

Parent Handbook

Preschool Policies Agreement / Contract

2023-2024



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www.sunshinecottagepreschool.com

Please Read This Parent Handbook Agreement.

This document gives you all the information that is needed to follow all preschool requirements and protocols to keep our preschool running smoothly and happily.

Welcome to Sunshine Cottage Preschool and Development Center in Buda Texas.

“May you live with the sun shining on you every day, 1 as you learn and grow to be strong and happy.” -Anonymous

Welcome to **The Sunshine Cottage Preschool and Development Center**, where we inspire and encourage curiosity, independence, and a lifelong love of learning by offering high quality instruction and hands-on experiences. Our program and curriculum are carefully selected and designed to provide a supportive learning environment where children develop strengths and acquire skills to best prepare them for kindergarten and beyond. Through intentional teaching, our children are immersed in learning opportunities aimed at promoting personal independence, as well as respect for the world around them, so that they will become contributing members in our community. This handbook is prepared to provide you with pertinent information and guidelines embraced and followed by **The Sunshine Preschool and Development Center**. Please thoroughly read this information prior to beginning your learning journey with our Center. You will be asked to provide your signature signifying that you have received and reviewed the Parent Handbook and that you understand it and will comply with our policies. If for any reason a family does not comply with one or more of the rules and guidelines laid out in this policy, it could result in expulsion from the preschool, or a suit for damages related to the below mentioned. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the information in this Parent Handbook, please contact Susan Ocker before signing:

Administration Team

Owner, Susan Buch

Director, Jennifer Fohn

Assistant, Heather Littlejohn

Positive communication with our families is of the utmost importance. We accept communication in a positive form. Please do not be rude to staff or other families in the center. When a new family is enrolled in our center, we strive to develop and maintain open channels of communication, to notify each other of any questions or concerns that may arise. It is important that there is a similar childcare philosophy between the center and the parents. We welcome questions, feedback, or discussions of any kind that are oriented towards a positive outcome for every child. Sensitive issues will be discussed in private at a mutually beneficial time. Let's begin our new journey growing and learning together at **THE SUNSHINE COTTAGE PRESCHOOL AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER!**

Communication/Parent Notification.

Parents are notified of necessary information in a variety of ways. In the entryway of our main building is where you will find all of the required documents as specified in §746.401 of the Texas DFPS Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers. Our Primary form of communication will be our Brightwheel App. Through here you will not only get daily notes on your child/children, but will also get reminders, and our Monthly Newsletter. Our Secondary form of communication is email. Our email can be found on our web site, or in the front page of this handbook. You can reach us via phone. However, seeing that we are not always available in the office, we might not reach the phone in time, to answer a call. You are welcome to leave a voicemail. If you have questions or concerns for administration (i.e., tuition questions, scheduling a meeting/conference, clarifying a policy) please send an e-mail to: sunshinecottagepreschool@yahoo.com.

Important reminders, such as closure dates or policy changes, will be posted in the foyer, at the entrance of the school and on Brightwheel. Each family is responsible for reading all messages. To effectively distribute important information about your child's daily routine, as well as school/class reminders, we use an application called BrightWheel. This app allows for teachers and caregivers to update information related to your child as it becomes available throughout the day. Parents are also able to send messages directly to the classroom teacher to update them on need-to-know info and/or just check in on their little one. At the end of each day, parents will be emailed a completed copy of their child's daily sheet, summarizing what their child's day at school looked like and if there's anything your child needs the next day at school. Please be understanding of our teacher's time. When you message, expect a delayed response, as our jobs require us to prioritize the children in our care, and their needs.

BRIGHTWHEEL application is our preschool communication system that is set up for all families to communicate with classroom teachers and administrators. This application should be first line of prompt communication through the administration tab for admin team. Please use parent student classroom message tab to communicate with your Childs teacher.

Hours of Operation

The Sunshine Cottage Preschool and Development Center provides year-round, quality child-care for children as young as **6 weeks of age through 6 years age**, until they graduate to kindergarten. **We are open Monday through Friday, from 6:30 a.m. until 6:00 p.m., and offer both full-time and part-time care (ages 18 mo. +) to our families.** Full time care is offered as care from Monday-Friday, Part-time care is considered Monday/Wednesday/Friday, or Tuesday/Thursday. Add-ons or schedule changes may be accepted to our daily schedule only if there is a position open for that day, and they will be accepted on a first come, first served basis. Please remember that schedule changes of this nature create some disruption to our normal routine. We appreciate as much notice as possible so that we can plan for meals, sleeping arrangements, and any changes in activities that may occur. Please try to limit your Childs daily hours in daycare under 10 hours per day.

We appreciate you taking into consideration our schedule when dropping in or calling and remember that visitors usually cause children to react in an excited manner. We do not recommend visiting your child during their school day unless you plan on taking them home after. This is to minimize disruptions, and negative changes to their mood.

Enrollment Policy and Fees / Security Deposit

There are several forms that make up the enrollment packet including the admission form, the enrollment trial period form, a current immunization record, and a physician's health statement, Tuition fee schedule, Parent handbook policy contract signature sheet, BrightWheel acceptance sheet, and ACH form. **Every form in the packet must be completed, and in our possession before we can assume the responsibility of caring for your child.** This is to ensure your child receives the very best care possible and satisfies the record-keeping requirement of state licensing guidelines. All forms must be reviewed and updated *annually*. If you have changes to any of the forms in the enrollment packet, please notify the office to update your records.

There will be a two week security deposit required at the time of enrollment. This security deposit amount will be used to secure two weeks paid of any future four week withdrawal notices. See withdrawal policies in this handbook.

Upon enrollment there will be start up fees:

1. Two weeks security deposit of the current weekly tuition.
2. Two weeks trail period tuition at current weekly tuition.
3. Annual Supply fee - prorated
4. Access Key (Touch App)

Enrollment Trial

Every family will complete the enrollment trial period form, which their two-week *paid* trial period for each child enrolled in the preschool, plus include the two week security deposit. Either party may terminate this agreement within this period, through an electronic letter, with or without cause. After the initial trial period has been completed, a 4-week written notice will

be required to withdraw terminate care. Usual and customary reasons for termination include, but are not limited to, the following: a child's failure to thrive/acclimate to surroundings; behavior (refer to examples found in subsequent pages of this handbook); our ability to meet any specific and/or "special" needs of each child; and/or the inability of family/child to comply with preschool policies. This policy is extended to infants enrolled in our preschool. We believe it is not healthy to force an infant with colic to attend preschool. The constant crying makes for a difficult day for the baby, the other children, and the teachers. If after two weeks an infant is still struggling to acclimate to the preschool environment, we may request a parent conference and may require parents to keep their child home for up to a month to outgrow the colic before coming back to preschool.

Tuition Payment Procedures

The success of our center depends on the prompt payment of tuition and fees to cover the costs of day-to-day expenses. Unless otherwise specified and approved by the Owner, **tuition is payable in advance each MONDAY morning, each week for that week of childcare.** This means payments are processed before week of care provided. Payment options for Tuition are as follows:

- ACH Auto Bank Draft (This draft will deposit your account each Monday Morning)

- Credit/Debit Card Transaction (4.5% convenience fee will be added to each transaction)

Personal checks or cash are not accepted

Tuition and fees are computed with the following factors in mind: employment costs (employee payroll wages and benefits, Employer's tax, property tax, franchise tax, insurance, ground maintenance. child-specific costs (furniture, craft/activity/curriculum supplies, technology, indoor/outdoor play equipment, health supplies), facility costs (building maintenance and repairs, landscaping, utility usage, taxes, and insurance) and time related costs associated with maintaining and exceeding compliance with state standards related to childcare operations. Our Annual Supply Fee is for cleaning products, paper goods, art supplies, BrightWheel, replace worn-out toys and mats, etc. Through out the year.

DO NOT DISCUSS TUITION WITH TEACHERS, AS THEY DO NOT HANDLE THIS AND ARE NOT AUTHORIZED TO DO SO.

WEEKLY TUITION IS A FLAT RATE FEE REGARDLESS OF ATTENDANCE.

This means that tuition is still to be paid even if your child does not attend (absent because you are out of town, vacation, sick, or preschool holidays, closers due to weather or trainings, building maintenance issues, etc.). Tuition and set rates are nonnegotiable.

ALL TUITION RATES ARE DUE AT 100% RATE VALUE REGARDLESS OF ATTENDANCE. THIS MEANS IT IS DUE EVEN IN CLOSURES FOR HOLIDAYS, STAFF DEVELOPMENT TRAININGS, BAD / INCLEMENT WEATHER, BUILDING MAINTENANCE ISSUES, GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE MANDATES. If there is a refusal to adhere to this agreement in this contract the school can ask for your formal withdraw notice with a four-week paid in full (see withdraw section of contract).

Childcare services may be halted until full payment of tuition and NSF charges have been made, **in CASH**. In addition, upon the second returned check within 6 months, only cash will be accepted for three months.

Listed below are the current tuition rates by age:
Tuition Rates based on age group and program selected:

Age	Part Time Rate	Full Time Rate
0 - 17 Months	NA	\$280.00
18 - 24 Months	NA	\$260.00
2 Year Old	MWF - \$175 T-TH - \$145	\$260.00
3 Year Old	MWF - \$175 T-TH - \$145	\$240.00
4 Year Old	MWF - \$175 T-TH - \$145	\$230.00
5 Year Old	MWF - \$175 T-TH - \$145	\$210.00

Additional Fees:

(*) Infant Early Care: 6:30am-7:45am: Add \$14/week

(*) Infant Late Care: 5:15pm-6:00pm: Add \$17/week

Weekly **Meal Plan**-Daily Lunch and Afternoon snack (18mos-5yrs): Add \$15 to weekly tuition.

There will be a late fee of \$10 per day, assessed if tuition is late.

Annual Supply Fee: This fee is \$120 per child and is due on or before September 1 each year.

If tuition is not paid / cleared by the end of the day on the following Monday, your child will not be able to attend school until tuition and late fees are paid in full.

Monthly payments are calculated by multiplying our weekly rate, times 52(weeks in a year) and then dividing it by 12(months in a year). This will be drafted on the 1st business day of each month.

Enrollment Fees :

Nonrefundable Registration Fee: There is a \$80 Non-Refundable registration fee per family due at the time of enrollment. If you terminate childcare services and are gone more than 90 days and wish to return, you must pay a \$25 re-application fee.

Security Access Key (Touch App) Payment: SCP has a security access encrypted app for each parents phone to down load with private link for access into the preschool building. All new families that enrolls in our preschool are responsible for paying \$10 for each access app they need. If a Key CARD is required there is a \$20 fee to create. Replacement cards are available for purchase for a \$25 fee.

2 Week Security Deposit: Parents will be asked to pay a two-week security deposit at the time of enrollment. These funds will be used for future Four-week paid withdrawal notice policy. (Please refer to each corresponding section)

Return Checks Insufficient Funds: If a ACH draft check is returned for insufficient funds or invalid account number, there will be a \$45 fee incurred because of the returned ACH check.

Late Fees

There will be a late fee of \$10 assessed if tuition is paid after 12:00pm on Monday. **If tuition is not paid by end of day on Monday, your child will not be able to attend school until tuition and late fees are paid in full. This includes any returns or declines on payment methods until that payment clears.**

If ACH draft returns NSF then there will be \$10 daily fee added until payment is cleared.

A \$1.50 per minute late pickup fee will be assessed for all children picked up after closing. This must be paid in cash at the time of pickup, or before the child's next regularly scheduled day. This will be strictly enforced, and habitual tardiness may result in termination of services. This is a gratuity to the teacher who stays on her own time to babysit your little one during the time we closed till you arrive.

Immunization Requirements

Every child enrolled in a child-care center must meet applicable immunization requirements specified by the Texas Department of State Health Services in 25 TAC 97, Subchapter B (relating to Immunization Requirements in Texas Elementary and Secondary Schools and Institutions of Higher Education). This requirement applies to all children in care from birth through 14 years of age. You can access it on the Texas Department of State Health Services Internet website at: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize>, or you may obtain a copy from Licensing, or your local or state health department. Requirements for tuberculosis screening and testing vary across the state. The Texas Department of Health does not require tuberculosis testing for children attending a childcare center in this region.

PARENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING US THE MOST CURRENT IMMUNIZATION RECORD FOR THEIR CHILD AT ALL TIMES.

You can be asked to not return to the preschool until we have the most current records

Vaccine Preventable Illnesses for Employees

Sunshine Cottage Preschool understands that DFPS recommends childcare centers consider some vaccines for the safety of teachers and for the safety of the children they care for. Since vaccines are neither perfectly safe nor perfectly effective, and some persons who receive vaccines will be injured as a result, and some persons who receive vaccines will not be protected. Sunshine Cottage Preschool requires that all teachers consider the flu vaccine yearly, and the tDap and Varicella as a one-time vaccination. After speaking with his/her physician and considering the recommendations of DFPS each preschool employee should make the personal decision as to what is best for his/her health. All employees that have a cough or symptoms of allergies or a cold must wear masks and gloves until symptoms have subsided.

Monthly Expenditure Form We are happy to provide and sign a monthly expenditure form for families that request them for flex spending accounts. We will gladly provide you with this form, at your request Please allow for 24 hrs. for us to deliver this to you. See Administration Team if you have any questions.

Inclement Weather

In the case of inclement weather such as ice, snow, or flooding, **The Sunshine Cottage Preschool and Development Center** will follow the Hays CISD operating schedule. Please watch local television channels, check the internet or listen to local radio for notification of Hays CISD closings, delayed start times, etc. For example, if Hays CISD delays their school start times by 2 hours, we too will open two hours later than usual (at 8:30am). In the event Hays CISD decides to close during the business day, the Sunshine Cottage Preschool will also begin closing procedures at the same time. We feel that this decision helps to ensure the safety of both our families and our staff members. We will begin calling parents immediately via the telephone numbers listed on the enrollment forms to notify parents. Arrangements should be made to immediately pick up your child from **The Sunshine Cottage Preschool and Development Center**. **Alerts are given out through BrightWheel (sometimes email is used). Please sign up for the BRIGHTWHEEL app that we have in your Childs enrollment package. All CLOSURES DUE TO BAD / INCLEMENT WEATHER STILL REQUIRES AND PROCESS-ES FULL TUITION RATE REGARDLESS OF CLOSURE.**

Arrival *All children must be dropped off before 10:30 a.m. Children are to arrive clean, fed, dressed and groomed for the day, wearing both shoes and socks. We will try our best to send your child home with a clean diaper and appreciate the same consideration when you drop off. SCP will have QR Code to sign in and out electronically.* It is normal for some children to have difficulty separating from parents or cry when dropping off. Please make your drop off brief. The longer you prolong the departure, the harder it gets. A smile, a cheerful goodbye kiss, and a reassuring word that you will be back is all that is needed. *This is a time of testing, when two different authority figures are present (the parent and the provider). All children will test to see if the rules still apply. During arrival and departure, we expect parents to back up our rules. Please be in control of your child during pick up times.*

Departure

Our normal procedure is to release the child only to his/her parents, or someone else the parents designate on the Authorized Pick up and Emergency Contact Form. If someone other than the parent is to pick up the child, please notify us ahead of time. A verbal notice is fine on that day, if this person is on the list of people who are authorized to pick up your child. If the person is **NOT** on that list, we **MUST** have written permission to release your child. Please inform emergency contacts, or people designated to pick up your child, that if we do not know them then we will need to ask for identification. This is not meant to offend them. This is simply a measure taken for the child's protection. Drop off and pick up times are hectic for the children and staff members and are not good times to discuss serious matters. Please contact Susan or the preschool director with any issues or concerns you may have.

Do not pick your child up through the playground over the fence/gate. You must come inside and sign them out and go through the building. **State law requires that parents must sign their child in and out of the preschool daily.** For your convenience, a sign in /sign out QR Code, which is to be used through your BrightWheel app, is located at the entrance of both buildings. This gives us a written record of the child's attendance, hours, and the person who brought/picked up the child each day. If a friend or relative picks up, then we will need confirmation from the parent and a photo ID of who is picking up.

We are also required by the state to do a health screen check and document findings on the attendance log.

Parents or guardians that are signing out during pick up time are also required to notate or initial any concerns they have. Keeping concerns to yourself and then blindsiding with a report can be counterproductive. Let us communicate and work together to make things happy and best quality for everyone, especially the children.

Absences

Childcare fees are based on enrollment (a reserved space), not on attendance. **To maintain a reserved space, fees must be paid during the absence of a child due to illness, holidays, vacation, maternity leave, or for any other reason.** This policy is implemented because we are required by State to have everything the child needs regardless of their attendance. Therefore, money is going out on a daily basis, so we need the money coming in to cover the expenses of the child. Please send the preschool a message on BRIGHTWHEEL letting us know your child is ill.

Holidays/School Closures

The following is a list of days that **The Sunshine Cottage Preschool and Development Center** will be closed for school year. Please note that we may schedule a maximum of three (3) early pick up days during the year as needed for staff meetings, but at least two weeks notice will be provided to parents. The school may a couple times per year give a one month notice for staff development closer. FULL TUTION IS STILL DUE

Holiday	Date
Labor Day	09/04/23
Columbus Day - Staff Development	10/09/23
Thanksgiving Break	11/23/23 - 11/27/23
Christmas Break	12/25/23 - 12/29/23
New Year's Eve & New Year day	12/31/23 - 01/02/24
MLK Day	TBA
Presidents Day - Staff Development	02/19/24
Good Friday	03/29/24
Memorial Day	05/27/24
Independence Day	07/3/24 - 07/5/24
Labor Day	09/02/24

Personal Belongings

We are not responsible for any lost or damaged personal items.

All children belongings need to be labeled with their names by you before bringing it into the preschool. WE ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR TOYS OR EXTRA UNWANTED ITEMS BROUGHT FROM HOME.

Personal Classroom Supplies All personal belongings MUST be labeled with your child's name.

Parents are expected to supply the following items (as applicable) to be kept in their child's cubby: Disposable diapers/pull-ups, wipes, powders/ointments, pacifier (if applicable), bottles, bibs, saline drops/gel and nasal syringe, blanket for rest time, and a complete change of clothes (replace when soiled). Eating utensils, cups and dishes will be supplied.

Note: Donations help us keep costs down and are greatly appreciated. In our newsletters we will inform you of any season-specific items we need, but general school supplies (i.e. wipes, paper towels, construction paper, paper of any kind, crayons, paints, markers, and

misc. art supplies such as fabric scraps, glitter, pipe cleaners, paper plates, etc.) are always useful and appreciated. We also welcome activity and craft ideas!

Infants/Toddlers Schedule

Infants and toddlers will not necessarily follow the same schedule as the preschoolers. They are not capable of sitting still for circle time, may need a morning nap, etc. A report will be prepared for each infant/toddler each day. It will include things such as, time of feedings, what was eaten, amount eaten, time of diaper checks and results, times of naps, any medication given, and various comments about the child's day. **Infants are always fed on demand.** If parents have another feeding schedule in mind, please discuss it with the director so we can work together to best support the child. Breastfed infants need to have an adequate supply stocked and properly labeled. Nursing mothers are welcome and encouraged to come in and nurse their child while in care- we will make arrangements for your comfort and privacy. **Toddlers eat meals and snacks on a set meal schedule.**

Meals

Children are welcome to bring their own lunches and snacks to school consisting of "ready to eat" food, packed in temperature control containers. **Please do not send any food that needs to be refrigerated or microwaved.** Each day we give the children in our care a complimentary breakfast snack. As a courtesy to our families, we offer lunch, and an afternoon snack for purchase. All children enrolled in our preschool program (18 months+) must notify us the time of enrollment whether they wish to opt in for lunch and snacks. For families who chose to purchase meals at the Center, an additional **set fee of \$15 must be added onto each child's weekly tuition rate** and is due with tuition the Friday before the following week of meals. By chance, if a packed meal happens to be forgotten, one will be provided at a set rate of \$3 per day, each day that one is not provided. **We are a NUT FREE SCHOOL. Please do not bring in any kind of nuts or nut-based products for the safety of our children who have potentially fatal allergies**

Cleanliness/Hygiene

We do our best to maintain strict cleanliness and hygiene standards. Children's hands are washed before and after meals, after playing outside, and after toileting. We use paper towels for drying hands, so children do not have to use the same towel. If parents provide a toothbrush and toothpaste, teeth will be brushed as well. All employees are required to wash their hands frequently and use antibacterial gel. Infants sleep in separate cribs or pack and plays, with clean sheets used only by them.

Beginning at toddler age, washable nap mats are used. Each child has a separate nap mat with a sheet and a blanket that are washed weekly (unless soiled, then they are washed as often as necessary) and mats are wiped with disinfectant daily.

Children use separate cups, plates, bowls and eating utensils that have been thoroughly washed. Highchair trays, etc. are disinfected after each use. We disinfect toilet seats and clean potty chairs between each use.

Preschoolers Schedule

We post the most up to date schedules based on each classroom on our information board. Preschoolers enjoy a structured schedule that allows for flexibility. A schedule helps the day to flow more smoothly and allows the children to anticipate upcoming events. We will adhere to our written schedule to the best of our ability. There will be times when we must make adjustments to the schedule. We appreciate families considering our schedule when picking up or dropping off children. It is better if arrivals and departures do not occur during quiet time, but when they do, please take note of the fact that children may be sleeping. Come and go as quietly and quickly as possible. Children who arrive during quiet time will be expected to rest or play quietly until the rest period is over. Our daily schedule, while very flexible, is as follows:

Preschool /Toddler General Schedule

<i>Preschool</i>	<i>Toddler</i>
<i>6:30am-8:00am (drop off)</i>	<i>6:30am-8:00am (drop off)</i>
<i>8:00am-12:00pm (instructional time)</i>	<i>8:00am-11:00am (instructional time)</i>
<i>12:00pm-12:30pm (lunch)</i>	<i>11:00am-11:30am (lunch)</i>
<i>12:30pm-2:30pm (nap time)</i>	<i>11:30am-2:30pm (nap time)</i>
<i>2:30pm-4:00pm (instructional time)</i>	<i>2:30pm-4:00pm (instructional time)</i>
<i>4:00pm-6:00pm (pick up)</i>	<i>4:00pm-6:00pm (pick up)</i>

Preschool Attire

Children should arrive dressed to learn and dressed to play. Please do not send your child to school in their “Sunday Best” clothing and expect them to be spotless when you arrive to pick them up. Clothing should be comfortable and must be seasonally appropriate for outdoor play. Our goal is to minimize distractions to the learning environment. **Boys and girls should come to school each day wearing clean, preschool-appropriate clothing, so we ask parents to please be aware of graphic t-shirts and the message they send.** Any child who wears a shirt that promotes violence or drug/alcohol use will be given an alternative shirt to wear during the day and parents will be notified. **CLOSED-TOED, VELCRO SHOES ARE REQUIRED EVERYDAY.** To ensure children’s safety on the playground, and in the event of an emergency, **children are NOT permitted to wear sandals or flip-flops, LACE shoes, boots. Shoes must be easy for your child to put on and run and play in. Safety is crucial. Children must be dressed weather appropriate and must have their clothes and jackets labeled with their name in it.**

Diapering/Toilet Training

If your child is in diapers, it is your responsibility to supply us with disposable diapers and baby wipes on as needed basis. Our caregivers will indicate on your child's daily report when additional supplies are needed. When you feel your child is ready for toilet teaching, we ask that you begin this teaching at home during a weekend or vacation. We will follow through and encourage your child while in our care. The child must be showing signs of readiness. When a child is ready, the process should go quickly. Putting a child in diapers part time, and training pants part time, can be confusing and delay the training process. Please keep in mind that the activity level at our preschool can distract your child from responding to an urge to use the potty, more so than at your home. Therefore, we may continue to use diapers or pull-ups until your child can and will announce that he/she must use the bathroom (not just at home, but here, as well), and can control his/ her bladder and bowels for a few minutes beyond that announcement. Parents must supply training pants with plastic pants or disposable pull-ups, as well as a couple of extra changes of clothing each day (don't forget the socks!). During toilet training, we ask that the child be dressed in "user friendly" clothing, as much as possible. The best items are shorts and pants with elastic waists, or dresses. Try to avoid tight clothing, i.e. pants with snaps and zippers, and overalls. These are difficult for children to remove "in a hurry." ***Note: All children entering our three-year-old class (as well as our Prekindergarten classroom), must be potty trained and completely out of diapers.***

Nap/Quiet Time

There will be a designated nap/rest time each day. All children must nap, rest, read, or play quietly during this period. Rest time gives children a much-needed break during the day. Without rest time, some children are argumentative in the afternoon, short-tempered with others, and not too happy when they go home in the evening. Infants nap at varying times and their schedules will be accommodated. Somewhere between 12 and 18 months, children usually drop down to one nap per day. At this time, we will attempt to put them on the scheduled nap/rest period. Our nap time for our 18 mph - 5 yr is scheduled around 12:30 - 2:30.

Children with Special Needs

We will make all reasonable modifications to our policies and practices to accommodate children with special needs, unless to do so would be a fundamental alteration of our existing program. Each child will be evaluated on an individual basis to determine eligibility. We reserve the right to offer to the parent(s) a transfer to a facility that may be better suited to handle a particular special need, for the best interest of the child. We are not a special needs school and are not designed to be so. However, we will do our best to accommodate as long as the child is able to meet our preschool requirements. We help families enroll with Special Services through Hays CISD.

Parental Involvement

The Administration Team is available to review or to discuss any concerns or questions with regard to policies or procedures of **The Sunshine Cottage Preschool and Development Center**. The specific members of the Administration Team may be reached at the facility in person, by email, by telephone, or by direct mail. In the event that one of these team members are unavailable, an appointment made via through email to discuss concerns or questions as soon as possible. It is our goal to make **The Sunshine Cottage Preschool and Development Center** the best facility of its kind. We provide many opportunities for parental involvement in your child's learning experience. You are welcomed and encouraged to participate in any or all of these. Some examples include talking to students about your job on Career Day, serving as one of our monthly Mystery Readers, and/or assisting staff members in planning one of our school wide holiday celebrations. Please look for information regarding the need for parent participation in our newsletters.

Curriculum/Activities

The State of Texas requires all licensed childcare centers to develop, post and follow written activity plans which outline the daily routines and specific activities for each age group of children. We strive to ensure our students are “Kinder Ready” after finishing their prekindergarten year at **The Sunshine Cottage Preschool and Development Center**. We believe that when working with children there is no one-size-fits-all approach to learning, therefore we do not rely on any one specific prepackaged curriculum. Instead, our Director designs the school-wide instructional program, structured through weekly thematic instructional units closely aligned with the *Texas Infant, Toddler, and Three-Year-Old Early Learning Guidelines*, as well as the *Texas Pre-K 11. Learning Standards* (Texas Education Agency). This learning program primarily focuses on four developmental domains: social and emotional development, cognitive development, language and communication development and physical health and motor development, each containing milestones of children’s skills and behaviors by age group from birth to preschool. In addition to writing the curriculum, the Administration Team provides ongoing professional development to ensure all teachers are well-equipped teach our children using researched-based methodologies and instructional practices. It is our goal to provide high quality instruction through exciting and engaging activities to ensure children have fun while they are learning while also improving their social skills and cultivating their creative expression. Free play, reading, arts and crafts, music/singing, dancing, dramatic play/pretend, and problem solving are just some of the activities children will enjoy at our preschool. Music helps to develop young brains and plays a strong role in our day-to-day activities. Television/Electronic Devices will be utilized to help children unwind and relax, as well as to serve as educational tools. We usually watch no more than one hour of television per day, and some days none at all. The exception may be on rainy days, or if we are having a particularly difficult day. **Viewing will be limited to PBS and child-friendly, educational videos, such as Magic School Bus, Sesame Street, Wee Sing, etc.** We carefully screen everything the children watch and watch along with the children. We avoid any type of graphic images, potentially frightening images, unpleasant language, or anything of that nature, as we believe that young children are extremely impressionable. We prefer to err on the conservative side when choosing appropriate viewing and work hard to in-

corporate the weekly theme into any digital media time to properly support all learning intentions. At the very end of the day we will at times have something for the children to view as parents are arriving. We also use this during really hot, cold, or rainy days.

Center Rules

There are certain Center rules that all children will be taught and expected to follow. This is for the safety and well-being of everyone. Children may NOT walk around the Center with food, cups or bottles. In addition, we realize that we must expect a certain amount of wear and tear where children are concerned, we do not want to have our Center "demolished." There will be **no running** permitted in the Center. **Pushing, biting, grabbing, kicking, spitting, hitting, or pinching other children/ infants/ adults will NOT be allowed.** No standing or climbing on chairs or tables. Willful destruction of property will be charged to the parent at the cost to replace the item. Respectful treatment of other people and all property, toys, and furniture is expected. There will be no use of obscene, derogatory, or disrespectful language. PLEASE do not allow your child to walk through the school while eating. Do not allow your child to open the doors (this makes them think they can open their classroom or school door when they please. This is a safety issue). Please DO NOT let your child run through the parking lot or walk on the rock wall. If we have rules posted on BrightWheel and upfront by the office, it is your responsibility to read and abide.

Smoking is not permitted on the premises as per state law, which applies to both parents and staff members.

Photography / Video

The privacy of the children at our center is of the utmost importance to us. Therefore, to ensure the highest level of care, safety and privacy for each child, family, and employee, **The Sunshine Cottage Preschool and Development Center** will not allow any photos or videos taken of children while in our care to be copied or distributed. We have video monitoring throughout our preschool. These are on closed circuit cameras. I do not allow access for anyone to log on to view at their discretion. Again, this is a safety and privacy standard. We take this seriously. No copies of photos or video footage will ever be allowed to be given to teachers or families without the consent or agreement of the owner. Parents are welcome to view video footage with the owner with a written request that must be approved by the owner.

Reporting Requirements

All Sunshine Cottage Preschool staff members receive annual training on the prevention, recognition, and reporting of child abuse and neglect. Staff members are required by Texas state law to report any suspected child abuse/ neglect to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) and any applicable law enforcement without prior consultation with any family member involved. Always be sure to let the Director know when you drop your child off if he/ she has any unexplained cuts or bruises. All children that come to daycare with injuries have them logged into their file. Parent awareness of signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect, including warning signs that a child might be a victim, as well as prevention techniques, is vital to the health of our community. Such information is available through the Preschool office or by

contacting Texas Child Care Licensing. If you ever feel that we are not operating in a safe manner, please bring the matter to our attention. If you desire a copy of the state licensing guidelines, we will be happy to supply you one. We are proud to say we do our best to follow state licensing guidelines to the letter. Our staff is highly trained in knowing and complying with all applicable state and local laws. If you observe something that is a violation of state licensing laws, you can report the incident by calling the DFPS Office located at 1901 Dutton Dr. San Marcos, Texas 78666, (512) 753-2259. We pride ourselves in running one of the safest childcare centers in Texas.

Indoor/Outdoor Play

Indoor play: We provide a variety of age-appropriate toys for indoor play. Toys may be rotated or placed temporarily out of use so that the children do not become bored. Younger children have less-developed organizational skills and can get easily frustrated or upset when there are too many toy choices. It is also more difficult and can be overwhelming for them to help with cleanup process when there are toys everywhere. For this reason, during free play times, each child may select one or two things at a time to play with. They will be shown how to put those things away before selecting something else.

Outdoor play: We will be playing outdoors every day that weather permits. Please make sure that your child is appropriately dressed (see Clothing/Attire section), for outdoor play at all times. Our activities will include walks, playground time, water play (sprinkler in summer), and other gross motor skills such as riding tricycles, bouncing balls, climbing small steps, etc. **As a licensed childcare center, we are mandated by state law to take the children outside to play.** Parents who feel that their child is not well enough to participate in outdoor activities must keep them home until they are able to participate in all activities. We do at least three outside recesses per-day. We do stay in during rainy, very cold (under 45°F), and very warm (over 98°F).

Discipline and Guidance

We maintain a positive discipline policy which focuses on prevention and redirection as teachers' model and encourage appropriate behavior by verbally praising and rewarding children that are good listeners, kind to others, and respectful of others and Center property. The children are explained the rules of the Center frequently, so they are all familiar with the guidelines. Please keep in mind that there WILL be disagreements between children. Young children have a hard time expressing their feelings. Sometimes they hit, throw toys, bite, etc. We will try to prevent problems, redirect when appropriate, and discuss inappropriate behavior. The use of "time-to-self" will be utilized when a brief cooling off period is needed. Sometimes when children are fighting or throwing toys, we will put the toy in a short time out, and then bring it back into circulation a little later. Sometimes, but not all the time, this seems to work better than giving the child a time out. Under **NO CIRCUMSTANCES** will there be any spanking, physical abuse, verbal abuse, name calling, or isolation used. Neither food nor sleep will ever be withheld from

children as a means of punishment. Immediate Action will be taken in the form of staff termination or suspended from work.

Biting Policy

Biting is a natural developmental stage that many children go through. It is usually a temporary condition that is most common between ten and thirty-six months of age. Toddler's bite other toddlers for many different reasons. A child might be teething, or overly tired and frustrated. He or she might be experimenting or trying to get the attention of the teacher or his peers. Toddlers have poor verbal skills and are impulsive lacking much self-control. Sometimes biting occurs for no apparent reason. The preschool teachers will encourage the children to "use their words" if they become angry or frustrated. Teachers will always maintain close and constant supervision of the children. **The safety of the children at the preschool is our primary concern.** The following steps will be taken if a biting incident occurs: * The biting will be interrupted with a firm "No...our teeth are for chewing food!" * Staff will stay calm and will not overreact. * The bitten child will be comforted. * Staff will remove the biter from the situation and will be given something to do that is satisfying. * The wound of the bitten child shall be assessed and cleansed with soap and water. * The parents of both children will be notified of the biting incident and will be asked to sign an Incident Report. Confidentiality of all children involved will be maintained. If a child continues to consistently bite others despite interventions implemented by his/her teachers, a parent teacher conference will be scheduled to address the issue. If the child is not receptive to ongoing solutions to the issue, he or she may be suspended and/or terminated from care for the health and safety of the other children. We do our best to accommodate for everyone that is in this situation. Children are just children, and we need to help both parties work and grow through it.

Health Check

Children will be visually screened when they arrive in the morning. This is for parents to notate any bruising, scratches, bug bites, diaper rash, etc...that your child is coming to school with. In the event a child becomes ill and needs to be picked up, the parent(s) will be called and are expected to come pick the child up within one hour (60 minutes). If the parent(s) cannot be reached, or have not arrived within an hour, the emergency contact person will be called and asked to come pick the child up. If the child has not been picked up by either a parent or emergency contact within an hour and a half (90 minutes), the parent will be charged \$1/minute until they pick up for sick childcare. Please sign in and note any bug bites, scratches, rashes, small bruises that the child is arriving to school with so that we are all starting off knowing who has what and from where.

Illness/Sick Child Policy

Every effort is made to reduce the spread of illness by encouraging hand-washing and other sanitary practices (see Cleanliness and Hygiene). We are a "well-childcare facility," but we are capable to provide sick childcare within reason and separate from the well children. The following illness policies will be strictly enforced for the health, wellbeing, and safety of all concerned.

Under NO circumstances may a parent bring a sick child to daycare without notifying a member of the Administration Team, if the child shows any signs of illness (see list below) or

is unable to participate in the normal routine and regular day care program. Sick children will expose all children and staff members who they encounter. These people can in turn expose the other children. Sick children want care from their parents in the comfort of their own homes. If other children become ill due to exposure to your sick child, either because he/she was returned to daycare before full recovery or because he/she was not picked up promptly upon notice of becoming ill, other parents will be unnecessarily inconvenienced. Because this is disruptive to other children and their families, your cooperation on this issue is extremely important. For the benefit of our staff and other children and their families in our care, a sick child will not be permitted to return to care for 24 hours after condition has returned to normal. The child may return 24 -48 hours (depending upon the illness) after they have received the first two doses of an antibiotic. If a child receives an antibiotic for an ear infection, he/she may return to day care immediately if he/she has been free of other symptoms mentioned for at least 24 hours. If your child has surgery, h/she may not return until the following school day and must have a doctor's note stating that the child is cleared to attend school. **If you are not sure about whether to bring your child to care, please call a member of the Administration Team.** Allergy related symptoms, and non- communicable illnesses do not require exclusion if you have a note from your doctor. 14.

Symptoms Requiring Removal

* Fever is defined as having a temperature of 99.4 °F or higher taken under the arm, 100.4 °F taken orally, or 101°F taken rectally. For children 4 months or younger, the lower rectal temperature of 101°F is considered a fever threshold. DO NOT GIVE YOUR CHILD TYLENOL THEN BRING THEM TO SCHOOL TO CONCEAL A SICKNESS. I can tell when this is done and it can lead to the child being in danger of health issues and I have the right to terminate care if this is done.

Note: *A child needs to be fever free for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to daycare, that means the child is fever free without the aid of Tylenol®, or any other fever reducing substance. **

Diarrhea is runny, watery, bloody stools, or 2 or more loose stools within last 4 hours. * Vomiting 2 or more times in a 24-hour period. **Note:** *please do not bring your child if they have vomited in the night.* * Breathing trouble, sore throat, swollen glands, loss of voice, hacking or continuous coughing. * Runny nose (other than clear), draining eyes or ears. -Pink eye (conjunctivitis):

Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow discharge, often with matted eyelids after sleep, and including a child with eye pain or redness of the eyelids or skin surrounding the eye is reason for exclusion. A child may return to the center after a minimum of 2 rounds of eye drops/ medication have been administered. * Frequent scratching of body or scalp, rash, or any other spots that resemble childhood diseases, including ringworm. -Head lice: Any child found to have lice will be sent home as soon as possible that day. Upon their return, they will be checked for any evidence of lice by a member of the Sunshine Cottage Preschool staff and will only be allowed to return if they are nit-free. This is necessary to prevent the spread of lice due to the constant contact among young children, and our abundance of clothing, bedding, cloth toys, etc. * Child is irritable, continuously crying, or requires more attention than we can provide without hurting the health, safety or well-being of the other children in our care. **Note:** *Many times, our*

childcare may get blamed for the illness of a child, meaning that we have "allowed" sick children to come here, and or being around the well children. Parents may not stop to think that when sick children are brought to our center, our entire staff is also at risk of exposure. If you are not sure whether it is okay to bring your child, please call ahead to ask us. We may require a doctor's decision as to whether the child is contagious. We appreciate your cooperation.

Medication Policy

Parents will provide any medications needed by the child, including over the counter and prescription medicine. **Written authorization is needed for us to administer ANY medication, prescription or over-the counter. Every medication must remain in its original package or box to meet licensing requirements. Parents can not put any items in their Childs cubby that is not safe. Do not put lotion, diaper cream, body spray, sunscreen, bug spray, etc... Do not put plastic bags in their cubbies either.** *Note: All medicines must be in their original container with pharmacist's or manufacturer's label, child's name, dosage instructions, current date, name of medication, and times to be administered clearly written.*

Injury Policy

We do our best to ensure the safety and wellness of every child in our care. If your child is injured in our care, our staff will fill out an "Incident Report" that parents will be required to review and sign at pick up. We will gladly provide a copy of the incident report to parents upon request. All incident reports are kept in your child's file for the duration of their enrollment at our Center. If you seek medical care for your child due to an injury at **The Sunshine Cottage Preschool and Development Center**, parents must complete and sign a "Doctor's Visit Form" and submit the form to an Administrator prior to returning to the Center.

The Center will NOT be held liable for any sickness/injury of staff, parent/ guardian, or child will on these premises. If harm or injury is a result of parents not abiding by our school policies for safety, then the you agree that the preschool is not responsible or liable.

Injuries/Medical Emergencies

Minor bumps and scratches are inevitable, but we make every effort to keep the children safe through supervision and childproofing. Minor injuries receive appropriate first aid, and if an emergency injury or illness occurs, you will be contacted as soon as possible. If necessary, your child will be taken to the nearest hospital where you will be asked to meet us. If you are not going to be at your usual place of employment, or at home, please make sure that we have a number where you can be reached. Parents are responsible for all costs involved in emergency medical treatment, including emergency transportation if required. **The Sunshine Cottage Preschool and Development Center will not be held liable for any sickness/injury of staff, parent/guardian, or child while on these premises**

Withdraw Policy – Termination

*We reserve the right to terminate care services for a child for the following reasons (but not limited to): * Failure to pay on time without prior arrangements. * Routinely picking up your child late. * Routinely dropping child off after 10:30 not appropriately dressed and off daily routine from sleeping in too late. Failure to complete the required forms. * Lack of parental cooperation. * Failure of child to adjust to the center after a reasonable amount of time. * Physical or verbal abuse of any person or property. If parents or child is abusive verbally or physically to any preschool staff member or other families in the preschool.*

We require as much advance notice as possible when terminating care and will give the same courtesy in return. Parents are required to give a one month (4 week) written notice when they decide to terminate childcare. The month will be paid in full - (using the security deposit of two weeks that was paid at the time of enrollment). We will give one month notice of termination for which full tuition is still also due whether the child is in attendance or not. The provider reserves the right to give written notice of immediate termination where there are extreme circumstances that affect the wellbeing of the provider, staff, and/or other children in attendance. Anyone who terminates daycare and has an outstanding balance will need to have the account settled within 30 days. All accounts not settled within 30 days will be turned over to a collections agency regardless of amount owed. All accounts turned over to collections will have a \$20 per week late fee plus 35% collections fee added to amount due. The preschool also reserves the right to discontinue services of childcare to families who are rude or overbearing. WE CAN STILL REQUIRE A FOUR WEEK PAID IN FULL TUITION

Emergency Preparedness Plan

We are required by state law to conduct one fire drill every month. We vary the time of day to help the staff and children prepare to evacuate the building quickly and safely. We will not have a fire drill when the temperature is below freezing or above 105 degrees. Evacuation cribs with wheels are used to transport infants and non-walking toddlers to the emergency meeting area. Quarterly severe weather drills are also performed. *A copy of our Emergency Preparedness Plan is posted in the foyer of the preschool, as well as in every classroom.*

Subpoenas/Request for Records

If a parent issues a subpoena for any teacher in the preschool, that parent will be charged \$20/hour for each hour that the teacher must be gone from the preschool, including travel time. If a parent issues a subpoena for any administrator in the preschool, that parent will be charged \$30/hour for each hour that the administrator must be gone from the preschool, including travel time. If a parent would like copies of preschool records, he/she must submit a request in writing to the Director, specifying the records they need as well as how many copies they need. The Director will review the request and will respond within 48 hours with a quote, which will include the estimated cost of copies (\$0.20/page). The parent will need to approve the quote in writing. Please note that the initial quote is simply an estimate of the amount it will cost, and

the price is subject to change depending on how many copies are ultimately made and how long it takes. 17.

Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are special days in a child's life. It's a time to celebrate them. We welcome class-wide treats (cupcakes, cookies, juice boxes, etc.) and are happy to offer healthy alternatives. Birthday snacks and goodies will be served during snack time following naptime. Please check with your child's teacher(s) to get a head count and to check if there are food allergies to be aware of.

Keep in mind, little ones can get very emotional when there is not enough to go around, or if they get excluded from their friends due to an allergy. We want everyone to enjoy the celebration.

Faculty and Training

Under the leadership and guidance of the Administration Team, our preschool faculty is comprised of highly qualified and experienced CDA lead teachers and trained professional caregivers. All teachers are trained in First Aid and CPR. We run background checks and fingerprint all our employees. Each teacher must complete required continuing education training on classroom management, age-appropriate activities, lesson plans, child development, brain development, redirecting, and guidance. Teachers can not have mini conferences while they are working in the classroom. If you stay and continue to talk a long while with the teacher, then that means she is not able to care for the other children. Please limit your time with the teacher. You can always schedule a conference if you need to. Teachers work very hard to keep up with all the demands of meeting all expectations and requirements. Each teacher is required to have 24 hours per year.

Revisions to Parent Handbook and Contract

Updates to this handbook will be made as needed. We reserve the right to make changes to our rates and policies as we deem necessary. You will be notified, in writing, of any changes that may occur. Every attempt will be made to give at least two-week's notice of changes. Your flexibility, understanding, and cooperation are very much appreciated. Parents get a handbook upon registration and the handbook has its year date on it. After that year has ended then the family is responsible for asking for a new handbook, but always has access to the handbook upfront and there is a current handbook always posted on our website. An expired handbook can not be referred to and used for any resolutions and references. Any revisions made will be added to the handbook at the beginning of each fall semester - September. It is still the responsibility of the family to make sure they are referencing to our handbook that it is a current one. ***FAMILIES ARE REQUIRED TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR STAYING UP TO DATE WITH REVISIONS AND UPDATES TO OUR POLICIES IN THEIR AGREEMENT THROUGH OUR PROVIDING IT TO THEM ON OUR WEBSITE (WWW.SUNSHINECOTTAGEPRESCHOOL.COM) AND COPIES POSTED OUTSIDE OUR OFFICES IN BOTH BUILDINGS. WE ALSO SEND OUT NOTICES ON BRIGHTWHEEL AND POSTINGS TO HAVE EVERYONE READ AND REVIEW ANNUALLY AND SIGN***

NEW FORM STATING THAT IT HAS BEEN READ AND AGREED TO. Thank you for taking the time to read this Parent Handbook in its entirety. We look forward to growing with your family as you begin your learning journey at **The Sunshine Cottage Preschool and Development Center.**

Please return to be placed in your file and kept on record. Thank you. +++++++

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PARENT/GUARDIAN STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I/We have received and reviewed a copy of **The Sunshine Cottage Preschool and Development Center** Parent Handbook Preschool Policies Contract and have read it carefully. I further understand all matters set forth in the Parent Handbook and agree to abide by and adhere to the policies of **The Sunshine Cottage Preschool and Development Center** during my child(ren)'s enrollment at the Center, as they may be modified from time to time. I further understand, and agree, that any provision of the Parent Handbook and policies may be amended, revised, or eliminated at any time by **The Sunshine Cottage Preschool and Development Center Administration and that I am responsible for keeping up with the updates that are made aware via BrightWheel and Website.** I hereby acknowledge receipt of the Parent Handbook. I understand and agree that it is my responsibility to obtain updated handbook when this on I have been given expires. I know that I can find the most current one and have access to it on the preschool website at www.sunshinectagepreschool.com and a hard copy posted outside of the preschool office. You Not being responsible for staying with current policies will not be accepted by the preschool. Parent/Guardian Name(s):

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Name(print): _____

Child's/Children's name and age (print): _____