



Family Handbook

Jesus said,
"Let the little children come to Me."
Mark 10:14

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH CHILDREN'S CENTER

Our History

First Baptist Church Children's Center was organized in June 1967 and has served children and their families for more than 40 years as part of First Baptist Church's outreach ministry to the community and the church, particularly to children of working parents. The Children's Center continues to be an integral part of the church's ministry of education and is recognized as one of the very best childcare centers in Winston-Salem, NC.

Our Mission

"A family of faith seeking to know Christ and make Him known."

First Baptist Church Children's Center is a faith-based childcare center. As such, we make every effort to teach and model Christian values. Children who participate in our program are introduced to Biblical teachings that we believe will instill in them a sense of self-worth, Christian love, and responsibility to others.

Our Purpose

First Baptist Church Children's Center is a mission of First Baptist Church on Fifth. Our objective is to provide the highest quality care and early educational experience for children ages 8 weeks through 12 years in a climate of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity. We strive to support families by providing children with a creative, nurturing, and stimulating environment that fosters growth in all areas of development. Our 5 Star licensed, nationally accredited child care center welcomes all families, including those who may need financial assistance in order to enroll their children.

Our Goals

- To offer an enriching experience in early childhood and Christian education designed to allow each child to achieve his/her full potential
- To provide a safe and secure environment in which each child will grow cognitively, physically, emotionally and socially; will gain inner discipline; and will discover self-worth and the meaning of Christian love
- To nurture each child's spiritual development towards becoming a vital and positive force within the family, community, and church
- To help children become confident and enthusiastic learners by encouraging exploration and discovery through meaningful play and developmentally appropriate activities
- To support families in achieving their occupational or academic goals with the assurance that their children are in a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment
- To instill in each child a lifelong love of learning

Our Philosophy

We believe that all children are unique individuals created by God, each with special gifts and talents. We recognize that growth during the early years is uneven and that each child learns in his/her own way and at his/her own pace. Therefore, developmentally appropriate, child-centered curriculum is planned to meet each child's individual needs. We design our program according to the interests and needs of the children.

We believe that all children have the right to learn within a safe, healthy, nurturing and secure environment. Our highly qualified staff of early childhood educators transforms each classroom into a learning environment where children can grow and develop at their own pace. Teachers act as facilitators, interacting where needed to enhance the learning environment. Learning takes place not only within the classroom, but also on the playground and in the lunchroom, as well as within the church and community.

We believe that young children learn best by doing. Hands-on experiences are vital to the learning process for young children. It requires active thinking and experimenting to find out how things work and to learn firsthand about the world we live in. The learning environment is composed of families, teachers, and the community, and promotes the positive self-concept and self-expression of each child.

We believe that the needs of the whole child must be considered and nurtured when planning any activity or environment for young children. Our curriculum builds on prior learning and experiences, and addresses all areas of development, including language and communication, physical, social-emotional, cognitive, and spiritual development.

We believe in children's unique ability to express their knowledge in a number of different ways through play. Research supports that play is the most important process through which young children learn. Play is the work of young children. Children must be nurtured and respected as they go about their everyday task of learning through play.

We believe that parents are a child's first and most important teachers. Learning begins with parents; therefore parent involvement in our program is encouraged and expected. Parents will have opportunities to join together for learning, fun and fellowship by being involved in activities in the classroom or the center as a whole.

We believe that the diversity of all families should be respected, valued, and celebrated. When each family's unique background is acknowledged and appreciated, the child and family are best served. Families are encouraged to share their customs, traditions, and culture with the children. Parents are welcome in the center at all times.

We believe that a knowledgeable, dedicated staff is critical to the development and maintenance of a high quality early childhood education program. We are committed to serving as advocates for young children and their families. Staff members continuously engage in professional development opportunities to enhance their teaching skills.

We believe that an effective partnership between staff and the families we serve is an essential component to the successful development of each child. Communication between home and school is of the utmost importance. Families and teachers share successes as well as concerns in order to meet the changing needs of the child. We strive to support families in their efforts to guide children's development.

ENROLLMENT POLICIES

Eligibility

Children ages 8 weeks through five years of age whose parents or guardians are either employed or are full-time students are eligible to enroll in our full day preschool program. Children grades K–5 are eligible to enroll in our school age program. Children are accepted for enrollment on a first come, first served basis. When spaces are not available, children will be placed on a waiting list. Children are then enrolled in classes (in the order of their application date) as openings become available.

Children of church members and younger siblings of presently enrolled children have priority for enrollment. All enrollment forms must be completed and returned to the office before the child's first day of attendance. The medical form must be completed and signed by the child's physician. Also, an application for free and reduced meals must be completed and kept on file for every child, including those not eligible for the funding.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, or disability.

Registration and Deposits

An annual registration fee is due at the time of enrollment and is renewable at the beginning of each new school year. A deposit equal to two weeks tuition is due at the time of enrollment (preschool only). This deposit is held until the child withdraws from the center. The deposit may then be refunded or applied to the account balance. A two-week written notification of withdrawal from the Children's Center is required for a refund of this deposit.

Childcare Tuition

Childcare tuition is due in full each Monday throughout the year. This policy applies even when your child is absent and/or when there is a holiday or school closing due to inclement weather. Payments received later than Tuesday noon will be assessed a late fee of \$10.00. All checks should be made payable to First Baptist Church Children's Center or FBCCC. **The Children's Center does not accept cash for tuition payments.** We require tuition payments be made with check or money order. We only accept cash for field trip payments, special activities, etc. Tuition is based on the actual cost of operating our program as a non-profit, self-sustaining program and allows us to maintain the highest quality standards in staffing and staff-to-child ratios. Checks returned for insufficient funds or closed accounts will be charged a \$20.00 fee. After the second returned check we will request payment by money order. Receipts for payment will be furnished upon request. Parents will be notified of delinquent accounts. Having an account more than two weeks in arrears will result in the child being dropped from enrollment.

Financial Assistance

We accept children with DSS subsidy (vouchers) for enrollment. We also accept children whose enrollment is subsidized by Smart Start. If you receive subsidized childcare, the subsidy amount and the parent pay portion together must equal the total amount of tuition that is charged. At times, the church can provide **temporary** emergency assistance for children of families who have special financial needs. Please see the Director if you need information regarding financial assistance. The Children's Center will make every effort to work with parents to establish special payment arrangements if needed due to unusual financial situations.

Absent Children

We are always concerned when a child is absent. We would appreciate a call when your child is sick or out of town so that we can plan accordingly. Any child absent for two weeks without explanation or payment will be dropped from enrollment.

Insurance

Our insurance coverage is with the Hartford Insurance Company and is an excess coverage plan provided for all enrolled children while they are present at the Children's Center. Typically, your individual insurance will be used first, and then this insurance will help cover any remaining charges. The cost of this insurance is included in the annual registration fee.

Dropping Children From Enrollment

The Director has the authority to drop any child from enrollment for violation of Children's Center policies. Specific reasons for which a child will be dropped from enrollment are:

- ◆ The child's immunization and medical records are not current (When corrected and/or updated, the child may reapply for admission to our program.)
- ◆ Tuition fees are more than two weeks in arrears and payment arrangements have not been made with the director
- ◆ The child has been habitually picked up late (after 6:00 PM) by the parent or guardian (see Late Pick-Up Policy)
- ◆ The child's behavior/presence jeopardizes the welfare of the other children or staff members
- ◆ It is determined by administration and center staff that we are unable to appropriately meet the child's needs
- ◆ The parents make unreasonable demands on the staff or are disrespectful to staff members, administration, children, or other parents
- ◆ The parents physically discipline their child at the center or are disrespectful or abusive to another child at the center

DAILY OPERATING PROCEDURES

Days and Hours of Operation

The Children's Center is open from 7:00 AM - 6:00 PM Monday through Friday, with the exception of designated holidays and professional days. Children should follow a consistent schedule of attendance according to their parents' work or school hours. The NC Division of Child Development recommends that children not be left in the center for more than 10 hours each day on a regular basis. A calendar of planned closings is posted on the parent information board.

Safe Arrival of Children

A designated short-term loading zone is located on Poplar Street directly outside of the Children's Center entrance, which is in the breezeway. For special programs or events, parents may park in the parking lot directly behind the playground or in the 6th Street parking lot. **Please do not park across the street from the entrance or in the breezeway as this creates a safety hazard.** Children must be escorted into their classrooms by a parent or other responsible adult at the time of arrival. **For safety reasons, children should never be left unattended, allowed to ride the elevator, enter/exit the building, or roam the center without adult supervision.** The North Carolina Division of Child Development requires that children be signed in and out of the center by an adult on a daily basis. Please be sure to document your child's arrival and departure times accurately as these records are critical to the staff in the event of an emergency. It is imperative that the classroom staff is made aware of a child's arrival prior to the parent/guardian leaving the classroom. The responsibility for each child remains with the parent/guardian until the teacher has personally received that child. For the safety of our children and staff, a "buzzer" needs to be pressed to give you right of entry to the Children's Center. We have a camera on the door and it will be opened **only** upon recognition or with proper explanation of who needs to gain entrance to the Children's Center.

Morning Drop-off

Between the hours of 7:00 AM and 8:30 AM the children gather in several rooms according to age. Your child's teacher will inform you where the receiving classroom is for your child, depending upon your usual arrival time. Upon arrival, please put your child's belongings in his/her cubby, help your child wash his/her hands and then take your child to the teacher in charge before leaving for the day.

Breakfast

Breakfast is served from 7:30 AM until 8:30 AM each morning. If your child will be arriving after 8:30 AM, please make sure that he/she has been fed breakfast. Please note that we do not serve breakfast on days when we open late for inclement weather. We do not allow children to bring in food unless: 1) the child has an allergy that prevents him/her from eating the food we serve or 2) the child is an infant who is not yet eating from the table. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

Late Arrivals

We strongly recommend that all children be in their classrooms by 9:30 AM. If your child has an appointment or is going to be tardy for some other reason, please call us in the morning and let us know. Our teachers plan learning experiences and activities for the children and have a daily schedule to follow. Children who consistently arrive at school late are missing important components of our program. Late arrivals also disrupt the morning schedule for everyone in the classroom.

Safe Departure of Children

The adult picking the child up from the Children's Center must sign the child out at the front desk and should personally notify the teacher responsible for the child before leaving the center. Check your child's cubby daily for notices and belongings.

When someone other than a parent will be picking up a child, a signed written permission slip to release that child must be left with the office. In case of an emergency, a phone call from a parent may be acceptable. Any person other than a parent picking up a child will need to present a photo ID to the staff and sign the child out at the front desk. If a court order exists stating that any individual is not permitted to pick up your child, a copy of the order must be on file in the Center.

Because we are legally responsible for the safety and well being of the children in our care until they leave the center for the day, if the adult picking up a child appears to be intoxicated or otherwise impaired, we will contact the proper authorities.

Late Pick-Up Policy

A late fee will be charged any time your child is picked up after 6:00 p.m. A \$25.00 charge per child will be assessed for the first 15 minutes past 6:00 p.m. with additional charges accumulating as follows:

- 6:01 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. - \$25.00 per child
- 6:16 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. - additional \$15.00 per child (total \$40.00)
- 6:31 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. - additional \$15.00 per child (total \$55.00)
- 6:46 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. - additional \$15.00 per child (total \$70.00)
- 7:00 pm and later - child will no longer be allowed to attend

Late fees **must** be paid before the child can attend our program again. If the child is picked up late more than 3 times, the child may be dropped from the program permanently. The Children's Center director may excuse late pick-ups for valid reasons such as a family emergency, car trouble, inclement weather, etc.

If a child is not picked up in an appropriate amount of time, every possible effort to contact a member of the family or persons listed as emergency contacts will be made. If no one can be reached in a reasonable amount of time, the director or other staff member in charge may contact the Winston-Salem Police Department and release the child to this agency.

Lost and Found

We will make every attempt to locate and return lost items. This task is much easier if your child's name is on all items brought into the center. Found items will be taken to the Children's Center office. We cannot be responsible for any personal items that your child may bring to school.

Inclement Weather

At First Baptist Church Children's Center, we make every effort to be open for parents who must work regardless of weather conditions. However, there are times when our staff cannot get to the center safely and/or the public transportation system is not operating. The safety of our staff members and our families is always of great concern to us, so we hope that you understand when we have to make adjustments to our schedule.

If the WS/Forsyth County Schools delay opening due to inclement weather conditions, the Children's Center will open at 9:00 AM. If schools are closed for the day, we will open at 10:00 AM or remain closed for the day, depending on the severity of road conditions.

A decision will be made by no later than 8:00 AM. We will send out an email with delay or closing information as soon as a decision is made. Please consult WXII Channel 12 throughout the morning for updated delay/closing information. You may also call the center in the morning and information regarding delays or closings will be available on our answering machine.

It is imperative that we have all contact numbers and email addresses on file and that they are up-to-date. If we need to close the center early due to worsening weather conditions, *we must know how to contact you!* Please make certain that we have the necessary information on file so that someone can be reached during the workday in the event we need to close.

Inclement Weather - School Age Program

Due to liability issues, if and when local schools close early due to inclement weather conditions such as snow or ice, First Baptist Church Children's Center will not pick children up from the schools we serve. We will not put your children's safety or the safety of our staff members at risk by driving the church bus/van when road conditions are potentially dangerous.

If local schools announce they are closing early due to bad weather conditions, parents will be responsible for picking their children up from school. We do offer care for school age children on days that the schools close due to inclement weather conditions. However, if schools make the decision to close early, parents should call the Children's Center before bringing their children to us in the event that we have decided to close early as well.

PROGRAM INFORMATION



NAEYC Accreditation

Congratulations! You have chosen an early childhood program for your child that is accredited by the *National Association for the Education of Young Children*. NAEYC administers the largest and most widely recognized accreditation system for all types of early childhood schools and child care centers. NAEYC is the nation's largest organization of early childhood educators. Early childhood programs accredited by the NAEYC Academy for Early Childhood Program Accreditation have voluntarily undergone a comprehensive process of internal self-study, invited external professional review to verify compliance with the Criteria for High-Quality Early Childhood Programs, and been found to be in substantial compliance with the Criteria. The Criteria for Accreditation can be found on NAEYC's Web site at www.naeyc.org/accreditation.



North Carolina Star Rated License

(North Carolina Division of Child Development)

One of the most important decisions you will ever make as a parent is choosing quality child care for your child. Every child is special and unique and deserves the best start possible. Studies reveal that a high quality child care program will help children become more ready for school which increases their chances to succeed. Research also indicates that employers benefit when their employees' children are in quality child care arrangements. Parents are more productive and focused on work knowing their children are being nurtured and interacted with in ways that promotes all areas of their development. This confidence in care creates a win-win situation for everyone: parents, children and employers.

Part of making the right decision is understanding the Star Rated License. All licensed programs have a star-rating similar to the ratings you will find for other products and services. A One Star means the program meets North Carolina's minimum child care requirements. A Five Star license means a program meets the voluntary enhanced standards required for the highest star level. The child care license is posted in every child care program for parent review. On the license you will see the scores the program has earned in the two major components of the license: Staff Education and Program Standards. You will also be able to see if the program received a Quality Point.

Classroom Information

INFANT

Infants are cared for on an individual schedule that is provided by the parents in an effort to maintain consistency between home and the center. Infants are held for all bottle feedings as well as other times throughout the day, providing staff with opportunities for one-on-one interactions with each infant. Infants are only placed in cribs for sleep. Freedom of movement on soft areas, sensory activities, stories, songs, finger-plays, and an environment rich in music and language are provided to promote all aspects of infant development. Because our infants and crawlers spend so much time on the carpet, parents are required to put on disposable shoe covers before entering these classrooms. For health and safety reasons, older children are not permitted to enter Infant classrooms.

TODDLER

Children transition to Toddler classrooms at various times depending on individual development. Toddler classrooms begin to establish “group” routines for the children while insuring that the physical, social, and cognitive needs of the individual children are met. Children in the Toddler classrooms experience a wider variety of creative, music, language, sensory and motor experiences. Toddlers are encouraged to explore their environment to promote learning through discovery. Both group and individual activities are planned in an effort to foster independence, cooperation, listening and language skills, and positive social interactions.

PRESCHOOL

Children in Preschool classrooms are offered experiences to promote future success in learning. Learning Centers are set up in classrooms so that small groups and individual children can explore a variety of materials related to math, science, art and literacy (both reading and writing). Also offered are large group activities and additional interest areas such as a block center, dramatic play area, library corner and outdoor play area. The staff encourages independence and self-regulation through teaching and role modeling concepts such as taking initiative and giving and taking direction in socially appropriate ways. Children learn to understand others and express their ideas more effectively.

SCHOOL AGE

School age children are provided a safe and nurturing environment that is designed to promote social interaction, physical development, and cognitive growth. Children are grouped according to grade level. Activities include opportunities for individual and group participation, while providing a balance between child-initiated and staff-directed activities. School age children are offered quiet time for rest and relaxation, reading or journaling, and academics, as well as opportunities to participate in experiences such as arts and crafts, dramatic play, small and large group games, and outdoor or gym play. Character development is emphasized in an effort to instill in children traits such as responsibility, self-discipline, honesty, perseverance, fairness, respect, integrity, caring, and citizenship.

Classroom Transitions

Children are transitioned through the Children's Center based on their social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development, typically at the beginning of the new school year in August. The process of transitioning children to a new classroom at other times during the year will include parent meetings with the staff in the new classroom, a schedule of planned visits by the child to the new room, and the sharing of pertinent information between the current and new staff.

Daily Schedule

Your child's daily schedule will vary according to his/her age. The daily schedule will typically include the following: learning centers, group time, individualized learning activities, snack and meal times, and playground or gym playtime. We use a combination of both the *Wee Learn Curriculum* and the *Creative Curriculum* as the foundation for our core curriculum. Children's interests and current level of competence are taken into consideration when planning activities. A weekly lesson plan is posted in each classroom and teachers leave a daily board of information posted for parents. Children will participate in activities such as art, music, science, movement/dance, storytelling, and special cooking activities in their classrooms on a daily basis. Music classes are provided weekly for children ages 2-5 years at no additional cost. Children also benefit from going to Chapel each week to hear Bible stories and sing songs with the ministers here at First Baptist Church. Our 4/5 year-olds (Pre-K) go on field trips at least once a month. We will occasionally ask parents to contribute supplies for a special art or cooking project.

School Age Program

Our **Before and After School Program** is designed for children ages Kindergarten through 5th grade. We are located in Zone 6 and serve several local elementary schools, including Moore Magnet School and the Arts Based Elementary School. We provide transportation to and from these two schools. Other schools in our zone will pick children up and/or drop children off at First Baptist Church Children's Center upon parent request.

Please note that our schedule for the Before & After School Program will run according to the WS/FC School system calendar. We serve breakfast and afternoon snack to our school age children. Planned homework time is balanced with recreational activities for an enriching and fun after school experience. Children can enroll in Before School Only care, After School Only care, or Before and After School care. We also offer care for school age children during school breaks and most inclement weather days.

During the summer months we offer a **Summer Enrichment Program** for children who have completed Kindergarten through 5th grade. Children enrolled in our Summer Enrichment Program participate in regular weekly field trips like going to the movies, swimming, and walking to the City Market and Public Library, as well as other fun and exciting off-site experiences. Our school age children also benefit from weekly academic reviews, thematic units of study, and educational games.

Preschool Curriculum

First Baptist Church Children's Center uses a combination of the Christian faith based *Wee Learn Curriculum* and the *Creative Curriculum* as the foundation for our Weekday Education Program.

WEE LEARN CURRICULUM

A child's growth and development is viewed as a process, not an event. Development begins when the child is conceived and continues throughout life. The *Wee Learn Curriculum* provides a range of activities that are designed to meet the needs of children at their level of development along the growth continuum. This curriculum also provides guidance and activities in each unit to help the child develop language, pre-reading, pre-writing, and other foundational skills appropriate to his or her stage of development. Physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual development are interrelated. Our teachers select activities and experiences that provide a balanced program of early childhood education.

The *Wee Learn Curriculum* is developed around themes that provide opportunities for children to learn about God, Jesus, the Bible, the church, self, family, others, and the natural world. Experiences and activities that encourage physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual development are included under each theme. Our teachers use activities found in the *Wee Learn Curriculum* to plan individual and group activities that will meet the specific needs and interests of each child.

CREATIVE CURRICULUM

According to the National Organization for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), developmentally appropriate practice provides children with opportunities to learn and practice newly acquired skills. It offers challenges just beyond the level of their present mastery and it takes place "in the context of a community where children are safe and valued, where their physical needs are met, and where they feel psychologically secure."

Based on the concept of developmentally appropriate practice, the *Creative Curriculum* rests on a firm foundation of research and is closely linked to and used in conjunction with North Carolina's *Foundations: Early Learning Standards for North Carolina Preschoolers*, which was developed by the North Carolina State Board of Education and the Department of Public Instruction.

First Baptist Church Children's Center utilizes the *Creative Curriculum* as a guide for planning developmentally appropriate activities for every age group and supports the *Creative Curriculum* philosophy that young children learn best by doing. The curriculum is built on current theories of development that all children learn through active exploration of their environment, and therefore the environment plays a critical role in learning. Our goal is to help children become independent, self-confident, inquisitive and enthusiastic learners.

Playground and Gym Time

Children enjoy going outside to play every day! Each age group will have a daily scheduled outdoor playtime, both in the morning and afternoon. Unless your child has an injury or weather related illness (such as asthma in hot weather) he/she will join the rest of the class for outside play. If your child is not well enough to go outside, he/she should not attend school.

On days when it is actively precipitating or when a weather advisory/air quality warning has been issued, the children will enjoy going to the gym for games and active play.

Birthdays and Celebrations

Birthdays are special occasions for children, and we celebrate them with pleasure! You are welcome to bring or send a special treat for your child's class (cookies, cupcakes, ice cream, etc.) Latex balloons are considered hazardous material and cannot be brought to school, however the Mylar type is allowed. Parents should talk with their children's teachers in advance regarding birthday celebrations. Teachers will provide a sign-up sheet when help is needed to provide special foods and supplies for holiday celebrations.

Meals and Snacks

Good eating habits and positive attitudes toward food should be established at an early age. A nutritious hot lunch, early morning breakfast, and mid-afternoon snack are provided for children. Monthly menus are posted on parent information boards and in the classrooms as well as on our web site. We encourage parents to come have lunch with their children any time!

The NC Department of Health and Human Services regulates our food choices. We are carefully monitored and must use 100% fruit juices, whole grain and enriched products, and provide a well-balanced menu. The Children's Center participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, which meets all federal recommended daily nutritional standards. All parents/guardians are required to fill out a Child Food Program Eligibility Application annually in order for the Children's Center to maintain state compliance.

Please inform us if your child has food allergies! If a child has food allergies that have been medically diagnosed, we will allow substitutions for them. We are required to serve all children milk (with the exception of infants) unless we have a medical statement from a physician stating that a child has an allergy or intolerance to milk.

Due to Health and Sanitation Regulations, we cannot allow children to bring in sippy cups filled with beverages in the morning. If your child comes in with a sippy cup in the morning, please have your child finish his/her beverage and take the cup with you. Only children in Infant and Crawler rooms may bring in empty sippy cups to leave at the center. For infants who are still bottle-fed and eating prepared baby food, parents should pack an ample supply of filled bottles and prepared food for the day unless they are opting to use the formula/baby food we offer.

Infant Feeding

Parents are required to fill out an Infant Feeding Schedule for all children under 15 months of age. Each infant's feeding schedule will be modified as needed in consultation with the child's parent to reflect changes in the child's needs as he or she develops. The feeding instructions for each infant will be posted in the classroom for quick reference.

Breastfeeding

The Children's Center is committed to providing ongoing support to breastfeeding mothers, including providing an opportunity for mothers to breastfeed in the mornings and afternoons, and holding off giving a bottle, if possible, when a mother is due to arrive. The Children's Center will follow guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics and Centers for Disease Control in ensuring that breast milk is properly treated to avoid waste. Children's Center staff are trained in the proper storage and handling of human milk. Infant formula, supplemental liquids (water or juice) and solid foods will not be provided unless the parents have requested that we do so.

Bottle Feeding

Each infant will be held for bottle feeding until able to hold his or her own bottle. Bottles will never be propped. If a breastfed baby does not want to take a bottle, staff will work with the parents to develop a plan for alternative feeding. This may include offering breast milk in ways other than a bottle, such as cups or spoons. Infants will be fed on demand and will not be made to wait for timed feedings if they are hungry. Bottles will never be heated in a microwave oven.

Introducing Solid Foods

We will begin feeding solids on notification by the parents, since infant readiness is not based on age but on individual readiness. Some infants may not be ready for solids until they are six months old. Parents are urged to follow a physician's recommendations and their infant's signals since feeding solids before the infant is ready may contribute to obesity, food allergies, choking, and deprivation of nutrients needed from formula or breast milk. Solids will not be fed from a bottle. Table foods will be offered when parents determine a child is ready. Please note that we are not allowed to give cow's milk to children under 12 months of age without a signed statement from a medical professional.

Diapering/Toileting

Parents are responsible for providing disposable diapers and wipes for their children. Children who are still in diapers will be changed at least every 2 hours or whenever diapers become soiled or wet. Helping your child learn to use the toilet takes time, understanding, and patience. The first and most important rule is not to rush a child into toilet learning. A child must be ready if the toilet learning process is to be successful. Clothing should be manageable by children who are going to the toilet alone. Please limit the use of belts and pants with straps when children are first learning to go to the "potty". Discuss with the teachers your toilet teaching techniques so that we can be consistent and your child can be successful.

Clothing and Possessions

Please dress your child in clothing that is durable and comfortable. Children should never wear clothing to school that they are afraid to get dirty! Label all removable clothing with the child's name (especially coats, sweaters, hats and mittens.) Cowboy boots, rubber boots, sandals and "flip-flop" or slide type footwear that slip off feet easily are not allowed at school. Children are climbing, running and jumping throughout the day and this type of footwear can cause accidents. A sturdy tennis shoe is always the best choice for a full day of play at school.

We go outside everyday, so please dress your child accordingly. Children should come to school with appropriate outerwear (hats, coats with hoods, mittens) for cold days and should dress in cooler clothes on hot days. Please refrain from sending children in with book bags. Anything that your child needs should be able to fit inside his/her cubby.

Every child must have at least one complete change of clothing stored at the Children's Center at all times. This is required by state child care law. Please make sure these clothes are seasonably appropriate and still fit. Each child is encouraged to bring a small blanket to use at naptime. Comfort items may be brought to school if needed. Guns, ropes, knives and other toys that encourage rough and violent play are to be left at home. Suitable toys should only be brought to school on "Show and Share" days. We always encourage children to bring in books and items that relate to a current theme or science and nature. Each child has a cubby for his/her personal belongings, communication from the center or teachers, and artwork.

Please do not allow children to bring money to school unless requested for a special event. Children are not allowed to purchase soft drinks from the vending machine located in the gym area during the school day.

Helping Your Child Adjust

Be positive when your child arrives for his/her day! Your demeanor and body language are crucial factors in your child's adjustment. Although it may be upsetting to you to leave your child, please try to be positive so that your child will feel good about his/her day here at the Children's Center. Communication between parents and staff is one of the most important pathways to success.

Please let us know of any particular event, change in your child's routine, or other situation that may affect your child having a good day. There could have been a death in the family, an upcoming trip that the child is anxious about, a parent who is out of town, or maybe your child simply did not sleep well the night before. Letting us know of these events will allow us to help your child. He/she may need to talk, or may just need a little extra love and attention.

Please let us know of any accidents/injuries or a suspicion of illness that may have occurred overnight or during the weekend. We would want to watch for additional symptoms or to prevent additional injury.

Diversity

We are committed to helping children learn to respect and appreciate the diversity of the world we live in. We celebrate these differences through the involvement of families and open discussions that address rather than ignore stereotypes, gender biases, and prejudices. Our enrollment is open to all children regardless of race, religion/creed, socio-economic or ethnic background. We encourage families to share various aspects of their heritage through stories, songs, and recipes from their culture.

Communication

We strive to keep the lines of communication open at all times. Because our staff must cover an eleven-hour day, our lead teachers may not be here at your time of arrival or departure. We encourage you to call your child's teachers during the day here at the center if you have a question or concern, or "just to touch base." You can also leave a note or speak with someone in the office. If you have a concern that cannot wait until the next day, we provide a list of staff telephone numbers and encourage you to call your child's teacher at home if necessary. Infants, Toddlers, and Twos bring home a daily information sheet, while the older classes have daily information posted in or outside the classroom. Weekly lesson plans are also posted in each classroom. You will receive newsletters, calendars, and menus from the office each month. We will send home additional notes and/or emails as needed to keep you informed of activities here at the center. We encourage you to visit our web site frequently to access other important information - www.fbcchildrenscenter.org.

Screening and Assessment

The Children's Center uses the *Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ)* screening tool, the *Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum*, developmentally/age appropriate child skills checklists, and teacher observation to regularly assess children's social-emotional, physical, cognitive, and language communication development. Classroom teachers, administrative staff, and families have access to children's individual screening and assessment results. These results are used to plan curriculum to meet the needs and interests of each child. Teachers will conference with parents at least twice a year (once in the fall and once in the spring) regarding their children's developmental progress, and at other times throughout the year as necessary. We also offer dental and speech screening on a yearly basis.

Confidentiality

Respect for staff, children, and families is a high priority at First Baptist Church Children's Center. Therefore, we keep all information about children and families confidential. In the interest of best practice, it is sometimes necessary for staff members to have access to confidential information about children and families. This information is treated with strict confidentiality and sensitivity and is shared with appropriate staff members on a need-to-know basis only. Before sharing information about a child with other relevant providers, agencies or other programs, families will be asked for written consent.

Referral Services

Initial Referral

First Baptist Church Children's Center uses the following procedures for referring parents/guardians to appropriate social, mental health, developmental and medical services for their child should the center staff feel that an assessment for such additional services would benefit the child.

Whenever staff members are concerned about a child's development or behavior and feel that further evaluation is warranted, they will complete a Referral Form and turn it in to the Program Coordinator who will review their concerns with the Director. If the Director agrees with the concerns, the Program Coordinator will be requested to complete an observation and review the child's records prior to making a referral.

The Director will maintain a list of current referral resources for children in need of social, mental health, developmental, and other medical services including but not limited to hearing/speech, vision and dental.

Referral Meeting

The Director will schedule a meeting with parents to notify them of the concerns and will prepare a current list of possible referral resources. At the meeting, the Director will provide to the parent a written statement including the reason for recommending a referral for additional services, a brief summary of the center staff's observations related to the referral, and any efforts the center and staff may have made to accommodate the child's needs.

The Director will offer assistance to the child's parents in making the referral. Parents will be encouraged to call or request in writing an evaluation. If parents need extra support, the center may, with written parental consent, contact the appropriate referral agency for them.

The Director will inform the child's parent(s) of the availability of services provided by appropriate early intervention services, such as the North Carolina Early Intervention Services **Infant-Toddler Program** (children less than 3 years of age) or **Preschool Program** (children 3 – 5 years of age).

Follow Up to the Referral

The Director will, with parental permission, follow up the referral by contacting the agency or service provider who evaluated the child for consultation and assistance in meeting the child's needs at the center. If it is determined that the child is not in need of services from the agency or is ineligible to receive services, the Center will review the child's progress every three months to determine if another referral is necessary.

The Director and Program Coordinator will maintain a written record of any referrals, including the parent conference and results. All information pertaining to the child's referral will be kept confidential.

POLICIES ON HEALTH AND SAFETY

Immunizations

Immunization records are kept on all children and are submitted to the state. Our records must be kept current. Please provide us with documentation each time your child receives additional immunizations. All families must submit a completed medical form on their children before enrolling in the center. If a child's scheduled immunizations are not kept up-to-date, he/she will be dropped from enrollment.

Illness and Exclusion

First Baptist Church Children's Center is a place for **well children**. We understand that children get sick and that it is inconvenient and stressful for parents to take time off from work. However, it is our intent to maintain a healthy, as well as safe, environment for children and our staff.

Should a child exhibit symptoms that may indicate a contagious illness or condition, he/she should not attend the center. These symptoms may include, but are not limited to, diarrhea, vomiting, discolored nasal discharge, an unidentifiable rash, chronic "hacking" cough, fever of 100° F or higher, conjunctivitis, scabies, chicken pox, strep throat, roseola, ringworm, fifth disease, and coxsackie virus (hand, foot and mouth). A child exhibiting potentially contagious symptoms may return to the center after being symptom free and fever free without the administration of a fever reducing medication for a full 24 hours from the time of the last occurrence, having received appropriate treatment, and/or having written medical clearance from a physician stating the child is no longer contagious. All children attending school must be well enough to participate in all daily activities, including going outside.

Should symptoms develop while a child is in our care, the Director will evaluate the child. If symptoms are not severe, the parent will be notified of the concern and the child will be monitored. If the condition worsens or presents an immediate risk of infection to the staff and other children, the child will be isolated as much as possible and the child's parents will be contacted. Parents will be required to make arrangements for the pick-up of their child within **one hour** from the time the call is received. Although we strive for consistency, illness must be addressed on a case-by-case basis taking many factors into consideration.

If your child has been diagnosed with a communicable illness, please call the office and let us know so that other parents can be notified of their children's exposure to the illness.

Accidents and Injuries

When minor injuries occur due to accidents, the Children's Center staff will provide appropriate first aid and parents will be notified by phone if necessary and provided with an accident report. If a serious accident occurs and the child clearly needs immediate medical care, we will call EMS (911) and parents will be notified.

Emergency Information/Contacts

Parents are responsible for keeping all emergency information and phone numbers/email addresses up-to-date so that the process of notifying a parent can be accomplished without delay. We need parents' current cell numbers, pager numbers, work numbers, email addresses, and emergency contact information on file at all times. Please notify us if you are going to be out of town for the day or if your usual schedule has changed so that we can locate you if necessary.

Medications

First Baptist Church Children's Center will not administer medication to children, with the only exception being emergency medications for non-contagious existing conditions such as asthma, allergy, etc. Any child ill enough to require medication should remain at home under parental supervision, or you should arrange with the child's physician a dosage schedule that allows the medication to be administered before and after school. It is imperative that medications **NEVER** be left in diaper bags, back packs, or cubbies, or placed in a child's food, drink or bottle and brought into the center. This presents a serious health risk to the other children and places the center in non-compliance with state regulations.

Should a child require an emergency medication such as Benadryl (administered for an allergic reaction), asthma medication (inhaler, nebulizer, etc.) or Epinephrine (EpiPen), the Children's Center needs a completed medication administration package signed by the child's parent and the child's physician detailing the physical symptoms, medication dosage, and administration instructions. The expiration date must be clearly marked on the medication. Emergency medications will be stored out of reach of children and will be administered by staff members as instructed.

Parents may give standing authorization for up to 12 months to apply over-the-counter topical ointments, topical teething ointment or gel, insect repellents, lotions and creams (such as **sunscreen** and **diapering creams**) to a child when needed. The authorization must be in writing and must contain the child's name, the names of the authorized ointments, repellents, lotions, and creams, the criteria for administration, the manner in which the ointments, repellents, lotions, and creams should be applied, the signature of the parent, the date the authorization was signed by the parent, and the length of time the authorization is valid, if less than 12 months.

Field Trips / Buggy Rides

A blanket permission form for field trips is included in your child's enrollment packet. This form allows teachers to take the children beyond the building or fenced playground for walking field trips, such as the Public Library, City Market, or other nearby downtown locations. Infants, Toddlers, and Young Twos are taken for buggy rides on a regular basis. Field trips that require transportation (beyond walking distance from the church) will be announced in advance. These trips are primarily for Pre-K children and school age children. Children will be taken on trips by van or bus with the approval of the administration of the Children's Center. Parents are usually asked to provide payment for field trips.

Emergency Preparedness

An Emergency Procedures Handbook is located in each classroom. An emergency evacuation plan is posted in every area of the Children's Center indicating escape routes in the event of an emergency. Emergency Evacuation Drills (also referred to as fire drills) are conducted monthly to insure that all staff and children are prepared to evacuate quickly and safely in the event of a true emergency. These drills are unannounced and are planned and coordinated by the Director and the Facilities Manager. The lobby of the GMAC building is our designated alternative shelter in the event that we must evacuate the premises.

Biting

Although biting is considered a normal behavior in very young children, we are well aware of the problems that arise when children begin to bite and we will work closely with the parents and child to remedy the situation. Each biting incident will be handled on an individual basis and all information shall remain confidential.

As with any behavior, how biting is dealt with depends upon the ages of the children involved, the reason for the biting (if it can be determined), frequency of the biting and many other specific circumstances. Young children may bite for many different reasons: teething, exploring, stress, frustration, imitating behavior, personal space is violated or crowded, lack of vocabulary, sign of affection, or to obtain attention. Please understand that teachers can prevent many occurrences of biting, but in some instances biting can occur with no forewarning.

In the event that a child has been bitten, the child will be comforted and the bite mark will be washed with soap and water. Ice will be applied to the bite mark if the child will allow it. The staff member who observed the incident will write an incident report. This report will be presented to the parent when the child is picked up. In the event that a child is bitten and the skin has been broken, we will make a courtesy call to the parent. It will be at the parent's discretion whether to seek medical attention or not.

The biting child will be told in a firm tone "No biting. Biting hurts!" Depending on the age of the child, appropriate behavior management techniques will be used. The staff member who observed the incident will document the incident on an incident form. If the biting incidents become excessive, the Director or Program Coordinator will conference with the teachers and parents and observe the child to assess the situation. If necessary, the child will be "shadowed" for a period of time to be determined by the Director in an effort to determine the cause (if any) for the biting and to look for ways to prevent further occurrences. Parents may be asked to seek professional assistance from another agency.

Occasionally, biting incidents become excessive to the point that we may have no choice but to ask parents to remove their child from the center for a period of time. Dropping children from enrollment for biting is always a last resort.

Anti Bullying Policy

First Baptist Church Children's Center is committed to making our center a safe and caring place for all children. We all treat each other with respect, and we will refuse to tolerate bullying in any form at our center. Bullying and conflict are not the same. Conflict is a natural and necessary part of growing up, and children need to experience and navigate conflict. Bullying occurs when there is an unequal balance of power between two children, and one child repeatedly and deliberately intimidates or abuses the other. Bullying can be physical, verbal, or emotional and it can occur with preschool children as well as school age children.

Examples of bullying behavior include:

- Teasing someone in a hurtful way
- Stealing or damaging another person's things
- Spreading rumors about someone
- Ganging up on someone
- Hurting someone physically
- Using put-downs such as insulting someone or making fun of them
- Leaving someone out on purpose.

Staff will do the following to prevent bullying behavior:

- Be accepting of each child's individual strengths, personal characteristics, family culture and background
- Be inclusive of all children in program activities and guide and encourage all children to do the same
- Closely supervise children in all areas
- Watch for sign of bullying and stop it when it happens
- Respond quickly and sensitively to bullying reports
- Take seriously families' concerns about bullying
- Look into all reported bullying incidents

Children in our program will do the following to prevent bullying behavior:

- Be accepting and respectful of one another's individual strengths, differences, physical characteristics and family background
- Treat each other respectfully
- Refuse to bully others
- Refuse to let others be bullied
- Refuse to watch, laugh, or join in when someone is being bullied
- Try to include everyone in play, especially those who are often left out
- Report bullying to an adult

Children who engage in bullying behavior will be instructed to stop immediately and age-appropriate consequences will result. We will explain to the child why the behavior is unacceptable and hurtful to others. We will also assist the child in finding acceptable ways of interacting with other children. The child's parents will be consulted. If developmentally appropriate behavior management techniques fail and the bullying behavior continues, the child will be dropped from enrollment.

Behavior Management

At First Baptist Church Children's Center our policy on behavior management centers around giving positive reinforcement, redirection, or separating children from the group, if needed, for short periods of time. If this proves ineffective with a particular child, the teacher may send the child to the office to improve his/her behavior before the parents are called. The Children's Center does not spank children or use any form of physical punishment and North Carolina Law prohibits corporal punishment even if a parent gives permission.

When positive reinforcement, redirection, time-out, and visiting the Director prove ineffective for behavior modification, parents will be consulted about what to do next. If a child is causing excessive disruption or injury to other children or staff they will be asked to leave the Children's Center for a period of time to be determined by the Director. Parents will be asked to consult their physician or a counselor if their child's behavior continues to be disruptive to the classroom. Failure of the parent to seek professional advice and intervention or continued excessive disruptive or dangerous behavior will result in the child's dismissal from First Baptist Church Children's Center.

Parents are not to use overly harsh tones or any physical punishment with their own children while on premises. Our childcare environment is a safe, secure environment and harsh tones or actions from an adult may frighten a child, negating their feelings of security while here at First Baptist Church Children's Center. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

Reporting Abuse and Neglect

All North Carolina citizens are mandated by law to report suspected child abuse and neglect to the Department of Social Services in the county where the child lives. The Child Protective Services Division of the Department of Social Services will investigate all reports. Call 336-723-8351 for the Child Protective Services Division of Forsyth County, or call 911 if a dangerous or emergency situation exists.

Staff Child Ratios

In the interest of safety and best practice, First Baptist Church Children's Center adheres to the highest voluntary enhanced staff/child ratios as set forth by the NC Division of Child Development. Those ratios are as follows:

Age of Children	Ratio: Staff/Child	Maximum Group Size
0-12 Months	1/4	8
12-24 Months	1/5	10
2-3 Years	1/8	16
3-4 Years	1/9	18
4-5 Years	1/12	24
5-6 Years	1/14	25
6 Years and Older	1/19	25

Nap / Rest Time

Children are given an opportunity to rest each day. We try to make the children as comfortable and secure as possible so that this can be a pleasant time for them. You may send a special blanket or comfortable toy to be used during nap. The Children's Center will be responsible for washing the sheets on the cots and cribs each week. Other items such as pillows, soft sleep toys, and blankets should be taken home weekly to be laundered by parents and should be returned the next school day.

Teachers assist children in resting by reading stories, providing soothing music, and rubbing backs. Children are not required to sleep, but are expected to rest quietly on their cots during this time.

We request that Toddlers and Preschoolers NOT be dropped off between 12:00 PM and 2:00 PM. Naptime is a difficult time to expect a young child to enter the classroom, and can also be too disruptive for those who are napping.

Outdoor Play Requirements

We are required by the North Carolina Division of Child Development to provide all children, including infants and toddlers, an opportunity to play outdoors each day that weather permits. Exclusions to this rule would be when it is actively precipitating or there has been a weather warning or ozone advisory. Please send children to school dressed appropriately for outdoor play every day. We strongly encourage parents to apply sunscreen to children before coming to school. In order to maintain our staff-to-child ratios, all of the children in a classroom must go outside at the same time. Parents MAY NOT request that their child stay indoors while the rest of the group is outside. If a child is not well enough to participate in outdoor play, the child should not be at school.

Photographing Children

Our teachers regularly photograph children as part of the assessment process, as well as for special projects such as parent gifts and classroom slide shows. Please let us know in writing if you do not want your child to be photographed. In addition, a professional photographer will photograph children in the fall and spring of each school year. Parents will have an opportunity to purchase those photographs and part of the proceeds will remain with the center to fund special projects.

Reducing the Spread of Infection

Most experts agree that the single most effective practice that prevents the spread of germs in the childcare setting is good handwashing by child care providers, children, and others. To help control the spread of illness, children, parents, and staff are required to wash hands upon arrival at the center. Children and staff are also required to wash hands throughout the day at designated times per North Carolina Health and Sanitation Rules. Toys, furniture, and surface areas are cleaned, sanitized, and disinfected daily as well in an effort to prevent the spread of infection. Children who become ill while at the center will be separated from the other children until they can be picked up by the parent.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Family Participation Program

Family participation is vital to a successful early childhood program. It is also a key component in maintaining our National Accreditation standing. Parents are their children's first teachers and they play an important role in enriching their children's educational experiences. Family participation in an early childhood program creates a sense of joint responsibility that is shared by parents and teachers for the child. We know that parents who get involved in the lives of their preschool children stay involved once the children go on to "big school."

Our **Family Participation Program** typically begins in September. We request that parents/family members donate a minimum of 1 hour per month as a family volunteer. Volunteer Interest Sheets will go out in mid-August each year so that parents can consider how they would like to help during the school year and the times that work best for them.

Some possible volunteer opportunities include:

- ◆ Classroom Captain (coordinates other parents for activities)
- ◆ Assist with early morning arrival and late afternoon departure times
- ◆ Help with lunch (first and second lunch times available)
- ◆ Share expertise, talents, or hobbies with the class
- ◆ Find out what units of study are being enjoyed each week and bring in items pertaining to those units to share with the class
- ◆ Assist with special center events such as Fall Festival, Picture Day, Playground Beautification, etc.
- ◆ Assist classroom teachers with various projects
- ◆ Assist classroom teachers with parties/celebrations
- ◆ Assist with supervision on field trips
- ◆ Assist classroom teachers during special classroom activities
- ◆ Read to the class or a small group of children

We recognize that parents bring their children to First Baptist Church Children's Center because they must work or attend school. However, there are numerous volunteer opportunities available that can be tailored to fit individual schedules. We are more than willing to work with you to come up with the most convenient and suitable volunteer position possible for your family.

Visitation and Conferences

Parents are always welcome in the classroom! However, since the teacher's first responsibility is to the children, she will not be able to talk with you at length about your child during class time. Conferences can be arranged at any mutually convenient time during the year. We provide a time twice a year for all parents to meet with teachers to discuss their children's progress.

Changes at home do affect a child's behavior at school. Please share with your child's teacher enough information to make her sensitive to your needs and to the needs of your child. Parents are invited to have lunch (for a small charge) with their children. Please notify the office so that you can be included in the lunch count for the day.

Newsletters, Calendars, and Memos

A monthly newsletter and calendar of events will be sent home with your child near the beginning of each month. It will inform you of activities, staff and policy changes, and opportunities for family participation. Other memos will be sent home or emailed as needed, along with notes from your child's teacher. Please check the parent information board at the entrance, as well as the one located in or outside your child's classroom, for additional notes and daily information.

If you have Internet access, we encourage you to visit our Children's Center web site at www.fbcchildrenscenter.org for further information. Our calendars, newsletters, and other important information can be found on our web site. Also, each classroom has its own "Home Page" where you can access information pertinent to your child's classroom.

Family Surveys

Each year we will send out family surveys in an effort to collect information about how well we are meeting the needs of children and families, based on nationally recognized standards and criteria developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). We value your input and will use this information to guide us in our program planning.

Suggestions and Concerns

All suggestions, ideas, and concerns about your child should always be discussed with your child's teacher(s) first. If a problem is not resolved, you will then need to see the Director. Parents who question or disagree with the center program or policies should discuss these concerns with the Director. If after talking with the Director a parent is still not satisfied, the parent should then contact the Associate Pastor for Administration & Community Ministry. Further appeal can be sent in written form to the Children's Center Committee Chairperson for possible consideration. We work to keep all lines of communication open for the health and well being of your child.