



TreeHouse

Christian Learning Center

OPERATIONAL POLICIES

TREEHOUSE CHRISTIAN LEARNING CENTER

OPERATIONAL POLICIES 2021-2022

4250 FM 663, PO Box 512

Midlothian, TX 76065

(972) 275-6646

Director: Tom Curran

tom.curran@treehousemidlo.com



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Christian Learning Center

In order to help you understand the Parent Handbook and Operational Policies of TreeHouse Christian Learning Center, please note the following acronyms used in this handbook as well as additional information.

DFPS – Department of Family and Protective Services – This is the Texas department that oversees child care licensing. There is a licensing division of DFPS that develops the Texas Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers that are the licensing regulations for all child care centers in Texas. DFPS inspects every child care center in Texas usually about once a year. A copy of the Minimum Standards is available in the Center’s office, in each classroom, and can also be viewed online:

http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Child_Care_Standards_and_Regulations/default.asp

A copy of the most recent Parent Handbook & Operational Policies may be found at the front desk.

Mission

TreeHouse Christian Learning Center exists to provide quality Christian, Biblical education and child care based on the growth of the whole child – mental, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual – in a safe and nurturing environment in order for each child to develop into the person God created him or her to be.

Philosophy

TreeHouse Christian Learning Center believes that each child is unique and learns best through play and exploration of a variety of materials and environments. We seek to create the richness and diversity of experience that will take children along new paths, deepen their understanding and their skills, and give added complexity to the talents and personal qualities they bring to us. Our philosophy is soundly based in child development and educational theory including the work of Piaget, Vygotsky, Erikson, Dewey, and Reggio Emilia. The staff provides innovative and creative models of early childhood education. Children of all abilities, from infants through preschoolers, are welcome to play, explore, and expand their level of skills. An environment that fosters all aspects of development through comprehensive and multi-disciplinary activities will enhance a child’s opportunities for learning.

Curriculum

Based on the premise that children learn through play, you will see a wide variety of materials and experiences for our children to explore and experience. Centers and zones of learning engage children in activities related to interests of the children. Art, music, movement, dramatic play, science, math, literacy, sensory, and motor play are integrated into daily experiences where children are active explorers of their environment. The teacher’s role is to support the children’s decisions and encourage them to extend learning beyond their original plan. The curriculum promotes cognitive, language and communication, social, emotional, and motor development in a holistic manner. TreeHouse also uses Pinnacle Christian Curriculum to provide thematic learning opportunities that are developmentally appropriate for each classroom. TreeHouse does not use technology devices with our students.

Goals for Children:

The primary goal of TreeHouse is to present the truth of the power of the good news about Jesus’ birth, life, sacrificial death and resurrection for the salvation of our souls along with the love of God for each child and in a safe, secure and stimulating environment. We are focused on creating enriching educational experiences designed to meet the developmental needs of the children enrolled. More specific goals are to:

1. provide each child with opportunity and encouragement to express his/her individual creativity in a variety of ways;
2. foster the development of large and small motor skills through a variety of activities;
3. stimulate problem solving skills, and language and cognitive development that lead to higher ordered thinking skills and provide the foundation for early math and literacy skills;
4. develop social skills through interactions with other children and adults; and
5. enable the child to appreciate and respect differences among people.



Enrollment

Enrollment in TreeHouse Christian Learning Center is open to the community at large. TreeHouse is designed to meet the needs of healthy children twelve weeks and up. All children enrolled must provide, as required by Texas child care licensing requirements, a doctor's statement to participate in group care, documentation of immunizations, a completed enrollment application, and hearing and vision screening if applicable. To comply with the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) regulations, parents must have all records complete before their child's entrance to the Center. If you do not comply, you will not be allowed to leave your child with us on your desired enrollment date.

Before enrollment, the office staff will conduct a tour of our facility with you, introduce you to the teaching staff, and provide a brief overview of our Parent Handbook & Operational Policies. If you would like to schedule an extended visit in the classroom with your child, please let the office staff know.

TreeHouse does not discriminate in enrollment on the basis of race, religious preference, national origin, or family configuration. Any child with special needs will be considered for enrollment on an individual basis. If TreeHouse is able to meet the child's special needs within the confines of our usual classroom format, the child will be welcomed into the program.

Policies

In August updated policies are distributed to parents, along with any changes in the curriculum or the program. If any changes are made throughout the year, parents will be notified and copies will be made available. School calendars are passed out in August and any time changes are made. Parents are asked to update their child's records after each immunization or screening and whenever an address or telephone number changes. Important information is posted at the front desk. If you have any questions or concerns about any policies or procedures of the Center, please feel free to call, e-mail, or drop by the office to discuss them. Our contact information can be found on the front cover or at the end of this handbook.

Hours of Operation

TreeHouse is open from 6:30 A.M. until 6:00 P.M. Monday through Friday year round. Parents will receive a calendar in August indicating which days the Center is closed. TreeHouse is closed for all major holidays. These are announced each year with the annual school calendar.

Enrollment Charges, Policies and Fees

Refer to the current rate sheet available at the front desk for current tuition rates. A one-time registration fee is charged once a space is available for enrollment. A supply fee is included twice a year in August and January. Tuition is billed weekly in advance. TreeHouse does not accept cash or checks. All fees are collected by ACH or debit or credit card. A \$25.00 fee will be applied for any returned payments. All accounts are required to be on ACH auto-draft from a bank account or debit/credit card. ACH from a bank account is free but our credit/debit card processor adds an additional 2.9% convenience fee.

Increases in tuition or other fees will be announced to all parents with a minimum of two weeks notice. There are no adjustments for absences due to illness, vacation, holidays, or any emergencies, such as inclement weather days. This includes the closure of TreeHouse at holidays. Child care fees are charged in advance of services rendered. In the event of temporary school closures, tuition will still be charged to retain your child's enrollment. Temporary closures could be due to weather, building issues, health risks of the Covid Pandemic, or any other circumstance beyond our control.

Tuition is billed out on Sunday and drafted on Monday for the week ahead. If your account carries a balance for any reason you may be subject to disenrollment. We have a \$25 fee for any declined payments. If TreeHouse transports your child to/from school, please notify the front office no later than 2:00pm if your child is not going to be picked up that day. If you do not contact the front desk by 2:00pm, your account will be charged a \$10.00 fee. Anyone picking up a child after 6:00pm will be charged a late fee of \$25. Excessive late pickups could result in disenrollment.

An enrolled student always has a reserved spot therefore tuition applies whether students attend or not. Tuition is not discounted for closures for Holidays, weather days, or pandemic closures. If closures go beyond 1 week we address that on a class by class basis and try to offer discounts and will waive the requirement for 2 week notice for disenrollment.

We do require a two week written notice for disenrollment and we do not prorate tuition.

Once a child has been in attendance for twelve consecutive months, you may take up to two weeks' vacation each calendar year, at half-tuition fees. Your child must be absent for five consecutive business days and your account balance must be zero. Vacation time does not roll over from one calendar year to the next. Please give us at least a two-week written notice when requesting vacation by filling out a vacation form at the front desk.

Attendance

Regular and prompt attendance is important. If a child is to be absent, parents should call TreeHouse to report the reason for his or her absence. Consistently late arrival disrupts the whole class and makes it difficult for your child and other children to establish a routine. In addition, children also miss group learning activities if they arrive after 9:30 am. For this reason, TreeHouse enforces a 9:30 am cut off time for drop off. The occasional late arrival will occur due to doctor's appointments. Please let your child's teacher or the office know if your child has a doctor's appointment and will be arriving late. If your child will be arriving after their normally scheduled lunch time due to an appointment, please make sure they have already had lunch. No drop offs will be accepted during the normal nap time for their class to avoid disruptions for the already napping children.

Receiving and Dismissing Children

Upon arrival, each child must be accompanied to his or her room by an adult. Make certain that you have greeted your child's teacher and checked in at the check in computer or paper sign in at the front desk. Your child may sometimes experience separation anxiety. Your child may cry and reach for you. If it is his or her first week, it is appropriate to walk with your child into his or her classroom and help him or her get settled for a few minutes at most. The teacher would also be happy to help your child get settled. After his or her first few days, it is best to establish a short routine to say goodbye. This may include giving your child a hug and telling him or her that you will pick him or her up in the afternoon. Your child may continue to cry after you have told him or her goodbye, but it is best to leave quickly. Most children calm down within a few minutes of their parents leaving. If you are concerned for your child, please feel free to call the office and we can confirm if your child has settled into his or her day.

Please take care when walking across the parking lot. Please make sure your child is in an appropriate seat belt restraint when you bring your child and when you leave the Center. Car seats are an important part of your child's safety, and TreeHouse will report any negligence that is witnessed.

Children will be released only to persons listed on the enrollment form emergency contact card who have a valid photo ID. If you would like to add someone to the authorized pick up list, please drop by the office and ask to add someone to your child's contact list. You will need to list the person's name, his or her relationship to the child, his or her phone number and address, and whether you want this person to be an emergency contact, authorized pick up, or both. You may also write all of this information on a piece of paper, sign and date it, and place it on the office desk if no one is available at the time you wish to update your information.

If a teacher does not know the person who arrives to pick up your child or does not know if he or she is on your child's contact form, the teacher will send that person to the office to present his or her ID and be checked against your child's contact form. That person's ID will be copied and the copy kept in your child's file. When the child is dismissed at the end of the day, the adult who takes the child is asked to sign out at the time she or he leaves.

In order to provide a safe environment for the younger children (6 weeks-24 months), we ask that you leave your older child at the door of the infant or toddler room and not let him or her enter the room. Texas Child Care Licensing regulations do not allow older siblings in the infant rooms.

Late Pickup

Parents are expected to arrive at the Center in enough time to visit with the teacher about the child, gather the child's belongings, and exit the Center no later than closing time. Fees will be assessed for late pickup. Refer to the Rate sheet for specific fees. TreeHouse will not be able to serve families who cannot pick up their children on time on a regular basis. A regular pattern of late departures (after 6:30) will result in termination of child care services.

Inclement Weather Policy

In the case of inclement weather, TreeHouse will follow the decision of Midlothian ISD regarding school closings. If Midlothian ISD announces a two hour delay, TreeHouse will also have a two hour delay and open at 8:15AM at the earliest. In the case of an early closing, TreeHouse will call all parents to inform them of our early closing time. It will be at least 30 minutes after the calls are made, but we will give as much advance notice as possible. Please watch your local weather station for school closings in the case of inclement weather or go online to check for Midlothian ISD closings.

Early Childhood Development

During the years your child spends at our Center, he or she will pass several developmental milestones. The earliest years of your child's life are explosive years of growth and development. You and our teachers will become partners in the following years to foster healthy growth and development in your child. Both of us have critical jobs when it comes to the development of your child. It is our job to care for your child through the day and to help equip you for the tremendous amount of care you will need to provide throughout your child's life. In your child's early years, they are entirely dependent on their family to receive the care and attention they need. You can do many things that will positively influence your child's growth. Our role is to be your support.

Each teacher is trained on the developmental milestones expected in their particular age group. They will work to move your child through each milestone and brainstorm with you when it seems your child is a little behind. Each child's growth is different. The developmental milestones are guidelines, but they will not hold true for every child. Our teachers will get to know your child as an individual and help him or her on his or her own path.

If you are concerned about your child's development, please talk to your child's teacher or to the Director. We can let you know how we think your child is progressing and connect you to resources if he or she may need a little extra help.

TreeHouse supports families and children who may need additional accommodations, to include home language, differing abilities and cultural backgrounds. Please notify Center Management if you or your child require accommodations and we will ensure that we do our part in making sure your needs are met to the best of our ability.

Below are ways that our program will partner with your family:

1. If specific therapies are needed during the day while the child is in our care, we will do our best to provide space to accommodate sessions with advance notice if we are able to schedule around other classes our school-age program.
2. Participation in all comprehensive meetings when scheduled at least 2 weeks in advance if needed.
3. Complete supporting documentation from authorized medical professional for any accommodations related to the child's physical or developmental needs.
4. Provide materials and resources in parent/child's primary language.
5. Provide opportunity for cultural inclusiveness by hosting cultural events throughout the year.



Health Care

Children are to be kept home or sent home when they show any of the following symptoms:

1. An illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in the Center activities, including outdoor play.
2. An illness that results in a greater need for care than caregivers can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of other children in care.
3. The child has one of the following:
 - A. Oral temperature of above 101 degrees and accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness;
 - B. Armpit temperature of above 100 degrees and accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness;
 - C. Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, one or more vomiting episodes in 24 hours, rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, behavior changes, or other signs that the child may be severely ill

Please notify the office immediately if your child has been exposed to any contagious disease. If your child is diagnosed with a contagious disease, TreeHouse will need a note from the doctor listing the name of the disease and when the child may be readmitted to child care. No children who have had a contagious disease will be readmitted before TreeHouse has been given a written doctor's note with the above information.

Upon arrival each day, the child will be observed for symptoms of illness. No ill child will be admitted to TREEHOUSE .

In case of a serious illness, emergency medical care will be obtained and the parent(s) notified as soon as possible. An ambulance will be called if the child is in need of immediate medical care. The Center Director or designated office staff will accompany the child to the hospital if the parent has not yet arrived. He or she will carry the child's file containing all medical information. For this reason, please make sure your child's medical information remains up to date. A release for emergency treatment must be on file. The Director, if not present at the time of the emergency, will be notified immediately of any medical emergency and any steps taken to deal with the emergency. A full report to Child Care Licensing will be made as required by Texas Minimum Standards.

When a child becomes ill, he or she will be cared for until arrangements can be made for his or her removal from TreeHouse as promptly as possible. Parents are expected to remove their child within 30 minutes of notification. Parents must provide the Center with the phone number of a person to contact in case of emergency if they are unavailable. Parents will receive a copy of a symptom report stating the details of the symptoms of illness observed. Parents will be notified when the child has been exposed to communicable disease.

Readmission to TreeHouse of any child recovering from a communicable disease or disabling illness shall be based on the recommendations of the Texas Department of State Health Services or the American Academy of Pediatrics and the recommendation of the child's doctor. Each teacher has a copy of the Center's full health policies. **These include a stipulation that children must be free of fever, diarrhea, and vomiting for 24 hours without the use of symptom-reducing medication before returning to the Center.**

Medication

Medication and special medical procedures will be administered to a child in the Center only on the written, dated, and signed request from a licensed physician and parent(s) or guardian(s) of the child. Teachers may administer gas drops, teething tablets, and prescription diaper cream if the appropriate form has been filled out. All other medication will be administered by the office staff. Medication permission forms can be found in the main office.

Medications prescribed for a specific child must be kept in the original container bearing the pharmacy label which shows the prescription number, date filled, physician's name, directions for use and the child's name. If the medication must be refrigerated, it will be kept on a separate shelf inside the refrigerator at the back of the office. The shelf is clearly labeled and is never used for anything except medication.

All medication must be taken home at the end of the day. TreeHouse reserves the right to obtain additional administration information from a pharmacist or a physician.

Non-prescription medication can be given at TreeHouse if furnished by the parent. All over-the-counter medications must be brought to the office in the original container, with an age appropriate dosage on the label, or a note from the child's physician giving a different dosage.

TreeHouse encourages the use of sun block to protect children from the harmful rays of the sun. Parents are asked to apply the sun block in the morning when dressing the child. If you would like to send sunscreen for our staff to apply, please mark it with the child's name. We will keep the sunscreen out of reach of the children and apply when needed for extended outdoor periods such as splash days. Parent's must complete an authorization for us to apply sunscreen before we will do so.

TreeHouse staff will not apply insect repellent.

Texas Department of Health Requirements for Immunizations & Vaccines

Parents are responsible for keeping their child's records updated by giving the Director written statements of any changes. Immunization cards signed by the physician are needed to update immunization records. Additional changes in required immunizations may be made by DSHS. Parents will be notified of changes.

DFPS which licenses and regulates child care centers in Texas allows for parents who do not wish to immunize their children to sign an affidavit. We do not require parents to immunize but we do find that children who are not immunized are at times more likely to be ill. We apply and enforce our wellness policy to all families equally.

TreeHouse does not require adult immunizations for employees; however, we do provide information on and CDC recommendations for adult immunizations to every employee annually.

Recommended Immunization Schedule for Persons Aged 0 Through 18 Years (2014) is available at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/downloads/child/0-18yrs-schedule.pdf>

Meals and Snacks

TreeHouse provides breakfast, lunch and snacks each day. Monthly menus are available at the front desk and posted in the dining room. If your child is a picky eater or does not care to eat the lunch provided, parents are asked to provide a nutritious, age appropriate lunch for their children. This might mean that as your child is learning to eat table food and waiting for all of his or her teeth to come in, you might not send foods that are too hard or sticky. TreeHouse provides two servings of milk, one serving of fruits/vegetables, and one serving of grains daily for snack.

The Center will serve milk with each child's lunch. TreeHouse does not force children to eat. If your child does not eat something, you will find it in your child's lunch box. TreeHouse does not use food as a reward or punishment.

If your child will be arriving during or after lunch (11:00 am) due to a doctor's appointment, please make sure he or she is fed before coming to school. No child will be admitted between the hours of 11:30 am to 2:30 pm as this is naptime and arrivals at this time are usually disruptive to the other children who are sleeping. All breakfast food must be finished before your child may enter his or her classroom. For special occasions please consult with your child's teacher.

Staff do not reward good behavior or "clean plates" with food of any kind.

Bottles (breast milk/formula) and food for infants who are not eating table foods must be provided by the child's parents. Label all with the infant's name and date brought to the Center. Bottles will be stored in a small refrigerator in the Infant A classroom



until needed. If you breast feed and would like to send frozen milk, please label it with your child's name and the date it was expressed and we will store it in the freezer in the snack room behind the office.

Food Allergies

Food allergies can be very serious in young children. Any child with a known, diagnosed food allergy requires a Dr.'s food allergy plan identifying the food allergy, symptoms due from exposure and an action plan for exposure/reaction to the food. We ask that you introduce all new foods to your children at home so that you can monitor any potential reactions. Once your child has successfully integrated a food into his or her diet at home, you can begin to send it to school with your child. The eight major food allergens are milk, eggs, fish, crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, and soybeans. Your child may have reactions to foods other than these, but these are the main food allergens as identified by the FDA. To help safe guard children's health we are a nut free school. When packing your child's lunch please ensure that none of the food contains nuts. If your child comes to school with food containing nuts, that food item will not be served to them. If this means the lunch is not filling, parents will be called to provide a new lunch for the child. If the parent is unable to bring a lunch, we will attempt to supplement the child's lunch.

Allergic reactions can include hives, flushed skin or rash, tingling or itchy sensation in the mouth, face, tongue, or lip swelling, vomiting and/or diarrhea, abdominal cramps, coughing or wheezing, dizziness or lightheadedness, swelling of the throat and vocal chords, difficulty breathing, or loss of consciousness. If you observe these symptoms in your child, you should contact your child's doctor immediately. Mild allergic reactions can become more severe if not treated properly. A severe allergic reaction may result in anaphylaxis which causes constricted airways in the lungs, severe lowering of blood pressure and shock, and suffocation by swelling of the throat.

If your child's teacher notices any symptoms of an allergic reaction, we will let you know immediately. If your child has any allergies, please make sure to list them on your child's enrollment packet. Allergies are posted on brightly colored paper in your child's classroom so that any teachers who would be taking care of your child know about his or her allergies.

If your child has severe allergies that may need to be treated with an epinephrine pen, please bring one for us to keep here. We will train all office staff and any staff who work with your child in its use. All staff are trained on the basics of food allergies, know how to recognize the symptoms, and take precautions to ensure children are protected.

Special Dietary Needs

If your child develops an allergy or intolerance to certain foods, or must avoid or be given certain foods for other medical reasons, TreeHouse must be given a written dietary plan by a physician or a licensed dietician. Children who cannot drink milk due to milk intolerance or allergy must have a nutritional plan for a source of calcium. Parents will provide supplements or substitutions for items on the Center's snack menu that are restricted from their child's diet.

Custody of Child

If legal custody of any child at TreeHouse is in question, documents verifying custody will be requested when your child starts attending. If you do not provide documents verifying custody, then TreeHouse does not have the legal right to withhold a child from his or her mother or father if she or he comes with appropriate identification. TreeHouse has a liberal "open door policy" to all its families. However, it is not an appropriate place for the parent not in custody to have visitation during the day. We ask parents to limit stopping by to visit outside of the classroom with their child as it disrupts the flow of the school day, and is often upsetting when the parent leaves.

Security and Emergency Procedures

The responsibility of a teacher and child care provider is to provide a safe environment while allowing children the opportunity to develop their motor skills and explore their environment. Minor accidents occur as children play and explore. When such an incident occurs, caregivers will do all that they can to determine the cause of the accident, care for the child, document the injury for the parents and the director, and evaluate the incident to determine how it can be prevented in the future. Parents will receive an injury report explaining the details of the accident. If a serious injury occurs that requires medical attention, the Center will notify the parent, Child Care Licensing, and EMS if the injury needs immediate attention.

Parents must keep their emergency contact numbers up-to-date at all times. The Center will call the child's doctor for instructions if the parent cannot be contacted. If the child must be transported immediately for medical attention, EMS will be called. It is important that parents keep medical information up-to-date in the child's file, especially allergies to medications, and changes in doctors. Parents may update their contact information in Brightwheel without staff assistance. Please notify us when those changes occur so we can make sure they are noted in all locations.

All staff are required to have valid First Aid & CPR certification at all times.

Fire evacuation is practiced monthly with the children so that the children are less likely to be frightened and the teachers are prepared. Special evacuation cribs are in the infant rooms so that the babies can be removed quickly. All children will be evacuated to the parking lot in the event of a fire and parents notified as soon as possible. The smoke detection and security system is connected with emergency dispatch and help will come immediately if the alarm is activated.

Preparations for threatening weather have been made at TREEHOUSE. Quarterly, the teachers and children practice going to safe places on the inside of the building. The dining room has enough space for us to be safe. Parents will be notified of the situation as soon as possible if threatening weather strikes.

If we must evacuate the building and go to a safer place, we will be at Hoblitzelle Camp on FM 875 in Midlothian, approximately 2 miles south on FM 663.

If you would like a full copy of our emergency plan, please ask the office to provide one for you.

Diapers, Wipes, and Toilet Training

Disposable diapers and wipes for all children who are not potty trained must be provided by the parents. TreeHouse requires a supply of diapers, and two packages of wipes per month.

Before you begin preparing to toilet train your child, we ask that you meet with the teacher. We want to work with you and help you make this a successful new step in your child's development. Toilet training comes when your child is ready to take responsibility for eliminating in the toilet and handling his or her own clothing. Due to the structure of the three year-old classroom, it is necessary for children to be potty trained before entering the class. If your child turns three but is still in diapers, he/she will remain in the two year-old class until they are in underwear.

While your child is toilet training, TreeHouse asks that parents provide several changes of clothing each day. All other children are expected to have at least one change of clothes available each day.

Items from Home

Please do not bring food from home except for a nutritional lunch each day. For special occasions, please consult with your child's teacher. All breakfast food must be finished before your child may enter his or her classroom.

TreeHouse does not allow toys brought from home, with the exception of security items for use during rest time. Bringing a toy often leads to disagreements with playmates and upset feelings. Sometimes items from home get broken. Please leave all valuables, such as earrings, necklaces, etc., at home. TreeHouse is not responsible for the loss or destruction of any items brought from home.

The best items to bring from home are found "treasures." The teachers are always eager for you to share these with the class. Shells from the beach, wildflowers, snails, bugs, seeds, bird nests, magazine pictures, interesting bottles or containers, old jewelry, and many more things are valued by the children and the teachers. Children often like to share things from their house. This interest can be redirected from toys to these "treasures."

Security items are very important to a child and are often misunderstood or not respected by adults. Security items often include blankets, stuffed animals and pacifiers. These transitional items or self-comforting items will be respected by our teachers. Please label these items clearly. As your child adjusts to our program and begins to need his or her security item less, we will put it in his or her cubby. We will not force your child to separate from this item, but we will help your child find new

ways to be comforted and feel safe. Please make sure that all items are taken home and washed on Friday so that they may return with your child clean on Monday.

Outdoor Play

Young children need regular opportunities for outdoor play. TreeHouse schedules outdoor play two times each day for all children 18 months and older, and once a day for children younger than 18 months. Children must come to school healthy enough to be able to participate in outside play. Infants and children will be outside if the temperature is above 40 degrees; however, teachers may decide to take children outside at lower temperatures on dry, sunny, calm days. Parents should provide appropriate clothing, including hats and gloves every day. In the summer months, the teachers may need to limit outside play to 20 minutes or less when the temperature or heat index is 100 degrees or above. We make certain that children are getting adequate supplies of water.

TreeHouse has two developmentally appropriate playgrounds for young children with equipment and free space for playing outdoors. Non-walking infants will enjoy going for walks in strollers, or lying on a blanket in grassy areas. They may also play on our smaller playground when not in use by the older children. On rainy days, children may engage in physical activities in large spaces upstairs in the building. When it is too wet to play on the playgrounds, but it is not raining, classes may take a walk outside.

Screen Time

TreeHouse does not allow any child two years old or younger to watch TV or videos on smart phones or tablets while in our classrooms. Our Three Year Old and Four Year Old Classrooms may watch a G or PG rated movie on special occasions with approval from the director. We want to encourage our children to be active and engage with real objects to enhance their learning.

Rest Time

Infants are kept on their home or natural sleeping schedule. A supervised quiet period of two and a half hours on mats will be provided for children after lunch. TreeHouse provides rest mats or cribs for all children. If the child has a small comfort item, it can be brought with the understanding that it will be put in the child's storage area until naptime. All children will be required to rest for one hour, but they do not have to fall asleep. They are asked to be quiet and allow their classmates to sleep. After a period of rest, children who are not sleeping may read a book and continue to rest quietly. While the children rest, the teachers take turns having their lunch breaks and preparing the classroom for new activities.

Safe Sleep Policy

All staff, substitute staff, and volunteers at will follow these safe sleep recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) for infants to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome/Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS/SUIDS):

- Always put infants to sleep on their backs (unless an Infant Sleep Exception Form 2710 signed by the infant's health care professional.
- Place infants on a firm mattress, with a tight fitting sheet, in a crib that meets the CPSC federal requirements for full-size cribs and for non-full size cribs.
- For infants who are younger than 12 months of age, cribs should be bare except for a tight fitting sheet and a mattress cover or protector. Items that should not be placed in a crib include: soft or loose bedding, such as blankets, quilts, or comforters; pillows; stuffed toys/animals; soft objects; bumper pads; liners; or sleep positioning devices. Also, infants must not have their heads, faces, or cribs covered at any time by items such as blankets, linens, or clothing.
- Do not use sleep positioning devices, such as wedges or infant positioners. The AAP has found no evidence that these devices are safe. Their use may increase the risk of suffocation.



- Ensure that sleeping areas are ventilated and at a temperature that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult.
- If an infant needs extra warmth, parents should provide sleep clothing as an alternative to blankets.
- Place only one infant in a crib to sleep.
- Infants may use a pacifier during sleep. But the pacifier must not be attached to a stuffed animal or the infant's clothing by a string, cord, or other attaching mechanism that might be a suffocation or strangulation risk.
- If the infant falls asleep in a restrictive device other than a crib (such as a bouncy chair or swing, or arrives to care asleep in a car seat), move the infant to a crib immediately.
- Our child care program is smoke-free. Smoking is not allowed in Texas child care operations (this includes e-cigarettes and any type of vaporizers).
- Actively observe sleeping infants by sight and sound [§746.2403 and §747.2303].
- If an infant is able to roll back and forth from front to back, place the infant on the infant's back for sleep and allow the infant to assume a preferred sleep position.
- Awake infants will have supervised "tummy time" several times daily. This will help them strengthen their muscles and develop normally.
- Do not swaddle an infant for sleep or rest.

Clothing

Children should come to school dressed in comfortable, washable play clothes. Children are required to wear shoes while at TREEHOUSE. Complete independence of adult help in dressing is a goal our children are encouraged to achieve. Simple clothing will enable your child to achieve this goal.

Remember that play is a child's work and that much of play is dirty. The children will paint, dig in dirt, play in mud, dig in the garden, play with bugs, crawl on the floor, cook, mash playdough, and more. We have smocks for the children, but the paint often finds a way to get on clothes. All school supplies are non-toxic and washable.

The right clothing will contribute to your child's safety at TREEHOUSE. Please choose shoes that will not contribute to playground injuries from slips and falls. Flip flops and slide on sandals may be easy for your child to put on by herself, but they are not safe when your child wants to run and be active. Select clothing that allows your child to run and climb safely. Avoid necklaces, belts, and draw-string hoods as these have been known to catch on climbing equipment or furniture, with the threat of severe injury.

Jackets, sweaters, hats, mittens, etc. should be clearly marked with your child's name.

An extra set of clothes and shoes should be brought to TreeHouse and placed in the child's storage area in case a change of clothes is needed. Please mark these items with permanent markings.

Discipline and Guidance

Guidance is based on an understanding of the individual needs and development of a child and is directed toward teaching the child responsible behavior. Teachers seek to re-channel aggressive or problem behavior and teach the child to respect the rights of others. No physical punishment will be used to correct a child. Boundaries for children are established in each classroom according to their age.



Communication between home and school is essential for the child's sense of consistency and stability. Disruptions at home or at school can be unsettling to a child and result in misbehavior. In order for the teacher to be supportive of your child, it would be helpful to know about changes that are happening at home and at school. These types of events cause stress for children and may result in a change in behavior. Adults who share this information are better prepared to support a child.

Children are learning how to behave in a group and will make mistakes. We will not report all misbehaviors to you only those that persist or are puzzling to us. We share this information with you so that we can work together to help your child overcome this problem and gain better social skills.

Procedures for Inappropriate / Aggressive Behaviors

Severe behavior problems will sometimes occur in a classroom. These may include biting, bullying, hitting, and using profanity. Very young children frequently do these things to get a reaction from the adults. Toddlers are easily reinforced by our attention. It may be appropriate to redirect the aggressor and protect the other children without giving the aggressor much attention. Prevention is the best tool for a teacher in this situation. However, if the children are older, these behaviors are much more serious. Preschoolers should be learning how to control their tempers and may need consequences to remind them. If you witness aggressive behavior in your child's classroom, know that the teachers and the director are working together to find a solution.

All of the children in the room need adult support as they learn to get along with others. Some children are intimidated by aggressive children. We will help these children learn strategies for taking care of themselves.

The techniques teachers will use include redirecting your child, offering him/her words to use to solve problems, and a chance to try again, offering appropriate choices, as well as modifying the environment or routine to better meet your child's needs. Teachers also use positive reinforcement, praising the children for good behavior they observe.

When a child engages in a behavior that causes noticeable harm to another child., i.e., if your child bites another child, TreeHouse completes a Discipline/Behavioral Report which must be signed by the parent of the child who is biting other children. The parents of the child who was bitten will be given an Ouch/Accident Report which must be signed by the parent of the child who was bitten. The name of the child who engaged in biting and the name of the child who was bitten are not shared with the other parent. While biting is common in young children, it is a behavior which the teachers and parents want to change as quickly as possible.

If teachers notice a pattern begin to form in a child's behavior, teachers will begin a tracking chart recording the behavior, the time and date that it happened, and the circumstances leading up to the incident. These tracking charts will be shared with you and the director. Often these charts will reveal a cause to the behavior, such as frustration, teething, experimentation or the inability to communicate. Our goal is to help identify what is causing the biting or undesirable behavior and to resolve these issues. Teachers will adjust the environment, the teachers' interactions with the child who is struggling or the classroom schedule to relieve the cause of the behavior. New behaviors may be taught and positively reinforced. During this time, your child's teachers will talk to you about the type of behaviors you notice at home and your strategies for dealing with them. It is important that we handle situations in the same manner both at home and at school, so we may adopt some of your practices as we are able and we may ask you to try strategies we use here.

If it is unclear what is causing your child's behavior or if small changes in routine or environment do not alleviate the problem, then we will ask you to attend a conference with your child's teacher and the director to discuss the challenging behavior. A plan to help your child will be agreed on.

In order to let you know about our specific guidelines, teachers are instructed to take the following steps when biting occurs:

For the child who was bitten, hit or bullied:

1. The child who was bitten, hit or bullied will be separated immediately from the aggressor.
2. The child will be comforted.



3. First aid will be given to the bite or hit. It is cleaned with soap and water. If the skin is broken, the bite is covered with a bandage.
4. Parents are called if the skin is broken or if there is a significant mark.
5. An Accident Report is completed documenting the incident. Parents will receive the form at pick up.

For the child that bit, hit or bullied:

1. The teacher will firmly tell the child "No! Do not bite/hit! You have hurt _____."
2. The child will be immediately separated from the child who was bitten or hit.
3. The child will be redirected to another activity.
4. A Behavioral Report is filled out documenting the incident. Parents will receive the form at pick up.

When the aggression becomes excessive (because of the number of times a child bites, hits or bullies because the bite breaks or bruises the skin, or because the bite leaves a significant mark) the following guidelines may be used:

1. A conference will be held with the parent of the aggressor child to discuss the child's behavior and how the behavior may be modified. The primary teacher, director or assistant director will participate in this conference.
2. Moving the child to another classroom may be explored if the staff feel it will help the child.
3. If the child continues aggressive behavior the child will be sent home for the day.
3. If a child continues to receive behavior notices and aggression cannot be abated, the child will be suspended for 1-2 days and an action plan will be put in place with a disenrollment date identified.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher Conferences will be made available twice a year in November and April. Teachers will share observations and written assessments at these times. Daily, teachers will share written reports for children under 3 years old detailing what the child ate, when he slept, and when her diaper was changed or she went potty. It will also give your child's general mood for the day and highlight any current needs, like diapers or extra clothes. All teachers will verbally share with you about your child's day and answer any questions you may have. If you have a particular concern or question that will take more time for the teacher to answer or which you feel needs the Director's attention, please request a parent-teacher conference. We would be happy to set aside a time to discuss your questions or concerns about your child or the Center. We ask that you strive to keep your conversations with the teachers at the door of the classroom short because all of our teachers need to be engaged in hands on supervision of the other children who have not yet left.

Parents in the Classroom

Parents may come by the Center unannounced at any time during the hours of operation to observe their child, the Center's operation, or program activities. Please make sure to sign in and out in the office any time you come to visit. On certain holidays or special days, TreeHouse will invite parents to come and participate in their child's day as they are able. TreeHouse will notify you of these occasions. We ask that you sit and join your child in his or her activities when you visit. Please follow the teacher's lead for how to interact with the children. We ask that parents follow the same rules in the classroom that the children follow.

We would enjoy having you share a special interest, hobby, or your career with the children. Parents can enrich our curriculum in many ways and we appreciate your help.

It is very important that you respect each child and family's right to privacy. Information that you learn about another child while you are visiting the classroom must stay at the Center. Feel free to speak to the teacher if you have a concern about

another child. The teacher will be able to share general information about what we do, but will not be able to share specific information about another parent's child.

Holidays and Birthdays

TreeHouse invites our parents to participate in our annual Week of the Young Child celebrated in April each year. You will be notified of special events in the week leading up to our celebration. Week of the Young Child is a time to recognize both parents and teachers and their roles in each child's early learning and development.

TreeHouse will celebrate Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, Easter, and other days selected by the teacher. We ask that you bring healthy treats for our celebrations. Any treats brought from home for the whole class must be commercially prepared (store-bought) or prepared in a kitchen that is inspected by local health officials. For health reasons, homemade items are not allowed. Teachers will specify what they want brought to parties. Part of our curriculum is teaching children about nutrition. Learning that we can have fun parties and still eat healthy foods will help our children learn to make healthy food choices.

A child's birthday is a very special event. We want to recognize each child on his or her special day. However, we will not sponsor a birthday party at the Center. Parents are welcome to bring invitations to birthday parties planned for elsewhere and we will distribute them to all children in a room. TreeHouse will not distribute addresses for security reasons. To recognize a child's birthday, a parent may bring a special snack. We ask that it be simple and age-appropriate. Parents are also invited to come at lunch time or afternoon snack time to celebrate their child's birthday with the other children. Please talk to your child's teacher if you wish to participate in your child's day in this way. Please also check with the teacher to see if any of the children have diet restrictions. Some children cannot have icing because of the milk products. Others cannot have chocolate. Birthday favors are not appropriate at school.

Field Trips, Transportation, & Animals

TreeHouse does not take preschoolers on field trips or transport children at any time. We also do not allow pets or animals in the Center for any reason. We may once a year in conjunction with Pre-K graduation take the Pre-K class on a very controlled field trip.

School Aged kids will participate in field trips on extended breaks from school for Thanksgiving break, Christmas break, Spring break and over the summers. School field trips will be both fun and educational. Trips will be posted a minimum of 48 hours in advance as well as emailed out to parents. We will have schedules available in advance for summers.

Water Activities

During the warm summer months, TreeHouse may have sprinkler play outside for the toddler and two year old classrooms up through school aged kids. We will provide notice of this in advance. Water is used in sensory tables both inside and outside the classroom year round. Toddlers, two, three & four year old classrooms may also take out squirt bottles during the warm summer months.

Assessments

TreeHouse will offer assessments twice per year in the areas of cognitive development, speech development, social functioning, and motor skill functioning. Such information will be used to determine the child's progress, accomplishments, and further growth needs. All results and recommendations will be shared with the parents.

Families will also be asked to participate in annual assessments of the Children's Center and its program.

Hearing and Vision Screening

According to Texas Health and Safety standards, all children must have vision and hearing screening between the ages of four and five years. When screening is done at your child's well checkup, the Center will need a physician's copy to keep on file. It is the parents' responsibility to get all screenings done.

Infant and Toddler Care

Infants' daily schedules are individualized according to their own needs for eating and sleeping. Initially very young babies may sleep a lot until they adjust to the stimulating new environment. Other babies are over-stimulated at first and sleep only for short periods of time. The more details you can share about your baby, the more quickly the caregivers will learn to read your baby's signals and respond in a way that satisfies him or her.

All baby bottles must be plastic or another unbreakable material. All bottles and pacifiers must be permanently labeled with the child's name prominently displayed. Bottles must be taken home each day to be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized.

Parents must provide all food, formula, and diapers. Please label. We encourage mothers to breast feed their babies and have arranged for a quiet space for that purpose. You may also bring expressed breast milk instead of formula. Upon request, a compilation of breastfeeding education and support resources in the community can be provided by the office. Let us know how we can help you.

Written and signed instructions as to the baby's feeding and napping schedule should be given to teachers. The feeding instructions must be updated at least once a month until your child moves into the toddler classroom. These instructions are to include all of the foods the baby is eating. The parents, and not the Center's staff, are to introduce all new foods to the baby. If the baby has had no reaction to the new food after three days, then add that food to the child's diet instructions at the Center.

Older siblings of infants are not allowed in the infant classroom according to Texas Child Care Licensing standards. Please speak with the teachers about drop-off and pick-up procedures that can be arranged when you must bring an older child with you.

As your child transitions from infancy to toddlerhood, the TreeHouse staff will work with you and your child to develop a schedule that will allow for easy transition to the Infant B classroom and then the Toddler classroom. The TreeHouse staff will also help your child gain independence in feeding necessary for an easy transition. Please speak with your child's teacher for ideas and tips on helping ease this process of independence.

Including Children with Special Needs

TreeHouse supports the philosophy that children learn best when they have opportunities to interact with all children, including children of different ages, gender, backgrounds and abilities. If your child has a special need that should be understood and supported by his or her teacher, please tell us about it. Children with an identified disability may be working with other professionals outside of the Center. If you have a concern about your child's development, please bring it to the attention of the teacher or Center director. We can offer referrals to outside groups and individuals who can help your child.

Babysitting Policy

TreeHouse does not endorse or take responsibility for the use of the Center staff as personal babysitters outside of school hours. Center staff may not discuss personal babysitting with a parent while the staff is at the Center.

Parent Rights

Parents are entitled to see the following information. You may ask the Center Director to show you the most recent copy of the

- minimum standards for this licensed facility;
- Department of Family Protective Services inspection report;
- fire marshal's inspection report; and
- health department's sanitation inspection report.

Children's records are kept confidential and only made available to the Director and assistant. Parents may request access to their child's school records during school hours. Other important information is posted on the door of the office for you to see at any time.

Abuse & Neglect

All employees, including office staff, are required to receive training on the topic of abuse and neglect annually. Once a year in August, information concerning abuse and neglect will be distributed to all parents and employees. If you would like

information on abuse and neglect at any other time, please contact the office. Texas state law requires the staff of the Center to report any suspected abuse or neglect of a child to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or a law enforcement agency. If parents or employees suspect any abuse or neglect, it can be reported by phone (1-800-252-5400) or online at <http://www.txabusehotline.org>. If you or your child is being abused, you may also call the Family Abuse Center in Midlothian at their 24 hour hotline (1-800-283-8401) for help.

Health Checks

Health checks are conducted on each child when they enter the classroom in the morning. Teachers look for breathing difficulty, severe coughing, signs of fever, discharge from the nose or eyes, changes in skin color, bruising or swelling, and cuts, sores, or rashes. Parents may be asked about any changes in the child's sleep, eating, drinking, or toileting habits, or any changes in mood or behavior at home. Any changes are recorded and kept in a spiral notebook in a safe place in the teacher's classroom. Only the teachers in that room and the Director have access to the notebook. No information will be shared with other teachers or parents besides the child's own. Health checks protect the children first and foremost, but they also protect the parents and the staff. Health checks are designed to be minimally disruptive to the child's day.

Gang-Free Zone

Under the Texas Penal Code, the area within 1000 feet of any Child Care Center is considered a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.

Open and Concealed Handgun Carry at the Center Law enforcement officials who are trained and certified to carry a firearm on duty may have firearms or ammunition on the premises of the Center. For all other persons, firearms, hunting knives, bows and arrows, and other weapons are prohibited on the premises of the Center.



TreeHouse

Christian Learning Center

Contact Us

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to talk to your child's teacher or the office staff or the Director. You may talk to us in person, give us a call, or send us an email, whichever is easiest for you.

Tom Curran – Director; TreeHouse Christian Learning Center

4250 FM 663, Midlothian, TX 76065 Tel: 972-275-6646

Exclusion of Children from the Center’s Programs

The Director of TreeHouse Christian Learning Center has final authority when it is necessary to ask parents to remove a child from the Center’s program. For example, the Director might recommend that a parent find other child care arrangements for their child if the Center’s staff do not feel that they can meet the developmental needs of the child, staff feel other children are at risk physically or emotionally, or if the parents have not paid tuition fees.

Contacting the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services – Child Care Licensing

http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care

I have read all the pages of this Operational Policy and agree to abide by the policies of

TreeHouse Christian Learning Center:

Printed First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____