

**SMU PRESCHOOL**  
**AND**  
**CHILDCARE CENTER**  
*PARENT HANDBOOK*



## **SMU Preschool and Childcare Center Program Philosophy**

Southern Methodist University Preschool and Childcare Center is designed to meet the developmental needs of infants and young children of the University community. We provide experiences that enrich and enhance each child's cognitive, language, social, emotional, physical, and creative development. Within the center's daily schedule, each child has opportunities to create, explore the environment, learn problem solving and personal interaction skills, and learn concepts through first-hand, hands-on experiences. Children develop a positive self-concept through a balance of self- and teacher-directed activities. Opportunities for solitary play as well as group play are provided. Staff provides care that is supportive, nurturing, warm and responsive to each child's individual needs. We respect parents as the primary and most important provider of care and nurturing, and we believe parents and teachers are partners in children's care and education.

### *The Goals of Our Curriculum*

The most important goal of our early childhood curriculum is to help children become enthusiastic learners. This means encouraging children to be active and creative explorers who are not afraid to try out their ideas and to think their own thoughts. Our goal is to help children become independent, self-confident, inquisitive learners.

Our curriculum identifies goals in all areas of development:

Social: to help children feel comfortable in school, trust their new environment, make friends, and feel they are a part of the group.

Emotional: to help children experience pride and self-confidence, develop independence and self-control, and have a positive attitude toward life.

Cognitive: to help children become confident learners by letting them try out their own ideas and experience success, and by helping them acquire learning skills such as the ability to solve problems, ask questions, and use words to describe their ideas, observations, and feelings.

Physical: to help children increase their large and small muscle skills and feel confident about what their bodies can do.



## **ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES**

### How to Apply

We currently have a wait list for all classrooms. To place your child on the wait list, please fill out the [wait list form](#) found on our website, [www.smu.edu/childcare](http://www.smu.edu/childcare) and send it with a check for \$25 to SMU Preschool and Child Care Center, Box 750215, Dallas, TX 75275. A paper copy of the form may be obtained by calling the center and requesting one. We only accept checks as a payment option.

### Scheduling a Tour

Tours of the center are offered by appointment as the lead teacher tasks and daily schedule varies day to day. To schedule a tour please call us at 214-768-2278, or e-mail [jschilling@smu.edu](mailto:jschilling@smu.edu).

### Enrollment

When an opening is available for your child, you will be notified by email and/or by phone. Upon notification, you have 48 hours to notify the director whether or not you would like to enroll your child at that time. If you decide to enroll, a start date will be agreed upon and you will be sent a confirmation notice by email. You will be asked to submit a deposit of one week's tuition, a New Enrollment form (including child's immunization record and doctor statement), an Emergency Medical Authorization form and a Release of Liability form. These forms may be found on our website and paper copies are available upon request.

### Access Cards

SMU staff, faculty and students will have their SMU ID's activated for Hawk Hall and the Childcare Center. Please provide your SMU ID number on the enrollment application. The non SMU parent is issued an access card; this card allows them access to Hawk Hall as well as the Childcare Center. Please be sure to protect your access card and keep it in a safe place when it is not in use. There is a \$10 fee for a lost card (this will be strictly enforced). If a card is lost and found by one of our staff, or another parent or other person, there will still be a \$10 fee charged for you to retrieve the card. If a card is lost a second time, the fee will be increased to \$15; for a third offense the charge will be \$25. More than three offenses will require a meeting with the director to discuss whether or not your family may return to the center. It is very important that you keep track of the access cards, as a lost card can be found by anyone and used to access the center. This is a security issue and we are trying to protect your children by limiting center access. If you lose your card, please report it immediately, so the card can be deactivated.

## Hours of Operation

The Center is open Monday through Friday, from 7:45 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

### Holidays, Closing and "As Needed" Weeks

The Center is closed as follows:

- All University holidays (consult the Official University Calendar for details)
- Two weeks between Fall and Spring semester (during Winter Break)

In addition the Center operates on an "as needed" basis (regular hours) for three weeks of the year. Families **may pick two of these weeks as "not needed."** During "as needed" weeks, tuition is charged on a daily basis for the days the child attends. Tuition is not charged if your child does not attend during your chosen "as needed" week.

- One week between Spring and Summer semesters
- One week between Summer and Fall semesters
- SMU Spring Break week

Regular tuition is charged for University Holidays (Labor Day, Memorial Day, etc.) except those holidays that occur during the Winter Break closing (Christmas Day, New Year's Day.)

### Tuition and Fees

A non-refundable deposit (equal to one week's tuition), is due upon notification of a child's acceptance in the center. This deposit will be used to pay the last week of the semester's tuition if the child is enrolled for the full semester.

- If a parent withdraws a child during the semester, **the deposit will be forfeited.** Each semester you will be required to notify us of your intention to re-enroll for the following semester.
- If your child remains in care for the following semester, the deposit will be rolled over to that semester, until the end of the fiscal year, at the end of the spring session. The deposit will then be applied to the last week of the spring session, and you will be asked to make a new deposit for the new fiscal year.

Tuition is charged weekly and is due by Noon on Wednesday each week. There is a **\$10.00 late fee** for tuition not received on time. Tuition may be paid in advance for more than one week if desired. Payment methods accepted are check or money order.

- Tuition checks should be made payable to SMU Preschool and Childcare Center. There will be a \$20.00 charge for each check that is returned for non-sufficient funds (NSF). After a second NSF check is issued, only money orders will be accepted.

- Please drop all payments in the locked check drop box located on the wall opposite the Multi-age room near the Directors' desk in the hallway. Teachers may not accept payments in the classroom or on the playground.
- No tuition reductions are made for absences unless it is an "as needed" week.

If your tuition payment is not current, we will ask that you not bring your child to the center until tuition is paid in full. The center reserves the right to fill your child's slot if payment is not received or if no arrangement for payment is made within one week.

A two-week notice must be given to the center if you withdraw your child during the semester.

There is a \$75.00 per child supply fee due at the beginning of each semester (3 times a year)

**See website for current rates.**

### ***ARRIVAL AND PICK-UP***

Make sure you do not park in the fire lane or no parking areas as the parking officials will issue tickets. You will be issued a parking tag to hang visibly from your vehicle, the parking tag only allows you to use the designated spots, in front of Hawk Hall, for childcare drop off and pick up only. You will be ticketed if the parking tag is not clearly visible hanging from your rear view mirror.

#### **ARRIVAL**

Be sure to sign your child in when you arrive. **Make sure a teacher has acknowledged the arrival of your child. DO NOT LEAVE YOUR CHILD OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL OR OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM.** Be sure to make teachers aware of any special circumstances, such as a restless night, injury or illness that occurred at home, or any other unusual situations.

Please do NOT bring your child to the Center or pick them up between the hours of 1-3 PM, as that is when nap time occurs. All children will be expected to lie down on their cots to rest for this period. Children who are awake after resting or sleeping for one hour may participate in an alternative quiet activity until nap time is over.

#### **PICK-UP**

Children are normally picked up outside on the playground, unless the weather does not allow for outdoor play. If the weather permits, teachers and children will be on the playground until approximately 5:25 pm. At that time, the teachers will take the children who have not yet been picked up back into the building. One teacher will remain with the children while they play in the hallway, while the other teacher begins closing procedures (locking classroom doors, clean up, etc.) We appreciate your cooperation in

picking up your children by 5:30 pm. Be sure to sign your child out when you pick them up. **In addition, be sure that a teacher acknowledges that you are leaving with your child.**

If you are late picking up your child, a \$1.00 late fee per child will be charged for every minute past 5:30 pm that you are late, payable to the center. Late pick-up fees will be charged to your child's tuition account.

If you need someone else to pick up your child, give the childcare center written permission in advance. Please include the person's name and driver's license number or some form of identification. The person picking up your child must present identification in order to insure the protection of your child.

On the enrollment form there is a space for you to list the names of persons authorized to pick up your child from the center. These persons are the only ones allowed to pick your child up unless you include others with the information listed above. In the event of a last minute emergency, if you need someone else to pick up your child, a phone call to the center will suffice, provided the person picking up your child is listed on the enrollment form.

### ***DISMISSAL FROM THE PROGRAM***

A child may be asked to leave the center for the following non-inclusive reasons: late pick up, discipline problems, late payment, dishonored checks, negative relationship between parents and staff, and disagreement with the center's philosophy.

Conferences between parent and teacher or parent and Director will precede dismissal, in an attempt to remedy the situation, if possible.

### ***CHANGES OF INFORMATION***

Please notify the center of any change of information in your child's file, such as, change of address, home telephone number, work telephone number (for either parent) and especially emergency telephone numbers. A current schedule of classes from those parents who are students' needs to be provided each semester.

### ***MEDICAL INFORMATION***

You must provide a written statement from your physician certifying that he/she has examined your child within the past year and that your child is in good health and able to participate in our activities. **YOUR CHILD'S RECORD OF A PHYSICAL EXAM MUST BE UPDATED EACH YEAR.**

You must provide an up to date immunization record to be kept in your child's file at the center. **IMMUNIZATIONS MUST BE KEPT CURRENT.** You must also provide a dated statement certifying that your child has been tested for and been found to be free of tuberculosis.

THE DOCTOR'S SIGNATURE and the immunization records must be on file at the center before your child begins attending the center.

Your child's records are open to inspection by the Department of Health and Human Services at any time.

### **HEARING AND VISION SCREENING**

Vision and Hearing Sensitivity screenings are required for first time entrants and children in a childcare setting who are 4 years old or older. Our center provides these screenings, as well as Speech/Language screening early in the Spring Semester for a fee. Screenings are conducted by the Park Cities Speech, Language and Hearing Center. Parents who elect not to participate in the screenings offered at the center must provide documentation of these procedures for their child's file.

### **MEDICATIONS**

All prescription and non-prescription medication to be given at the center is subject to the following conditions:

1. You must sign a medication form available in your child's room.
2. A licensed physician must have prescribed the medication.
3. The medication must be in its **ORIGINAL CONTAINER** which states the doctor's name, the child's name the date prescribed, the prescribed dosage, and the instructions for dosage.
4. Non-prescription medicine must also be in its **ORIGINAL CONTAINER** with your child's name and the date brought to the center marked on it. Teachers will follow the recommended dosage. Tylenol is NOT kept at the center for use by children.
5. Please provide a measure for your child's medicine to be properly dispensed.

Your child's teacher will dispense all medications.

If you would like sunscreen to be reapplied in the afternoon only when your child goes outdoors during the summer months, A form will be provided in late Spring to be used from May – September only.

**If your child is not well enough to participate in daily activities or go outside, he/she should be cared for at home.**

If your child has a mild cold, without fever or excessive symptoms (i.e. continuous runny nose-with yellow or green mucus and/or a lot of coughing, listlessness and/or irritability etc.), please check with your physician regarding attendance at school and a recommendation for medication that might control cold symptoms.

If your child is exposed to any contagious disease, you will be notified of the nature of exposure and the date of possible exposure. A notice will be posted on the Center door and an email will be sent. Please let us know immediately if your child is found to have a contagious condition so that we can inform other parents. This is a state standards requirement.

## ***ILLNESS***

When your child becomes ill at the center, he/she **MUST** be picked up **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**. **You will be notified by phone immediately.** It is important that you make arrangements to have your child picked up and cared for if he/she is too sick to remain at the center. If you cannot be reached we will call the person(s) authorized to pick your child up and ask them to come get your child. Please be sure your phone numbers are up to date. **If you will be away from those numbers at any time please leave a number where you can be reached in case of illness or an emergency.**

You will be asked to pick up your child if ANY of the following signs are observed:

1. Elevated temperature (100.4° or higher).
2. Vomiting-if one episode of vomiting occurs, the parent will be asked to pick up the child for observation. If no more vomiting occurs, the child may return to the center 24 hours after the one episode of vomiting first occurred.
3. Diarrhea –includes increased frequency of stools (more than 3 while at the center), loose or watery stools, stool that runs out of diaper, or child can't get to the bathroom in time.
4. Open, runny or spreading sores on the skin, mouth sores with drooling
5. Obvious symptoms of communicable disease (chicken pox, pink eye, mumps, etc.)
6. An unexplained rash
7. If your child's behavior requires the caregiver attention to the extent that it may risk the care of other children.

\*Your child **MAY NOT** return to school for 24 hours after the last symptom has disappeared. If your child has fever, the child may not return to the center until he/she is symptom free for 24 hours without the use of acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or any other fever reducer. This minimizes the danger of infection to other children at the center. The director of the center may ask you for a note from your physician before your child can be readmitted to the center.

**IF YOUR CHILD APPEARS TO BE ILL OR HAS ANY SYMPTOMS AS LISTED ABOVE WITHIN THE LAST 24 HOURS, HE/SHE WILL NOT BE ADMITTED TO THE CENTER UNLESS APPROVED IN WRITING BY HEALTH PERSONNEL (PER TEXAS MINIMUM STANDARDS).**

## ***EMERGENCIES AND ACCIDENTS***

If your child should require any medical attention of an emergency nature, you will be contacted immediately by phone. An authorization form for emergency medical care is included in your enrollment papers; this must be filled out, signed and **NOTARIZED** before your child can be left at the center.

When an emergency occurs, our first step is to administer first aid (all full time staff is currently certified in first aid and CPR). If either you or the persons designated on the emergency medical care form cannot be reached, your child's doctor will be contacted

and your child will be transported by ambulance to the nearest (if not designated) medical facility.

If a minor accident occurs at the center, you will be told how the injury occurred, what was done to treat it, and the follow up care that was used.

Again, a copy of each student parent's daily class schedule must be on file at the center so that you can be reached in the event of an emergency.

In addition, all parents must notify the Center of their whereabouts if they will not be at home, work or school, so that they may be reached in case of an emergency.

In case of bad weather, the Center will remain open, unless there is a public announcement made of SMU closing. Closing announcements may be obtained at 214-SMU-INFO. If the Center must be closed for any other reason, you will be notified as soon as possible by email if time permits; or by phone if immediate notification is required.

### ***DISCIPLINE***

We believe in a positive approach to discipline. Our goal is to develop generous and kind instincts in your child rather than to punish him/her. When an unacceptable or dangerous behavior occurs we use redirection. If the behavior is persistent a time out is given. If a behavior that is dangerous to the child or other children continues a conference with the parents may be in order to develop an appropriate procedure for handling the behavior. Persistent dangerous behavior without signs of abating may be cause for dismissal. SMU Preschool and Childcare Center does not condone or use corporal punishment of any type.

In addition, the Center adheres to the Discipline and Guidance standards mandated by Texas Minimum Standards Guidelines.

These standards are as follows:

**Discipline must be:**

- (1) Individualized and consistent for each child;
- (2) Appropriate to the child's level of understanding; and
- (3) Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.

**A caregiver may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include at least the following:**

- (1) Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
- (2) Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
- (3) Redirecting behavior using positive statements; and

- (4) Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, 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.

**There must be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:**

- (1) Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment;
- (2) Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training;
- (3) Pinching, shaking, or biting a child;
- (4) Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;
- (5) Putting anything in or on a child's mouth;
- (6) Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child;
- (7) Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language;
- (8) Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed; and
- (9) Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.

Texas Administrative Code, Title 40, Chapters 746 and 747, Subchapters L, Discipline and Guidance

### *NUTRITION*

Food is served at the following times during your child's day here:

Morning snack	9:00 am – 9:30 am
Lunch	12:00 noon – 1:00 pm
Afternoon snack	3:15 pm – 3:30 pm

If you would like to provide breakfast items from home for your child to eat when he/she arrives, please be sure to label all containers or packaging with your child's full name. Children are not permitted to share food brought from home. Please do not send food items after 9 AM, as snack will be provided at that time.

Lunches are prepared at Lee Center Cafeteria. A menu for the semester is posted in all classrooms. Milk is served daily, as is fresh fruit. All children (except infants) who are in the center during lunch must purchase the hot meal (included in your weekly tuition).

Please make us aware of any foods your child should not have.

If your child has allergies or food restrictions, please substitute a lunch that is prepared and ready to eat. We cannot guarantee substitute food items. If possible, avoid arrival and pickup during mealtime.

Meal times are very important learning times. Your child is encouraged to try each food on his/her plate. However, your child will not be forced to eat anything he/she objects to.

We encourage manners and self-help skills. Our teachers eat with the children to encourage a peaceful, relaxing mealtime.

You are welcome to join your child for lunch. Let the center know that morning prior to 11:00am.

Please arrange with your child's teacher, in advance, about birthday celebrations or going away parties. If you need help with your child's celebration, please consult with the teacher. Food items brought from home for these celebrations must be purchased from a place of business with ingredients listed on the packaging. Teachers must be able to monitor any food related allergies, by having the ingredient information available.

### ***PARENT – TEACHER COMMUNICATIONS***

We have an “open door” policy at the center. We encourage you to call or visit with us often. Becoming directly involved in your child's learning and play activities is enjoyable and beneficial to all concerned. Please feel free to spend time in your child's room, share ideas, concerns or anything else that you feel would help us to work together with you to provide quality care for your child. However, we will not accept visits between 1 p.m. and 3p.m.

You are welcome to participate in our activities at any time—no prior notification is necessary.

If you would like to serve as a volunteer at the center on a regular basis, please contact the director, as certain requirements for volunteers must be met.

Parents are welcome to schedule a parent/teacher conference as desired. Regular conferences are offered in the Fall and Spring Semesters.

### ***CLOTHING AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS***



Please send your child in comfortable play clothes. Shoes with rubber soles work best.

Texas weather can be unpredictable. Please remember that your child goes out to play twice a day and needs to be appropriately dressed. Remember to provide a hat and gloves if the weather is cold. **PLEASE LABEL ALL CLOTHING. WE ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR MISPLACED OR LOST CLOTHING, BLANKETS OR PILLOWS.**

**ALL CHILDREN NEED AT LEAST ONE COMPLETE SET OF CLOTHING (CHECK IT PERIODICALLY FOR SIZE AND SEASON). INFANTS NEED THREE SETS OF CLOTHES AND TODDLERS NEED TWO.**

### ***TOYS FROM HOME***

NO TOYS SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO SCHOOL YOU WILL BE ASKED TO TAKE THE TOY FROM YOUR CHILD IF HE/SHE COMES INTO THE CENTER WITH IT. **NO GUNS, WAR TOYS, OR OTHER TOYS THAT DEPICT OR ENCOURAGE VIOLENCE WILL BE ALLOWED IN THE CENTER.** THESE ARE NOT APPROPRIATE IN OUR SCHOOL. WE HAVE FOUND THAT CHILDREN BEHAVE MORE AGGRESSIVELY WHEN THESE ITEMS ARE AVAILABLE TO THEM. We have other ways we would like to teach children to learn to deal with their natural feelings of aggression.

### ***OUTDOOR PLAY***

All children, including infants, will be taken outside to play each day, weather permitting. Weather permitting includes, but is not exclusive to, high and low temperatures. Children will be kept inside the building under the following conditions.

- Inclement weather (raining)
- Red or orange ozone levels
- Temperature is 90° or above
- Temperature is 40° or under
- Please dress your child appropriately for the season.
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During the summer months we occasionally have a “Splash Day”, when sprinkler play is offered outside on the playground. Children come dressed in their swimsuits and bring a towel. You will be notified of this through the calendar and newsletter sent by email.

### ***FIELD TRIPS***

Field trips are a special part of our preschool program. They are determined by the teachers and coordinated with the curriculum your child is studying. Most of our trips are on campus, but occasionally we may visit places off campus. We must ask for your assistance in transportation and/or presence to increase our ratio of children to adults to meet Texas Minimum Standards Guidelines. Notices of trips are posted at least 24 hours prior to the trip and/or an email will be sent. Each child is, by law, required to wear a seat belt in the car. Each child under the age of 3 years must ride in a car seat.



Infants are children from 2 months to 18 months. There are five infants with two teachers in our infant room. The infant room teachers will give you a list of items that you need to bring for your child. They will also need information written down about your child, such as eating habits, special rituals, when or if a pacifier is used and any other information that will help them individualize the care of your child.

We recommend that you and your child visit the infant room at least once before actually starting. Please ask questions and get to know the teachers so that the transition will be a smooth one for your child and you.

Parents of infants who are not yet ready to eat table food only are required by Texas Minimum Standards to provide a signed, detailed feeding schedule once a month.

Nursing mothers are welcome at the Center. Please speak with the teachers to determine a workable schedule for nursing your child.

Each infant will be moved to the toddler room at 18 months if there is available space. Your child's change of room will be at the discretion of the director of the center.



## ***TODDLER ROOM***

Toddlers are children from 18 months to 36 months. There are twelve toddlers in the toddler room with two teachers.

The toddler room teachers will give you information particular to the toddler room. You will need to bring at least two sets of extra clothing for your toddler. Bring a pillow, blanket, and cuddly toy for naptime. NO bottles or pacifiers please. Please do not bring toys from home to the center. We have plenty of toys here and toys from home can be broken, lost, and cause disruptions.

If your toddler is potty training please discuss how you are doing the training at home with your child's teacher so they can re-enforce training here. Please be aware that there is a no pull-ups policy in the toddler room.

We recommend that you and your child visit the toddler room at least once before actually starting your child in the center. This will provide a chance for your child and you to get to know the teachers and the center. Please feel free to ask questions and share any concerns you may have about the transition.



The Preschool room has children from age three through five. There are sixteen children with two teachers. The preschool room teachers will give information that pertains to your child in that room. The preschool room has a more structured environment and schedule. We encourage independence by allowing children to choose learning centers to play in. We also have teacher-guided activities that help children learn how to follow several directions given at once. Many pre-reading and pre-math skills are emphasized in preparation for kindergarten.

Your child will need a complete set of extra clothing, a small pillow and blanket, and a cuddly toy to sleep with. We recommend that you and your child visit the room at least once before your child starts.

*Thank you for giving us the opportunity to share in the growth and enrichment of your child's life.*

**SMU PRESCHOOL AND CHILDCARE CENTER**  
Southern Methodist University 5906 Hillcrest Avenue  
P.O. Box 750215 Dallas, TX 75275-0215  
Phone 214.768.2278 Fax 214.768.0090  
[www.smu.edu/childcare](http://www.smu.edu/childcare)

You will be notified by email of any changes to the policies and procedures. A current copy of the handbook may be viewed on our website. If you would like to receive a paper copy as well, please contact the Director.

If you have any questions regarding the policies and procedures of the Child Care Center, you may contact the Director.

Parents may, upon request, review a copy of the minimum standards and most recent licensing report issued by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. The Licensing office may be contacted at 1-800-582-6036 or 214-583-4253. The website for this agency is [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us). The Child Abuse Hotline number is 1-800-252-5400 or use their secure website: <https://www.txabusehotline.org>

*SMU will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, or veteran status.*