discipline through close supervision, gentle

guidance, and redirection. When all else fails, we will utilize a brief timeout (one minute per age of the child). This practice is rarely employed and never overused. We strictly hold our staff to these discipline policies:

Employee Guidance & Discipline Policy:

All Center employees, including persons not counted in the child/caregiver ratio, must:

- Demonstrate competency, good judgment, and self-control in the presence of children and when performing assigned responsibilities.
- Relate to children with courtesy, respect, acceptance, and patience.
- Recognize and respect the uniqueness and potential of all children, their families, and their cultures.
- Ensure that no child is abused, neglected, or exploited while in the care of the center.
- Report suspected abuse, neglect, and exploitation to DFPS as specified in the Texas Family Code, §261.10

In addition: There will be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following behaviors are PROHIBITED by parents and caregivers while on Garden Oaks Baptist Early Learning Center property:

- Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment.
- Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training.
- Pinching, shaking, or biting a child.
- Hitting a child with a hand or instrument.
- Putting anything in or on a child's mouth.
- Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child.
- Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language.
- Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet.
- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age, including requiring a child to remain in a restrictive device.

Reporting Abuse: Texas state law requires suspected abuse and neglect to be reported to the Texas Department of Family Services or law enforcement. To make a confidential report dial the child abuse hotline: **800-252-4500**. Employees are prohibited from retaliating against anyone who makes a report in good faith. Employees are also required to report any suspected abuse and neglect.

Suspension & Expulsion

Garden Oaks ELC desires to always have open communication between parents, caregivers and the administration team in an effort to avoid any need for suspension or expulsion. Our deep desire is to build a program where children feel loved, safe and are encouraged to express themselves in a safe and healthy manner. We realize that the need for suspension or expulsion may present itself despite our best efforts. The Garden Oaks ELC Administrative team, along with the program Director hold the right to suspend or expel a student for any reason at any time. Notice of suspension or expulsion will be given in writing as well as communicated verbally to the student's parent or legal guardian. Details regarding the reason for suspension or expulsion will always be given to the responsible parties. Communication will also be given as to when and for how long the suspension or expulsion will be extended for.

Parent Participation

Garden Oaks ELC has an open-door policy. We are committed to working with families. We strongly encourage them to participate in every aspect of their child's program. Parents are welcome to visit the Center anytime. Our main focus is your child. You are encouraged to discuss any developmental milestones you have encountered and share any other information that may be appropriate. Parents are encouraged to share

personal interests including hobbies, talents, cultural backgrounds, favorite recipes, etc. Parent involvement is valued and therefore encouraged.

Parent Handbook Policy Acknowledgment:

I, the parent or guardian of **(students name)** _____ agree to:

1. Support the Center in its faith values and education plan.
2. Support the Student Behavior Agreement.
3. Read the Parent Handbook in its entirety, including the Discipline Policy, and uphold all rules and regulations outlined in this handbook.
4. Recognize the Center’s right to dismiss any student who does not respect its standards or cooperate in the educational process.
5. Abide by all registration fees, supply fees, tuition amounts and financial agreements.
6. Respect the administrator’s responsibility for placing a child in the proper developmental classroom.
7. Follow proper channels as outlined in the grievance procedure if I should disagree with the actions of any Center employee.

Parent’s/Guardian’s Signature

Date

Parent’s/Guardian’s Printed Name