

First Steps



at Katy's First Baptist

**Parent Handbook
2024-2025**

First Steps Mission Statement

Purpose

First Steps Preschool is a ministry of Katy's First Baptist Church. First Steps is committed to educating the children of Katy's First Baptist Church and 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 enhances the cognitive, physical, social-emotional, and spiritual development of children.

Philosophy

We believe that each child is a unique creation of God, 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 policies of the school and the school board, as well as 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 help children 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

Stefanie Beltran

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 2024-2025 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 2025 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 each week 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 the day after Labor Day and ends one week before Katy ISD. The school day starts at 9:00 and ends at 2:30.

ARRIVAL

Children will be accompanied to his/her classroom by parents or authorized guardians. Each child must be signed into their classroom by a parent or authorized guardian. Daily face-to-face contact will help maintain open communication so that the needs of students are understood and properly met.

However, conversation at arrival or dismissal must be brief to ensure smooth transition and minimize disruptions.

DEPARTURE

All children must be picked up in their classroom. If another authorized person needs to pick up your child, their photo ID will be checked to ensure the child's safe departure. Please make sure that all authorized persons are listed on the registration paperwork. You may add additional person(s) at any time by contacting the office. Any changes must be communicated through written messages to both the office and teachers.

All children must be picked up by 2:40 p.m. and there will be fees for late pickup is \$10 for every 15 minutes for the 2024-25 school year.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

First Steps can only accept well children. Please **KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME** to ensure everyone's safety and health if he/she exhibits symptoms such as:

- Any contagious disease
- Diarrhea and/or vomiting (within the previous 24 hours)
- Colored discharge from the nose
- Fever over 100.4°F (your child must be fever-free for 24 hours without medication before returning to school)
- Common cold combined with fever and/or green nasal discharge
- Croup
- Any unexplained rash
- Any skin infections
- Inability to comfortably participate in daily

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 your child's teacher or First Steps Preschool at 281-391-1105 if your child will be absent.

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 and two other people who can be contacted if we are unable to reach you or your spouse.

In the event of an injury to your child, you or your spouse will be notified first.

The director and parents will then decide on the appropriate medical assistance to 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.

You have also consented to emergency treatment, which means that no prior determination of a life-threatening emergency or the need for treatment needs to be made.

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 students as mandated by the Texas Department of Health **BEFORE the First Day of School.**

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

One parent-teacher conference will be scheduled each semester, in November and April. A progress report will be sent to parents before the spring conference.

Conferences may be scheduled at any time if deemed necessary by the parent, teacher, or director. Effective communication is essential for creating the positive experience you want for your child in preschool.

GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE

To ensure 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 strictly prohibits corporal punishment. Each teacher will discipline the children with care, demonstrating love and understanding of their needs. This approach includes:

- Emphasizing praise and encouragement for good behavior rather than solely addressing unacceptable behavior.
- Consistently reminding children of behavior expectations using clear, positive statements.
- Redirecting behavior through positive reinforcement.
- Implementing brief quiet time sessions, tailored to the child's age and development, limited to one minute per year of the child's age.
- Using quiet time only when redirection of behavior proves ineffective.

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

If a child's behavior, in the assessment of the teacher and director, reaches a point where it disrupts other children or poses physical danger, First Steps reserves the right to dismiss or suspend the child from the program without refunding any fees paid.

Parents will be informed of these steps. The aim of all disciplinary measures and guidance is to support each child in developing into a happy, responsible individual capable of managing their own behavior.

BIRTHDAYS

At First Steps, we understand the significance of a child's birthday. Each child is celebrated with a rendition of "Happy Birthday" in their classroom, and we encourage parents to send store-bought treats like cupcakes, cake, or cookies for their child to share with classmates. For students celebrating when school is out, we can schedule "pretend" birthdays. Parents should coordinate celebrations with their child's teacher. Please note that birthday party invitations will only be distributed at school if **ALL CHILDREN** in the class are invited.

SPECIAL EVENTS/PARTIES

Throughout the year, we will celebrate several holidays at First Steps Preschool. Each classroom will have sign-up sheets for parents to participate by providing food, drinks, paper plates, and more. We deeply value our partnership with parents and kindly request your cooperation in following the guidelines set by your child's teachers for each event. This approach will foster an inclusive and enriching experience for all participants. Your support and adherence to the teachers' instructions will guarantee a smooth and successful event.

CHILDREN'S CLOTHING

Please ensure that your child is dressed appropriately for school. We recommend comfortable play clothes suitable for activities such as painting, playing on the floor, and using the playground. **Children should WEAR SOCKS and TENNIS SHOES or SIMILAR CLOSED-TOE FOOTWEAR.** We kindly request that flip-flops or Crocs are not worn, and socks are required in the indoor play area.

As the weather cools down, please ensure all sweaters, jackets, and coats are labeled with your child's name. Additionally, please leave a **CHANGE OF CLOTHES** in your child's backpack each day in case of an accident. It's important to **LABEL EVERYTHING** you bring from home, including backpacks, diapers, wipes, nap mats, and other personal items.

SNACKS

Snacks should be brought each day in a labeled container. It is the parents' responsibility to provide snacks that have 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 a light blanket. Kinder mats work great. Please ensure everything is kept in a plastic nap mat tote and 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 a clipboard/go bag with student information, including emergency contact numbers and authorization for emergency care.
4. Teachers will lead children out quickly in an orderly manner, proceeding to the designated area where they keep 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 the proper signal, classes return to their rooms.
7. When the alarm goes off during drop-off or dismissal, parents will follow the instructions of the Director and teachers.

Severe Weather Drill

1. Upon hearing a warning, teachers assemble students in the designated area.
2. Teachers take a flashlight and attendance sheet to ensure that all children have been accounted for. Teachers also bring a 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 make any necessary 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, First Steps 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.

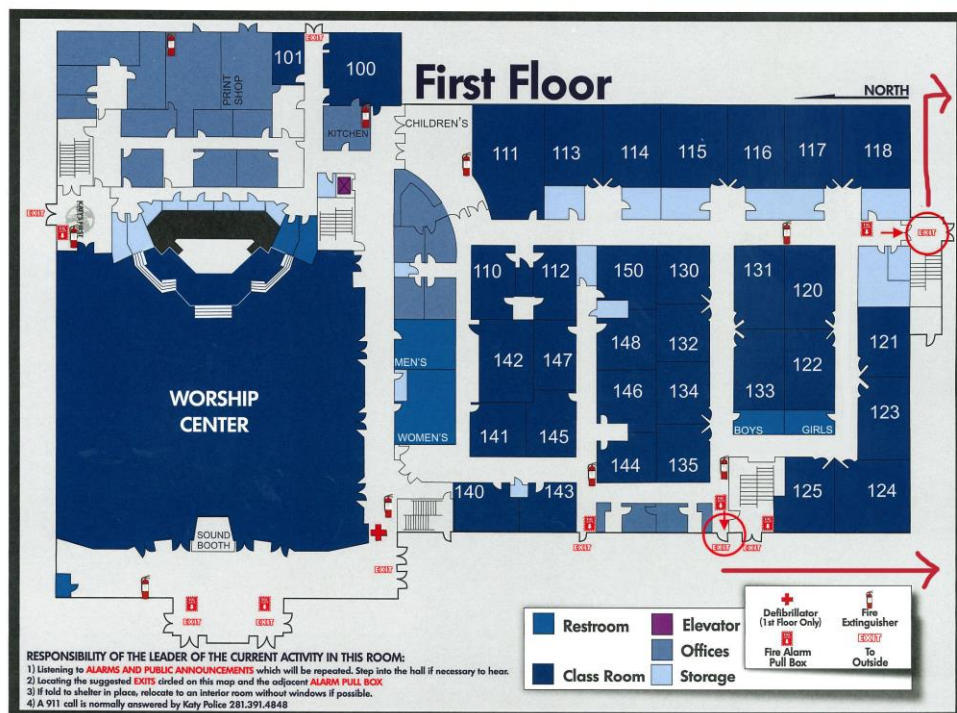
Lock Down/Intruder Drill

1. In the event that an intruder enters the building, an office staff member will alert the staff.
2. The office staff will immediately contact the local authorities.
3. Both teachers should promptly assemble children in their designated area.
4. Teachers must have a clipboard/go bag with a sign-in sheet to ensure all children are accounted for. Additionally, teachers should carry emergency contact and authorization for emergency care forms for each child.
5. All classrooms are to remain in a locked-down position until an office staff member informs the teachers that it is safe to resume normal activities.
6. If the class is held outside on the playground, teachers will guide the children away from the building where the intruder is located, ensuring access to other nearby safe buildings.
7. Parents will be contacted if necessary.

Emergency That Calls for Relocation from Premises

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

1. In an emergency requiring evacuation, a warning will be issued.
2. Teachers will promptly assemble students upon hearing the warning.
3. An office staff member will immediately contact the local authorities.
4. Teachers will use attendance sheets to account for all children. Each teacher will have a clipboard/go bag containing student information, including emergency contact numbers and authorization for emergency care. Office staff will provide activities such as sidewalk chalk, books, crayons, and paper to keep children calm.
5. Teachers will lead children out quickly and in an orderly manner to the designated assembly area, ensuring they remain 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 use their personal cell phones to make necessary calls to parents or authorities.
7. Upon arrival at the designated waiting area, the director will assess whether it is safe to remain there or if relocation to a second area is necessary.
8. If relocation to the first designated safe area (Bolin Chapel) is advised, all children and staff will proceed across the parking lot to that location.
9. Based on guidance from local authorities, either parents will be notified to pick up their children or staff and children will remain at Bolin Chapel until it is safe to return to the building.
10. If relocation to a second designated safe area (American Furniture parking lot at 500 Pin Oak Rd. Katy, TX 77494) is recommended, all children and staff will walk to that location.
11. 11. Parents will be called to pick up their children from the American Furniture parking lot. One teacher will supervise the children to keep them calm and under control, while the other teacher will assist in calling parents as needed.



GANG 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 activities are prohibited and are subject to increased penalties under Texas law. The Gang-Free Zone extends within 1,000 feet of the facility. Engaging in gang-related or organized criminal activity within this 1,000-foot radius is a violation of the law and is therefore subject to increased penalties.

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 the 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 at 1-800-252-5400 or visit <http://www.txabusehotline.org/Login/Default.aspx>.

First Steps Procedures for Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect

State law requires all staff members to report suspected cases of child physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, as well as neglect. Staff members who suspect any case of child abuse or neglect must immediately report it directly to Childcare Licensing and to our director. Once the case has been reported, the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) 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. An independent determination of whether a report is necessary or not is not permitted.
2. The Director must send a written report of the suspected child abuse to the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) within 48 hours of the alleged abuse.
3. The Director must immediately report all suspected cases to the Owner.

Employees

1. An employee must immediately report any suspected case of child abuse to the Child Abuse Hotline and to the Director.
2. When reporting suspected cases of child abuse, an employee must include the following information:
 - a. Name of the child
 - b. Age of the child
 - c. Child's present location
 - d. Type and extent of abuse
 - e. Name of the 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 both indoors and outdoors at First Steps. Information regarding the times, types of applications, and prior notifications is available upon request. These treatments typically occur when the children are not on campus.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

As a means of communication with parents, each teacher will send home a detailed monthly newsletter containing information relevant to upcoming activities for the next month in their particular class. Additionally, the teacher will send home weekly updates in your child's take-home bag or through ProCare.

A more general First Steps newsletter will be sent from the office on a monthly basis, along with regular emails and texts. Daily notes with brief information about the child's day will be sent home by the teacher for the toddler and two-year-old classes ONLY. Throughout the year, parents will receive various notes to remind them 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), as it is essential for our school operations.

.....
(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 understood the **Parent Handbook, Car Rider Line Policy, and Important Note** as presented for 2024-2025.

Parent Signature

Date