

CORNERSTONE
PARENT HANDBOOK

1801 West Road Houston, Texas 77095
Rebecca Mueller-Director

2024-2025
PARENT HANDBOOK &
OPERATIONAL POLICIES



Updated: 11/1/2024

RM

Dear Parent,

Thank you for entrusting us with your precious child. We take our responsibility to care for children very seriously. A part of this responsibility is establishing and upholding practices and procedures that facilitate a safe and nurturing environment in which children can grow and learn. We do this while promoting the physical, social, emotional, spiritual and intellectual development of young children. All children are welcome regardless of race, sex, religion, or nationality. In our program, you will encounter frequent, positive warm interactions among adults and children, planned learning activities appropriate to the children's age and development and active outdoor play times.

As someone who will partner with us as parent or guardian, we ask that you read all the pages of this handbook, knowing that we intend to maintain and enforce the practices and procedures listed. Your signature on your online registration form indicates that you agree with and will follow the protocols established in this handbook.

For His Glory,
Rebecca Mueller, Director
Cornerstone Methodist Preschool
rmueller@cornerstonegmcpreschool.com

CORNERSTONE METHODIST PRESCHOOL

PARENT HANDBOOK & OPERATIONAL POLICIES



CORNERSTONE'S VISION AND PHILOSOPHY

VISION/PHILOSOPHY

Our vision and philosophy can be summed up in three simple words, play, learn grow. Our goal is to create classroom and playground activities built around themes and learning objectives that encourage creativity, positive self-esteem, confidence, and independence. Our vision is to enhance both mind and body by providing hands on activities with open ended results that promote active learning, and problem solving. We work towards these goals by partnering with parents to plan special theme days and experiences that together promote community, learning and growing within a safe and nurturing environment.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

SCOPE OF PROGRAM

Age Range- Toddlers to 5 years old

Children are divided into classes based on the age range of children enrolled in the program and days registered.

Toddlers (18-24 months)

Toddlers will learn through touch, sight, sound, and experiences. A Bible story and a simple craft that reinforces the lesson will be a part of the learning experience. The children enjoy daily outdoor playground time, lots of playtime with age-appropriate toys, and teacher interaction that is educationally focused. The approximate student/ teacher ratio in the classroom is 10:2.

Two-Year-Olds

The two-year-olds will begin to learn in a more structured environment. The schedule for this class includes circle time, games, outdoor playground time, simple crafts, Bible stories, and story time all related to specific themes and teaching objectives. The activities reflect and encourage the older toddler's increased fine motor skills. Group participation and interaction are stressed in the story time, music, and playtime. The children enjoy a Thanksgiving Feast, holiday parties, and birthday celebrations. The approximate student/teacher ratio in these classes is 12:2.

Three-Year-Olds – Preschool Program

The curriculum for the three-year-old student centers on their eagerness to learn and their increased ability to listen and follow directions. Learning experiences are driven by objectives and become more detailed as the student's fine motor skills and cognitive abilities develop. The teachers begin to encourage responsibility with assigned helper jobs. Letters and numbers, rhymes, music, and story time are a few of the many educational aspects to the child's day. Bible stories and memory verses are taught weekly. Monthly themes are planned with fun dress-up days, rodeo day, wheel's day, and a splash day at end of the school year. The approximate student/teacher ratio in these classes is 16:2.

Children must be potty trained to enter the class in September.

Four-Year-Olds – Pre-Kindergarten/Bridge Program

The four-year-old class is intentionally designed to prepare children for kindergarten. Learning experiences will be structured and specific to kindergarten readiness skills. Children will learn phonics, number and letter recognition and application, and math concepts. Students will also be exposed to science through hands on experiences. The Bible curriculum expands on the character of God, a Biblical timeline, prayer, and a special focus on Christmas and Easter. Memory verses and songs are reinforced daily. Monthly themes provide enrichment activities for the students. Responsibility in the classroom is taught by assigned jobs, individual centers and activities that require group participation. The approximate student/teacher ratio in these classrooms is 18:2.

Special Care Needs

Cornerstone Preschool works with qualified professionals affiliated with the local school district who do ECI interventions work to provide space and opportunity for required observation and therapies. Cornerstone also provides adaptive equipment as needed for students with special needs. We will also provide support so students with special needs can be fully integrated into classrooms activities.

Camp Programs

Each year Cornerstone may run summer camps. Children enrolled in summer camp will enjoy hands-on activities, stories, games, outdoor playground time, art, and music focused on each week's theme.

GOVERNING BODY

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is directly responsible for establishing and administering the policies of Cornerstone Preschool. The Board consists of a Chairperson, Pastor, Executive Director, 3 Church Members at Large, and 2 Staff Representatives. "If a parent wishes to attend a school board meeting, they must notify the Director 1 week before the meeting date they would like to attend. The parent will be placed at the beginning of the agenda to observe and ask questions. If the board conducts certain business such as financial and/or personnel issues, the parent(s) will be dismissed for the remainder of the meeting." The BOD shall consist of no more than 9 members. These members are selected from the church membership and from the Cornerstone Preschool staff. The Executive Director is a member of the BOD as well as two staff representatives (chosen by the staff at the beginning of each school year). The church members serving on the BOD are selected by the Lay Leadership Nominations Committee and approved by the Church Council.

FAMILY PARTICIPATION

Family participation is encouraged in our program through involvement in party celebrations, special events, and volunteerism in the many events our preschool offers. Some of the specific events where family participation is strongly encouraged include Family Picnics, Thanksgiving Feasts, and Christmas at Cornerstone. Families will also want to attend our Spring Program and end of year graduation for Pre-K/Bridge classes. We will ask for parent help for other events like splash day, wheels day, Easter Egg hunts, and Teacher Appreciation week.

VISION, HEARING, AND SPEECH SCREENING

According to The Texas Health and Human Services "Minimum Standards for Child - Care Centers", First-time enrollees who are four years of age and older and all children enrolled in programs who are four years of age by September 1st of each year will be screened for possible vision and hearing problems prior to completion of the first semester of enrollment or within 120 calendar days of enrollment, whichever is longest, or present evidence of screening conducted one year prior to enrollment.

As a courtesy to you, the Preschool arranges for a licensed examiner to come to the school to administer the vision and hearing screenings. You will receive a letter with this information and be provided with dates and times for the screening. It is the responsibility of the parent to either have these screenings done here for a nominal fee or to have another private source do the screenings. If parents elect to have this done privately, a copy of the vision and hearing acuity results (not just that the child passed or failed) must be provided to us. If the child fails either the vision or hearing screening and is referred for further evaluation, a copy of the follow-up procedure with diagnosis as to treatment or non-treatment must be provided to the school and becomes a part of the child's permanent record. Optional speech and language screenings are offered in the spring.

ENROLLMENT PROCESS

Cornerstone offers early enrollment for the upcoming school year for church members, current families and previous families beginning in January and spaced by 1-week intervals in the respective order. Enrollment opens to new families in February. Enrollment remains open if space is available in the class associated with your child's age.

To secure your child's spot in the program a registration/supply fee and one month's tuition must be paid. A *Health Statement* form and a copy of child's immunizations must be on file to complete registration. Once fees are paid a link to the registration form will be emailed to the parent. The online registration form must be completed within 7 days to finalize the registration process.



2024-2025 School Year
 August 19, 2024 - May 22, 2025.
 See calendar for holiday schedule.

ANNUAL SUPPLY FEE

2 Days per week - \$100 per year
 3 Days per week - \$150 per year
 4 Days per week - \$200 per year
 5 Days per week - \$250 per year

TODDLERS

18-24 Months

BY SEPTEMBER 1, 2024

Tues/Thurs – \$295/MONTH
 Mon/Wed/Fri – \$395/MONTH
 Mon/ Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri – \$495/MONTH

2-YEAR-OLDS

24-36 Months

BY SEPTEMBER 1, 2024

Tues/Thurs – \$295/MONTH
 Mon/Wed/Fri – \$395/MONTH
 Mon/ Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri – \$495/MONTH

3-YEAR-OLDS

3 Years Old

BY SEPTEMBER 1, 2024

Tues/Thurs – \$295/MONTH
 Mon/Wed/Fri – \$395/MONTH
 Mon/ Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri – \$495/MONTH

4-YEAR-OLDS

4 Years Old

BY SEPTEMBER 1, 2024

Mon/Wed/Fri – \$395/MONTH
 Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs- \$450/Month
 Mon/ Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri – \$495/MONTH

KINDERGARTEN BRIDGE

5 Years Old

BY SEPTEMBER 1, 2024

Mon/ Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri –\$495/MONTH

AFTER CARE PROGRAM 2-4PM

“Stay and Play”

Toddlers & 2 Year Olds/ 3-, 4- & 5-Year Olds

2 Days per week - \$140/Month
 3 Days per week - \$220/Month
 4 Days per week - \$290/Month
 5 Days per week - \$360/Month

PAYMENT POLICIES

PAYMENTS

- The registration/supply fee and one month's tuition is due and payable upon registration. Registration/supply fees are non-refundable. The tuition is refundable if notification of withdrawal is prior to July 1st.
- All tuition payments are due on or before the 1st of each month. Parents are required to set up an online payment through Brightwheel, our school management program. A late fee of \$25 will be charged on tuition not received by the 10th of the month.
- ***The entire month's tuition is required of all children in all classes, regardless of the number of days missed due to illness or other reasons.***

WITHDRAWING

- Registering your child in this program is a commitment to remain in the program from August through May.
- ***Registration/Supply fees are non-refundable.***
- Families that must withdraw their child or children from the program should submit a request for withdrawal to the Director at least 30 days in advance explaining the extenuating circumstances.
- Children withdrawn from the program after the first of the month will not be refunded the prorated amount for days unused in the month.
- Families that must withdraw their child(ren) from summer camp should submit a written request for withdrawal to the Director at least 15 days prior to the first day of camp to receive a 75% refund. Refunds will not be given for withdrawals made within 14 days of the start of camp.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

ATTENDANCE

- All required forms must be completed and on file in the office prior to each child attending classes.
- Children should be brought to school only on those days for which they are registered. There are no make-up days due to illness or other reasons.
- No child will be accepted on a drop-in basis.
- Please notify the Director by email and your child's teacher through the brightwheel app if your child will be absent from school on any given day or for an extended period.
- **Late Pickup Fee: \$1 per minute paid directly to the teacher after 2:10 pm or 4:10 pm if using extended care.**

CARPOOL SYSTEM

- When the carpool system is in use, parents will be assigned a time frame for carpool drop off.
- Parents should remain in the car while dropping off children.
- Children should remain buckled into their car seats while waiting in line.
- Children will be received by a Cornerstone staff member at the drop off location.
- The brightwheel app will be used to record who dropped off the child.
- A Cornerstone staff member will walk children to their classrooms.

SEPARATION

Sometimes children and parents have difficulty separating. We find it helpful when the parent leaves the child with a reassuring staff member and calmly, but promptly leaves. Generally, the child feels more comfortable within 5 minutes. We invite you to call the school at any time to check on your child.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES & POLICIES

POSITIVE GUIDANCE

A very important part of the preschool experience is helping children learn how to get along in the world, enjoy being with other children, and follow the direction of an adult other than their parent. A caring and positive approach will be taken regarding behavior management and discipline. The teachers will focus on the positive behaviors of the children and reinforce those behaviors as often as possible. Our goal is to help the children develop self-control and responsibility for their actions.

TO PROVIDE POSITIVE GUIDANCE:

Teachers will give positive attention for good behavior and when possible, ignore poor behavior. Specifically, teachers and assistants will:

- Encourage children to use their words when having a disagreement with another child and facilitate children in their attempts to settle their own disputes.
- Redirect behavior when this seems potentially effective and appropriate.
- Separate a child from the group (safe time) for a chance to regain self-control and to provide an opportunity to counsel a child about behaviors.
- Make sure children know the rules and teachers are consistent in enforcing the rules.
- Model appropriate behaviors for children.
- Implement structure and procedures that set healthy and consistent boundaries for children.

Disruptive behavior distracts from the full benefit of the preschool program and will result in consequences. The following behaviors are considered disruptive:

- Inflicts physical or emotional harm on other children, adults, or self.
- Disrespects people and materials provided in the program.
- Consistently disobeys the rules of the classroom.
- Verbally threatens other students and/or staff.
- Uses verbal or physical activity that diverts attention away from the group of children.

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES FOR CHRONIC DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR:

- If a child is not responsive to the teacher's positive guidance, the child will be removed from the classroom.
- If a child has difficulty managing his/her behavior on a recurring basis, parents will be asked to meet with the child's teacher and Director.
- If the child's behavior continues to be inappropriate, consistently disruptive, and/or dangerous, it may be necessary for the child to be sent home for a time to be determined or removed from the preschool program altogether.

HEALTH CARE POLICIES

WELLNESS POLICY FOR CHILDREN

- No sick child will be allowed to stay at school. If a child should get sick at school, the child's parents, or another responsible adult, so designated by the parent, will be contacted.
- Any child with a communicable disease will not be permitted back to school without a doctor's written approval. If your child develops a communicable disease, please inform the director so that other parents may be alerted.
- Any child suffering from diarrhea, vomiting, fever, or other illness may not return to school until the symptoms have been absent no less than 24 hours.
- Any child who has or develops an oral temperature of 100.4 degrees or greater (99.4 under the arm) will be excluded from attendance and cannot return to school until fever free for 24 hours.

MEDICATION DISPERSAL POLICY

Employees and volunteers will not administer any medication except in life-threatening situations when there is not enough time for a parent or administrator to come to the room and give it. The Director, Assistant Director, or person assuming the role of director will administer medications.

In a situation where a child has a non-communicable condition requiring medication, a Medication Authorization form must be completed and signed by the parent.

At the time a parent drops off a child and his/her medication, clear directions must be written out by the parent outlining the symptoms present when medication is needed and how it is to be dispensed. The form is to be given directly to the Director by the parent, so the Director can read the directions and ask for clarification if necessary. If the medication is difficult to administer, the Director may inform the parent that the child will not be able to attend school on that day.

INSECT REPELLANT, SUNSCREEN

Parents must indicate on the registration form what ointments and sprays caregivers have permission to apply to the child. This form is kept on file for the caregiver's reference. Items included on the form are the following: Neosporin, bug spray, anti-itch cream, diaper rash cream, and sunscreen.

WELLNESS POLICY FOR WORKERS

All employees of Cornerstone Methodist Preschool must report when they have any communicable diseases and stay away from the children until they have been cleared by a doctor. Employees and volunteers should not be in the presence of children if they are sick with any of the following illnesses: Head colds and coughs, cold sores on lips for nursery workers, diarrhea and/or vomiting, measles, mumps, rubella, chicken pox or shingles, skin infections, pulmonary tuberculosis, and/or hepatitis.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

- All caregivers are trained to respond to emergency situations. Procedures and protocol are reviewed and practiced for the following types of situations: Fire emergency, major injuries, minor injuries, severe weather, and lock down.
- In the event of a medical emergency, parents will be notified immediately. For minor injuries, a form will be filled out and parents informed at pick up. All injuries will be documented and kept on file.
- Fire drills are conducted monthly.
- In the case of severe weather, parents will be notified if it becomes necessary for children to be picked up immediately.
- If the school ever needs to evacuate the children from the premises, parents should meet at ASI Gymnastics-Cypress located directly in front of the preschool, 8920 Barker Cypress, Cypress TX 77433, to pick up their children. Phone Number – 281-858-5510

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILDREN

All children in the care of Cornerstone Methodist Preschool must have the appropriate immunizations for their age as set forth by Texas Health and Human Services or notarized documentation of an alternate, delayed or exemption from immunizations. Parents of children with missing or overdue vaccinations have 10 business days to submit an updated copy of their child's immunization record which reflects the child is current with the required immunizations for daycare. Failure to comply within 10 business days will result in your child being excluded from Cornerstone Preschool until your child is current.

HEALTHY HAND HYGIENE BEHAVIOR

- Washing hand protocol will be to wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- In between hand washing, older children may use alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol to clean hands.
- Children will be assisted with handwashing, including infants who cannot wash hands alone. After assisting children, staff will also wash their hands.

COVERING COUGHS AND SNEEZES

- Covering coughs and sneezes and washing hands are especially important for infection control measures in childcare settings.
- Children and caregivers will be trained to cover mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- If a tissue is not available, children and caregivers will be trained to cough or sneeze into in elbow, not into hands.

OTHER POLICIES

BABYSITTING POLICY

Employees of Cornerstone may not babysit for children enrolled in the Cornerstone program due to liabilities. Parents should not request babysitting services from staff members.

FACILITY CARE & SAFETY

The Director and staff of Cornerstone Preschool are committed to maintaining a safe environment for the children we serve. Therefore, our operating procedure will be to maintain the following care of our facility:

- keep floors, counters, and children's bathrooms clean
- ensure that toilet paper, soap, and paper towels are in bathrooms
- empty diaper pails daily
- put away and properly store all food items
- keep all toxic and cleaning supplies out of children's reach
- keep all trash picked up from facility
- always maintain child/caregiver ratio both indoors and outdoors
- remove, repair, or report broken equipment
- keep all electrical outlets covered
- ensure all indoor and outdoor equipment is maintained in good/safe condition
- keep all storage rooms locked
- keep all hazards removed
- keep all doors and pathways always clear, including during naptime
- ensure a staff member certified in First Aid/CPR is in each room during all hours of operation

TOILET TRAINING

The independence of a "potty trained" child is prerequisite for the 3-year-old classes. Independence means that the child must have the awareness to use the restroom without reminders, be able to manage clothing without help, and be able to clean themselves properly. Teachers work closely with parents who are committed to moving their child from diapers to underwear. When a child shows interest and readiness, we are happy to assist and encourage full independence.

TOYS

- Children will not be given shared, nonwashable, soft toys that may be contaminated with infectious secretions.
- When a child is seen putting an object into his/her mouth, this object will be cleaned with a disinfectant before being returned to the "clean toy" container or given to another child.
- All surfaces in the rooms will be sprayed with disinfectant or wiped down after each session.
- Toys will be age appropriate and removed and replaced as needed.
- Children are not allowed to bring toys from home to school.
- Toys will be cleaned and sanitized on a regular basis

DRESS CODE

- Children should be dressed appropriately for the weather conditions. All children will have outdoor time daily unless the weather does not permit. Please send warm jackets for cold weather and closed toed shoes.
- Little girls should wear shorts under dresses on all occasions.
- Clothing that is easy for young children to manipulate for toileting is preferred.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Birthday celebrations will be kept simple and held at 1:30 pm or just before the 2:00 pm pick up time. Parents may send one mini cupcake or small cookie and a juice pack for children in the class. No balloons are allowed.

NAPTIME

- Each toddler/2-year-old will be assigned a portable bed for their individual use.
- Children will rest for at least 30 minutes each day but allowed to look at a book or lay quietly if sleep doesn't come easily.
- After 30-45 minutes a child who does not sleep will be allowed to play quietly while others sleep.
- Three, four, and five-year-olds do not nap at school.

FOOD

Caregivers serving food must wash hands carefully before handling food. Children will be served only the food provided by parents for snack and lunch times. If other food is served, parents will be notified, and permission requested.

TABLE FOOD

Children will bring their own snacks and lunches from home and the teacher/caregiver will serve the food to the child according to the class schedule. Please send food that does not need to be warmed.

- Child must be seated at a table or secured in a highchair.
- Child's hands must be washed before and after eating.
- Children will not walk around with food.
- Surfaces and floors will be cleaned and sanitized after meals are served.

NUT-FREE POLICY

To provide a safe learning environment for all people in our school, Cornerstone is a nut-free school. Please do not send peanuts, tree nuts, or sesame seeds of any kind in your children's lunch or snacks. This includes peanut butter, hummus, and honey nut cheerios. Other foods that may have been processed in facilities with nuts are okay to send. Thank you for understanding and accommodating this request for the safety of our students.

SCREENING & TRAINING FOR EMPLOYEES

We love children at Cornerstone and want to protect them from harm. Therefore, Cornerstone requires all employees to complete a screening process and training program before working with children.

APPLICATION & SCREENING PROCESS

Employees are required to complete a screening process, This includes an application, face-to-face interview, references and a background check.

SEXUAL ABUSE AWARENESS TRAINING/AWARENESS

Cornerstone requires that employees and volunteers recognize and prevent abusive behavior of any kind and report any abuse to a supervisor. To equip Cornerstone employees and volunteers with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behavior, Cornerstone requires all employees and volunteers to complete sexual abuse awareness training through Ministry Safe. This training is completed online at www.MinistrySafe.com and is renewed every year.

ABUSE POLICY

Cornerstone has a “**zero tolerance for abuse**” policy in respect to its programs and activities. It is the responsibility of every staff and volunteer at Cornerstone to act in the best interest of all minors in every program. If staff or volunteers observe any inappropriate behaviors or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual), it is their responsibility to immediately report their observations to:

- Rebecca Mueller, Director
- Terry Gingell, Chairman of the School Board
- Cornerstone Methodist Church Pastor

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK

Cornerstone requires that all employees must undergo a criminal background check and fingerprint screening.

PRACTICES & PROCEDURES

All employees are trained in the Operational Policies of the center and indicate by signature that they have read, understood, and will comply with them.

TRAINING

Teachers must complete pre-service training that includes learning developmental stages, age-appropriate activities, positive guidance, and discipline, fostering self-esteem, safety practices, and the prevention and control of spreading communicable diseases. Caregivers also earn 24 clock hours of professional development each year.

CPR/INFANT/FIRST AID CERTIFICATION

All caregivers are kept current in CPR/Infant/First Aid certification.

SAFETY POLICIES

MONITORING PLAN

Monitoring of Cornerstone staff will include regular (announced and unannounced) visits in each class to provide supervisors the opportunity to observe employees' interactions with children and implementation of policies and procedures.

- The Director conducts unscheduled observations of each class on a weekly basis.
- The Director conducts periodic verbal performance evaluations with staff to provide and receive feedback on the implementation of practices and procedures.
- Every year, the Director with the help of the Cornerstone team will review the practices and procedures and make changes as needed. Pursuant to these changes, the Director will make final adjustments to any practices and procedures so that they are in place and ready for any future training of all Cornerstone workers in their area.

INTOXICANTS & TOBACCO USE

Employees and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while in any Cornerstone facility or while working with or supervising children.

Cornerstone requires employees and volunteers to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco products in church facilities, while in the presence of children or their parents, or during Cornerstone activities or programs. Cornerstone is a tobacco-free facility.

FIREARMS & WEAPONRY

Firearms, fireworks, and weaponry (including pocketknives) are not allowed at any Cornerstone children's programs by children or adults.

CHILDCARE LICENSING

Parents may review a copy of the Minimum Standards for Childcare Licensing at:

hhs.texas.gov

Concerns may be reported to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services at:

1-800-252-5400 or <https://www.txabusehotline.org>

Local Childcare Licensing Office: 281-597-5200
2133 S Texas 6 #100
Houston, TX 77077

A current copy of the center's Childcare License and most recent licensing inspection report may be found and reviewed on the public bulletin board.

CORNERSTONE PARENT HANDBOOK 2024-25
STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND AGREEMENT

I have received and read a copy of Cornerstone's Parent Handbook and understand the importance of the material in the handbook. I agree to abide by these guidelines while my child/children are enrolled at Cornerstone Methodist Preschool.

I understand the handbook may be modified, and that any guideline may be amended, revised, or eliminated by Cornerstone Methodist Preschool and that I will be notified of these changes. I also understand that I may contact the Cornerstone Director at any time about any concern associated with the handbook and need for changes. I understand it is my responsibility to review new guidelines which may be created and distributed.

Acknowledgement and agreement of this handbook is documented online through the brightwheel Cornerstone policies contract form.