

First Steps



at Katy's First Baptist

Parent Handbook 2023-2024

First Steps Mission Statement

Purpose

First Steps Preschool is a ministry of Katy's First Baptist Church. First Steps is committed to the education of the children of Katy's First Baptist Church and the children in the community through a curriculum and activities that are based on and are faithful to the Bible.

The primary purpose of the school is to provide an environment and opportunity for sharing the love of Jesus Christ with children and their parents. We believe children are created and loved by God. Within this atmosphere of Christian love, we seek to support parents by providing age-appropriate teaching that will enhance the cognitive, physical, social-emotional, and spiritual development of children.

Philosophy

We believe that each child is a unique creation of God who is made in His image (Gen. 1:27). Children are capable of having a relationship with the Lord and can grow spiritually (2 Tim 3:15).

We believe that preschoolers learn best through guided play. As children play and interact with each other and their teachers, each child will learn biblical truths and basic educational concepts by actively participating, exploring, and discovering.

We believe that each child grows developmentally (Luke 2:52) in the areas of cognitive, physical, social-emotional, and spiritual.

We believe that each child learns by example (Deuteronomy 6:7). Teachers of young children should hold a biblical worldview and live a Christian lifestyle.

This philosophy will be the guiding vehicle for applying biblical principles to teaching practices. All philosophies of policies of the school and of the school board, subjects, curriculum materials, and teaching methods at the First Steps shall conform to this philosophy of Christian education.

The program objectives are:

- To enable children to grow in understanding and love for themselves, their families, and others in their world.
- To grow in awareness that God loves them, and that Jesus is a special friend.
- To develop children's ability to think, solve problems, and communicate.
- To provide children with opportunities to enjoy creative expression in music, art, and play in a Christian environment.

First Steps Preschool is supervised and administered by the Education Committee elected by Katy's First Baptist Church.

Curriculum

First Steps uses the Association of Christian School International (ACSI) Bible Curriculum, Frog Street Press, and Learning/Handwriting Without Tears which meets the needs of each child at his/her level.

ACSI Bible Curriculum is committed to:

Helping preschoolers grow and develop just as Jesus did in "wisdom and stature" and in "favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52). Providing opportunities to develop thinking and reasoning skills, use creativity and learn to get along with others.

Themes and Concepts

- God tells His great story in the Bible.
- God's Word is truth.
- God loves everyone. His desire is for all people to have a right relationship with Him. His intentions toward every person are always gracious and good.
- Everyone needs to come to a saving faith in Jesus.
- Christlike behavior, evangelism, ministry, and stewardship are all applications of spiritual growth in Christ.
- Bible study, prayer, and worship are disciplines for spiritual growth.
- Children need to know and understand spiritual concepts.

Frog Street Press Mission Statement:

Impacting the future of young children and igniting their academic, social, and emotional growth by creating purposeful resources that educators embrace.

Frog Street Press provides:

- Hands-on learning activities in a learning center environment: books, art, music, blocks, home living, nature, puzzles, manipulatives, calendar mathematics, early literacy skills, science, and social studies.
- All academic subjects are brought to life in song, games etc. during circle times.
- Conscious discipline is implemented to encourage responding rather than reacting to life events. Responding to situations and transforming them into cooperative learning opportunities.

Learning/Handwriting Without Tears mission:

is to make learning and teaching easy and fun by providing superior educational products, professional development, and materials to educators and families.

**Katy's First Baptist Pastoral Staff
281-391-1100**

**First Steps Office Staff
281-391-1105**

Director

June Lee

281-574-2017

Administrative Assistant/Assistant to the Director

Morgan Newcomb

281-574-2016

STANDARDS

The First Steps Preschool program operates under the standards of Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services and is inspected regularly by the Harris County Health Department and the Katy Fire Department.

A copy of the Minimum Standards and First Steps' most recent licensing report is available in the First Steps office for parents to review. The local licensing office may be reached at 713-940-5160, Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-292-5400 and PRS website www.TXCCL.com.

FEES

A registration and supply fee are due at the time your child registers for preschool. Registration fee is \$105.00 and Supply fees for 2022-2023 are \$210 for 2 days, \$220 for 3 days, and \$230 for 4 days. This **does not** include the monthly tuition.

TUITION

Tuition for the month of May 2023 is due at the time of registration (please see office for amounts). All tuition payments will be due on or before the child's first day of school of the month. A late fee of \$10 will be added to the child's account if tuition is not received by the tenth of the month.

If your child is withdrawn for any reason, First Steps Preschool does not give refunds for registration fees, supply fees or monthly tuition.

ENTRANCE REGULATIONS

*A child must be 18 months old by September 1 to be eligible for enrollment in First Steps Preschool.

*Children entering the three and four-year-old classes must be **toilet trained**. If a child is discovered to be not completely potty trained, we will manage each incident on a case-by-case basis. The final step would be to take time at home to work on potty training for a period of time.

DAYS AND HOURS

School begins on the day after Labor Day and ends one week before Katy ISD. The school day begins at 9:00 and ends at 2:30.

ARRIVAL

Children will be accompanied to his/her classroom by parent or authorized guardian. Each child must be signed in at their classroom by parent or guardian. Communication is very important between teacher and parent and daily face to face contact will keep communication open so that the child's needs are understood and properly met.

DEPARTURE

All children must be picked up in their classroom. Should you need another authorized person to pick up your child, photo ID will be checked to insure the safety in departure of children. Please make sure that any authorized person is listed on the registration paperwork. You may add any additional person(s) at any time (please contact the office to do so).

Any child not picked up by 2:40 p.m. will need to be picked up in the First Steps After care room (and will be charged accordingly). At this time, the fee for drop-in after care is \$15 an hour.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

First Steps can only accept well children. A child may not be brought if he/she:

- Has any contagious disease
- Has diarrhea and/or vomiting (during the previous 24 hours)
- Has colored discharge from the nose
- Has a fever over 100.4° (your child must be fever free for 24 hours without the use of medication before returning to school)
- Has the common cold combined with fever and/or green nasal discharge
- Has Croup
- Has Any unexplained rash
- Has Any skin infections
- Is unable to comfortably participate in daily activities
- Is taking the first day of antibiotics

In the event the child has a contagious illness, the parent will notify the school. The child will not be allowed to return until twenty-four (24) hour symptom free.

Because preschool children often bite or scratch, those children who have tested positive for the AIDS virus or antibodies will not be allowed to enroll in the First Steps Preschool.

If your child becomes ill during the day, he/she will be isolated from the group, and you will be called to pick up him/her immediately.

In the event of exposure to a contagious disease within the group, you will be given written notice.

Please notify First Steps Preschool if your child will not be attending school. Please phone 281-391-1105 to notify First Steps of absences.

Medications will not be administered without parental consent and signed medical authorization form (kept in the First Steps Office).

Simple First-Aid will be administered to minor injuries. Please discuss any special health problems with the teacher and director. **The staff must be informed of any dietary restrictions and/or allergies.**

You have listed the name of your child's physician, where you and your spouse can be contacted and the option of adding two other persons who can be called if we cannot get in touch with you or your spouse. You or your spouse will be notified if your child has been injured. The director and parent will then determine what medical aid will be sought.

The program exercises reasonable care and judgment in all matters related to safety. In all emergencies, the program has permission to take such reasonable measures as are, in the judgment of the teacher or director, necessary for the welfare and safety of the child until a parent can be reached.

VISION AND HEARING SCREENING

All children who will be 4 years old by September 1 must be screened or have a professional examination for possible vision and hearing problems.

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

All children entering First Steps Preschool must meet the immunization requirements for children and students as mandated by the Texas

Department of Health before the first day of school.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Two parent/teacher conferences will be scheduled each year with one in the Fall during the month of November and one in Spring during the month April. A progress report will be shared with parents in the Spring Conference.

Conferences may be called at any time as deemed necessary by either parent, teacher, or director. Good communication is necessary for the great experience you desire for your child in preschool.

GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE

In order to have a safe and friendly environment during First Steps Preschool, the children have three basic rules to learn and follow:

- They cannot harm themselves.
- They cannot harm others.
- They cannot harm things such as toys, books, etc.

Our program has no corporal punishment. Each teacher will discipline her children in a manner which shows love for the child and an understanding of the child's needs. This will be accomplished by:

- Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
- Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
- Redirecting behavior using positive statements;
- Using brief quiet time, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.
- Quiet time will only be used when redirecting behavior is ineffective.

Exceptional discipline cases will be referred to the Director or Assistant Director who will counsel the child and if necessary, contact the parent.

If in the opinion of the teacher and director a child's behavior becomes uncontrollable, to the extent that other children are disrupted or physically endangered, First Steps reserves the right to dismiss or suspend the child from First Steps without refund of any monies paid.

Parents will be notified of all above-mentioned steps.

The goal of all discipline and guidance is to help each child become happy, functioning individuals who are responsible for their own behavior.

BIRTHDAYS

We at First Steps realize that a birthday is each person's special day. We sing Happy Birthday to each child in his room and are pleased to let parents send special treats (must be store bought, if cupcakes, cake, cookies, etc.) for the child to share with his classmates. We schedule "pretend" birthdays for our students who celebrate birthdays when we are not in school. Please contact your child's teacher about setting up your child's celebration at school. Birthday party invitations will be passed out at school only if ***all children*** in the class are invited.

SPECIAL EVENTS/PARTIES

There will be several holidays during the year that we will celebrate. Each teacher will be responsible for having sign-up sheets available in each classroom to allow parent participation in providing food, drinks, paper plates, etc.

We value our partnership with parents and kindly ask for your cooperation in following the guidelines provided by your child's teachers for each event. This will create an inclusive and enriching experience for everyone involved. Your support and adherence to the teachers' instructions will ensure a smooth and successful event.

CHILDREN'S CLOTHING

Please ensure that your child is dressed appropriately for school. Comfortable play clothes are recommended as the children will engage in activities such as painting, playing on the floor, and using the playground. Children should wear socks and tennis shoes or similar closed-toe shoes. We kindly request that ***flip-flops or crocs*** are not worn. Socks are required in the indoor play area. As the weather cools down, please make sure all sweaters, jackets and coats are marked with your child's name. Please leave a change of clothes in the child's tote or backpack each day in case of an accident. **Please label everything that you bring from home including backpack, diapers, wipes, nap mat, and other personal items.**

SNACKS

Snacks will need to be brought each day in a marked container. It is the parent's responsibility to provide a snack which has the proper nutritional value.

LUNCH

Each child will bring lunch from home. It is the parent's responsibility to provide a lunch with proper nutritional value. The preschool is unable to refrigerate or heat lunches.

NAP

Please bring your child a nap mat with a pillow and light blanket. (Kinder mats work great!!) Please label all items!!

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Fire drills will be conducted monthly with the children and teachers. Severe Weather/Lock Down Drills will be conducted 4 times a year (each). In the event of an environmental emergency, all children will be kept inside as per instructions from the Fort Bend County Emergency Management Director. If an evacuation is required, Emergency Management will evacuate children using proper safety precautions.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

An emergency preparedness plan is designed to ensure the safety of children during an emergency by addressing staff responsibility and facility readiness with respect to emergency evacuation and relocation. The plan addresses the types of emergencies most likely to occur in our area including but not limited to natural events such as tornadoes, floods or hurricanes, health events such as medical emergencies, communicable disease outbreak, and human-caused events such as intruder with weapon, explosion, or chemical spill.

Fire Drill Procedures

1. At the sound of the fire alarm, the teacher assembles students.
2. An office staff member will call the local authorities, if needed.
3. Teachers use attendance sheets to account for all children. Teachers also have clipboard/go bag with student information including emergency contact numbers and authorization for emergency care.
4. Teachers lead children out quickly in an orderly manner proceeding to the designated area where she keeps children together and under control. Children under the age of 24 months will be transported in a Bye-Bye Buggy/Safety Walking Rope.
5. Teachers will get personal cell phones to help make needed phone calls to parents or authorities, if needed.
6. At proper signal, classes return to their rooms.

Severe Weather Drill

1. Upon hearing a warning, teachers assemble students in the designated area.
2. Teachers take flashlight and attendance sheet with her to ensure that all children have been accounted for. Teachers also have clipboard/go bag with student information including emergency contact numbers and authorization for emergency care. Teacher will have a book ready to keep children calm.

3. An office staff member will contact local authorities, if needed.
4. Teachers will also get personal cell phones to help make needed phone calls to parents or authorities.
5. Teachers and children practice putting their heads down between their knees covering their heads with their arms and hands.

Flooding and Hurricane

1. In the event of questionable weather that might cause flooding, we will follow the advice of Katy School District and will close the school according to decisions made by the school district.
2. Parents will be notified to come and pick up their children before the situation becomes dangerous. Teachers must have clipboard/go bag with children's emergency form and authorization for emergency care forms.
3. Teachers will stay with children until all have been picked up by an approved person. Children must be signed out on the teacher's sign-out sheet.

Lock Down Drill (Intruder)

1. In the event that an intruder enters the building, an office staff member will warn staff.
2. The office staff will alert the local authorities.
3. Both teachers should immediately assemble children at their designated area.
4. Teachers must have sign-in sheet clipboard/go bag to check to make sure all children are accounted for. In addition, teachers should have emergency contact and authorization for emergency care forms for each child.
5. All classrooms are to remain in lock-down position until an office staff member informs the teachers that it is safe to resume the day.
6. If the class is held in the playground outside, the teachers will guide the children to walk away from the building where the intruder is, ensuring they have access to other safe buildings nearby.
7. Parents will be called if warranted.

Emergency That Calls for Relocation from Premises

(Including gas leak, chemical spill, explosion, etc.)

1. In an emergency situation that calls for all persons to be relocated from the building, a warning will be given.
2. At the warning teachers assemble students.
3. An office staff member will call the local authorities.
4. Teachers use attendance sheets to account for all children. Teachers also have clipboard/go bag with student information including emergency contact numbers and

authorization for emergency care. Office staff will have activities to keep children calm such as sidewalk chalk, books, crayons and paper.

5. Teachers lead children out quickly in an orderly manner proceeding to the designated area where she keeps children together and under control. Children under the age of 24 months will be transported in a Bye-Bye Buggy/Safety Walking Rope.
6. Teachers will get personal cell phones to help make needed phone calls to parents or authorities.
7. Upon all classrooms arriving at the waiting area, a determination will be made by the director as to whether the first relocation area is a safe place or if relocation to second area is needed.
8. If relocating to the first safe area is recommended, all children and staff will cross the parking lot to the Bolin Chapel.
9. Upon advice from local authorities, either parents will be called to pick up children or staff and children will remain in the Bolin chapel until it is safe to reenter the building.
10. If relocating to second safe area is recommended, all children and staff will walk to: American Furniture parking lot at 500 Pin Oak Rd. Katy, TX 77494 (281) 505-6400
11. The parents will be called to pick up their children from American Furniture parking lot. One teacher will supervise children and keep them calm and under control while the other teacher will help call parents as needed.



GANF FREE ZONE

First Steps Preschool is a Gang Free Zone. A gang Free zone is a designated area around the school where certain gang related activity is prohibited and is subject to increased penalty under Texas law. The Gang Free zone is within 1000 feet of the facility. Gang related activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of the school is a violation of the law and is therefore subject to increased penalty.

CHILD ABUSE

First Steps is required by State Law to report any suspected cases of child abuse to the proper authorities.

Each staff member is required to complete one hour of annual training which addresses prevention and response to abuse and neglect of children (<http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Training/Reporting/default.asp>). Information from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services regarding child abuse, child neglect, reporting abuse and neglect, protecting children, prevention techniques and public awareness will be provided to all staff and shared with parents. "Keeping Children Safe", Form 2958 published by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services will be posted on the preschool parent information board. Any parent of a child who is a victim of abuse or neglect may find support and information online at www.preventchildabuse.org. Parenting classes, tips and support can also be found at www.learntoparent.org.

To make a report call the Texas Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400 or online at <http://www.txabusehotline.org/Login/Default.aspx>.

First Steps Procedures for Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect

State law requires all staff members to report suspected child physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, and neglect.

Staff members who suspect any case of child abuse or neglect must immediately report it to directly to Childcare Licensing and to our director. Once the case has been reported, the Department of Family and Protective Services will investigate and notify the school. The DFPS Statewide hotline is 1-800-252-5400.

Procedures:

Director

1. The Director must report all suspected child abuse cases to the Child Abuse Hotline. A person may not make the independent determination of whether a report is necessary or not.

2. The Director must send a written report of suspected child abuse to the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) of the alleged abuse within 48 hours.
3. The Director must immediately report all suspected cases to the Owner.

Employees

1. You must immediately report a suspected case of child abuse to the Child Abuse Hotline and to the Director.
2. When reporting suspected cases of child abuse, you must include the following information:
 - a. Name of child
 - b. Age of child
 - c. Child's present location
 - d. Type and extent of abuse
 - e. Name of individual making the report
 - f. Individual's title
3. Due to the confidential nature of such reports, no information concerning the incident can be shared with other staff members or parents.

PEST CONTROL

Pesticides are periodically applied indoors and outdoors of First Steps. Information on times and types of application and prior notification are available upon request. Their visits typically occur when the children are not on campus.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

As a means of communication with parents, each teacher will send home a monthly detailed newsletter containing information relevant to the activities that will be upcoming for the next month in that particular class. The teacher will also send home weekly information in your child's take-home bag. There will be a more general First Steps newsletter that will be sent from the office on a monthly basis as well as regular emails/texts. Daily notes will be sent home by the teacher with brief information regarding child's day for the toddler and two classes. Throughout the year there will be many notes to remind parents of upcoming events and activities.

Please feel free to contact the Director, Administrative Assistant, or teachers at any time as cooperation and communication will contribute to a successful experience for your child.

Please sign up for ProCare (billing/tuition, parent communication) and Text blasts (Remind 101-communication from the school).

.....
(Please Sign and Return)

Child's Name: _____
(Please Print)

Parent Name: _____
(Please Print)

If your child is withdrawn for any reason, First Steps Preschool does not give refunds for:

(Please initial by each)

_____ **Registration fees**

_____ **Supply fees**

_____ **Tuition**

I have read, discussed, and understand the **Parent Handbook, Pandemic, and Car Rider Line Policy** as presented for 2023-2024.

Parent Signature

Date