



Journeys of the Heart Inc.

Childcare Parent Handbook

March 2024

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PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

Journeys of the Heart Inc. is dedicated to creating a nurturing and engaging setting for children to learn, develop, and flourish. Our approach revolves around recognizing the individuality of each child, ensuring they receive respect, care, and affection. Our goal is to enhance the overall growth of every child in our care – physically, emotionally, socially, and cognitively – to equip them for a smooth transition to school and beyond.

Religious Affiliation Statement

Journeys of the Heart Inc. operates as a secular childcare center that embraces families from various religious traditions. We honor the array of beliefs present in our community and do not advocate for any particular religious teachings or rituals..

HOURS OF OPERATION



Our childcare center operates from Monday to Friday, from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM. We understand the demands of modern-day schedules, and we strive to accommodate the needs of working parents by providing extended hours.

UNSCHEDULED CLOSINGS/INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event of unscheduled closures due to inclement weather or unforeseen circumstances, parents will be notified promptly via email, text message, or phone call. The safety and well-being of our children and staff are our top priorities.

TUITION AND FEE POLICY

At Journeys of the Heart Inc., tuition is due in advance at the weekly rate. Payments are expected on Monday morning for the upcoming week of childcare services. Your payment will be considered late if not received by Tuesday after 5:30 PM.

Late payments will incur a late payment fee of \$40.00 per week. Parents may pay by check or money order. Please note that tuition remains the same whether your child is in attendance for one day or the entire week.

During holidays, tuition is still due to reserve your child's placement in our program.

Additionally, we enforce a late pickup fee if you are unable to pick up your child by 6:00 PM. You will be charged \$1.00 per child for every minute until your child(ren) are picked up.

We appreciate your adherence to these policies, as they help us maintain the quality and consistency of our childcare services. If you have any questions or concerns regarding tuition or payment procedures, please feel free to contact us.

WATER ACTIVITIES

At Journeys of the Heart Inc., we offer various water activities for children to enjoy during the summer break. We understand the importance of safety and cleanliness when it comes to water play.

Parents are required to give permission for their children to participate in water activities, and appropriate swimwear must be worn at all times. This permission is indicated on our admission form.

During water table play, we ensure that the water tables and toys used are emptied, sanitized, and washed daily after each use. Children and caregivers are required to wash their hands before and after using the water tables to maintain hygiene standards.

Sprinkler play is held within our designated playground area on the grass. We store sprinklers and water hoses out of children's reach when not in use to prevent accidents.

Our priority is to provide a safe and enjoyable environment for all children to engage in water activities. If you have any concerns or questions regarding our water activities policy, please feel free to contact us.

Admission and Enrollment

At Journeys of the Heart Inc., we are committed to providing a nurturing and inclusive environment for all children, regardless of race, color, sex, creed, religion, national or ethnic origin, provided that our established program meets the needs of the individual child with reasonable accommodations (in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act - ADA).

Enrollment at Journeys of the Heart Inc. is subject to availability and completion of required paperwork, including enrollment forms, health records, and emergency contact information. We welcome children of all backgrounds and abilities.

We believe in celebrating the diversity of our community and strive to create a culture of respect, acceptance, and understanding. Our staff is trained to accommodate the unique needs of each child, ensuring that every child feels valued, included, and supported in their learning and development.

If your child requires any special accommodations or modifications to our program, please inform us during the enrollment process. We are committed to working with families to provide the necessary support and resources to ensure the success and well-being of every child in our care.

Thank you for entrusting us with your child's education and development. If you have any questions or concerns regarding our non-discrimination and inclusion policy, please do not hesitate to contact us.

UN-ENROLLING YOUR CHILD(REN)

At Journeys of the Heart Inc., we understand that circumstances may arise requiring families to un-enroll their child from our childcare program. In order to facilitate a smooth transition and make necessary arrangements, we require written notice at least two weeks in advance if you need to un-enroll your child.

When un-enrolling your child(ren), please provide a written notice to the administration at least two weeks before the intended withdrawal date. This allows us adequate time to adjust our staffing and resources accordingly and ensures minimal disruption for your child.

It's important to note that Journeys of the Heart School Age reserves the right to immediately un-enroll any child under certain circumstances. Un-enrollment may occur if a child poses a threat to themselves or others, or if they consistently refuse to follow center policies despite interventions and support.

We strive to maintain a safe and supportive environment for all children in our care, and we appreciate your cooperation in adhering to our un-enrollment policy. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this policy, please feel free to contact us.

TRANSPORTATION

At Journeys of the Heart Inc, we understand the importance of providing safe transportation for children to and from school. Therefore, we offer transportation services exclusively for children attending our daycare from their respective schools.

Our transportation policy adheres to strict safety guidelines to ensure the well-being of all children in our care during transit. Parents must provide written consent for their child to be transported by Journeys of the Heart Inc staff.

Our trained and licensed drivers operate our daycare vehicles, equipped with appropriate safety features and maintained to the highest standards. We strictly adhere to all traffic laws and regulations during transportation.

Upon arrival at the daycare, children are supervised by our qualified staff members until they are safely handed over to their designated guardians.

We prioritize the safety and comfort of every child in our transportation services. If you have any questions or concerns regarding our transportation policy, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Licensing

Journeys of the Heart Inc. is committed to maintaining the highest standards of quality and safety in childcare. Our center is licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to provide childcare services.

We adhere to all licensing regulations set forth by the DFPS to ensure the well-being and development of the children in our care. Our center is licensed to accommodate children ages 18 months through 12 years, providing age-appropriate programs and activities tailored to meet their needs.

Our licensing status reflects our dedication to providing a nurturing, secure, and stimulating environment for children to learn and grow. We undergo regular inspections and evaluations by DFPS to ensure compliance with licensing standards and regulations.

Parents can have confidence in our commitment to providing high-quality childcare services that meet or exceed regulatory requirements. If you have any questions or concerns regarding our licensing or compliance, please feel free to reach out to us.

Developmental Milestones

At Journeys of the Heart Inc., we prioritize the holistic development of each child in our care. We closely monitor developmental milestones for every child, ensuring that

they receive age-appropriate activities and interventions to support their growth and progress. Milestone assessments are conducted regularly, and progress reports are shared with parents to keep them informed about their child's development.

Toddlers (12-24 Months)

In providing a program for toddlers, our teachers understand that these children learn through active exploration and engagement with their environment. Toddlers discover their world primarily through physical interaction, such as walking, climbing, carrying objects, and exploring with their senses. Therefore, our program encourages and supports these large muscle activities as legitimate expressions of toddlerhood.

Preschool (2-5 Years)

Preschoolers are typically most responsive to activities that allow them to be actively involved in a hands-on manner. Our teachers embrace this understanding and design classroom spaces with various learning centers where children can freely choose to participate and explore at their own pace. Our dedicated staff regularly rotate and add materials to these learning centers to maintain and extend children's interests.

In instances where commercial materials may not fully meet the needs or interests of the children, our teachers are adept at creating their own games and materials tailored to the children's unique preferences and developmental stages. We believe that young children learn best when engaged in activities that build upon their interests and abilities.


Open-ended questioning and activities are integral to our approach, fostering the development of creative thinking skills in children. Information and discoveries about

each child's developmental progress are shared collaboratively between teachers and parents, resulting in a tailored program that meets the individual needs of every child.

At Journeys of the Heart Inc., we are dedicated to providing a nurturing and stimulating environment where children can thrive and reach their full potential. If you have any questions or concerns about our developmental approach or your child's progress, please feel free to discuss them with our staff.

Holidays

At Journeys of the Heart Inc., we believe in the importance of providing our staff and families with time to celebrate and rest during special holidays. Therefore, we will be closed for the following holidays:

- 
- New Year's Day
 - Memorial Day (Monday)
 - Labor Day
 - Christmas Eve
 - Martin Luther King Jr. Day
 - July 4th Holiday
 - Thanksgiving Day & Friday
 - Christmas Day

Please note that when a holiday falls on a Saturday, we will be closed on the preceding Friday, and when a holiday falls on a Sunday, we will be closed on the following Monday.

It's important to understand that tuition fees are not reduced for holidays listed above. This policy ensures consistency in our operations and staffing, allowing us to maintain the quality of care and education for your child throughout the year.

We appreciate your cooperation and understanding regarding our holiday closure policy. If you have any questions or need further clarification, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. Thank you for choosing Journeys of the Heart Inc. for your childcare needs.

Caregivers

At Journeys of the Heart Inc., the well-being and safety of your child are our top priorities. Therefore, our caregivers are carefully selected based on their education, genuine love for children, and extensive experience in childcare.

We ensure that all caregivers undergo thorough background checks to verify their suitability for working with children. Additionally, our teachers are required to maintain current certification in CPR and First Aid to handle any emergencies effectively.

Furthermore, we believe in the importance of continuous professional development for our caregivers. Therefore, our staff is required to participate in at least 24 hours of training annually to enhance their skills and stay updated on best practices in early childhood education and development.

You can trust that our caregivers are trained professionals dedicated to providing the highest quality of care and education for your child. If you have any questions or concerns regarding our caregiver qualifications, please feel free to reach out to us.

Thank you for entrusting us with the care of your child at Journeys of the Heart Inc.

Television

At Journeys of the Heart Inc., we recognize the potential benefits and drawbacks of television and video content for young children. Therefore, we have implemented a policy to ensure responsible and limited use of television in our childcare program.

Television and video content will only be used as part of planned activities and will be age-appropriate for the children in our care. We understand the importance of using media as a tool for learning and enrichment when used judiciously.

To maintain a balanced approach, television viewing will not exceed one hour per day. This time is reserved for educational purposes only, with a focus on programs that promote learning and development.

However, we prioritize interactive and hands-on activities to promote active learning and engagement among the children. Our curriculum is designed to encourage exploration, creativity, and social interaction, fostering a stimulating environment for growth and development.

We believe that by limiting television use and emphasizing interactive activities, we can provide a well-rounded experience that supports the holistic development of each child in our care.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding our television viewing policy, please feel free to discuss them with us. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in promoting a positive learning environment at Journeys of the Heart Inc.

Activity Plans and Supervision

At Journeys of the Heart Inc., our caregivers are dedicated to ensuring that each child receives individualized care and attention. We prioritize nurturing communication and expression of feelings in appropriate ways, allowing children to develop emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills.

For children who choose to work on homework assignments, our caregivers provide dedicated study time, offering support and guidance as needed.

Our program features flexible programming tailored to each child's age, interests, and abilities. We believe in providing a diverse range of activities to stimulate growth and development.

Outdoor play is an integral part of our program, weather permitting. Our outdoor spaces are designed to encourage both small and large muscle development, fostering physical health and coordination. We maintain a balance of active and quiet play, including group and individual activities.

To ensure safety during outdoor activities, we require children to wear tennis shoes or sandals with straps. This precaution helps prevent accidents and injuries.

Additionally, our caregivers supervise children under the age of five during transitions to and from restrooms, indoor and outdoor activity spaces, and other areas. This hands-on approach ensures the safety and well-being of every child in our care.

Daily activity plans are thoughtfully designed to promote learning, creativity, physical activity, and social interaction. All activities are supervised by trained staff members to maintain a safe and supportive environment for children to learn and grow.

If you have any questions or concerns about our childcare program, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. Thank you for choosing Journeys of the Heart Inc. for your child's care and education.

Smoking/Drugs/Alcohol Policy



At Journeys of the Heart Inc., the safety and well-being of the children in our care are our top priorities. To ensure a secure environment for all, we ask that all adults adhere to the following guidelines:

- A. If an adult's behavior and/or health status pose an immediate threat or danger to the health and safety of the children, they must not be present when children are in our care. This includes situations where an adult's behavior may compromise the safety of the children or if they are experiencing symptoms of illness that could be contagious.
- B. We strictly prohibit the consumption of alcohol or controlled substances on the premises of Journeys of the Heart Inc. Additionally, smoking or the use of tobacco products is not allowed anywhere on our premises. This policy applies to all staff, visitors, and parents/guardians.

We maintain a zero-tolerance approach to behaviors that may jeopardize the safety of the children or violate our policies regarding substance use. Any violations of these policies will be addressed promptly and may result in removal from the premises or termination of employment, as appropriate.

Thank you for your cooperation in helping us maintain a safe and healthy environment for all children at Journeys of the Heart Inc. If you have any questions or concerns regarding our safety policies, please feel free to reach out to us.

Parent Open Door and Participation Policy

At Journeys of the Heart Inc., we believe in fostering strong partnerships between our childcare center and the families we serve. Therefore, we have implemented an "open door" policy that allows parents to visit their child(ren) in our center at any time during our hours of operation.

Parents are welcome to visit their child(ren) in our center, including during program activities, and explore the building and premises. However, for the safety and security of all children and staff, we require parents to sign in at the front entrance before entering the classroom area. This simple procedure helps us maintain a secure environment for everyone.

We highly encourage parents to actively participate in their child's learning journey by engaging in center activities and events. Your involvement not only strengthens the bond between home and childcare but also enriches the overall experience for your child.

At Journeys of the Heart Inc., we value open communication and collaboration between parents and staff. If you have any questions, concerns, or ideas to share, we welcome your input and encourage you to reach out to us at any time.

Thank you for being an active participant in your child's education and development at Journeys of the Heart Inc. Your involvement is greatly appreciated and contributes to the success of our childcare community..

Enrollment Requirements

To enroll your child at Journeys of the Heart Inc., you must:

- complete the enrollment form in its entirety,
- provide proof of age,
- up-to-date immunization records,
- emergency contact information,
- any relevant medical documentation.

Review Policies and Inspections

At Journeys of the Heart Inc., transparency and accountability are paramount in providing quality childcare services. We want to ensure that parents have access to essential information and understand our commitment to maintaining a safe and nurturing environment for their children.

Therefore, we want to inform you that a copy of the Minimum Standards, Operational Manual, and any revisions can be located in the Director's office. If you ever

wish to review this information or have any questions or concerns about our policies, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

Our policies are regularly reviewed and updated as necessary to reflect the evolving needs of our childcare community. Every parent will receive the most up-to-date policy information to ensure clarity and transparency.

Additionally, we want to assure you that we undergo regular inspections and reviews to uphold compliance with licensing requirements and maintain the highest standards of quality and safety. The following inspections and licenses are posted for your review:

1. Journeys of the Heart License
2. The most recent licensing inspection
3. The most recent fire inspection
4. The most recent health inspection report
5. The most recent gas pipe inspection report

We believe in fostering an environment of trust and open communication with our families. If you have any questions or need further information about our policies or inspections, please feel free to contact us. Your child's well-being and safety are our top priorities at Journeys of the Heart Inc.

Release of Children

Ensuring the safety and security of every child in our care is of utmost importance at Journeys of the Heart Inc. To maintain a secure environment, we have implemented strict procedures for releasing children to authorized individuals.

Children will only be released to individuals listed as authorized pick-up persons on their enrollment forms. It is imperative that these authorized individuals are accurately listed on the admission form provided upon enrollment.

For verification purposes, photo identification may be required from any individual seeking to pick up a child. This measure helps us confirm the identity of the authorized person and ensures the safety of the child.

On the admission form, there is a designated space indicating the individuals authorized to pick up the child. It is crucial that this information is kept up to date and accurately reflects the current list of authorized persons.

We appreciate your cooperation and understanding in adhering to our child release policy. Your child's safety and security are our top priorities, and these measures help us maintain a safe environment for all children at Journeys of the Heart Inc. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this policy, please feel free to reach out to us.

Immunization Requirements for Caregivers

At Journeys of the Heart Inc., the health and safety of our children, families, and staff members are paramount. Therefore, we uphold stringent guidelines regarding staff immunizations to prevent the spread of communicable diseases in our childcare facility.

All staff members are required to provide proof of immunization or immunity to certain communicable diseases as mandated by state/country regulations. This requirement aligns with our commitment to maintaining a healthy environment for everyone in our care.

Currently, Journeys of the Heart Inc. does not mandate that caregivers receive vaccinations. However, we recognize the importance of staying informed about updates and recommendations from authoritative health agencies such as the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

In the event that DFPS or CDC mandates vaccination for caregivers, we will require all staff members to comply with the specified vaccine requirements. This includes receiving each specified vaccine that the caregiver is not exempt from having, unless medical conditions are identified as contraindications or reasons of conscience, including religious beliefs.

We are committed to ensuring that our childcare facility remains a safe and healthy environment for all. If you have any questions or concerns regarding our staff immunization policy, please do not hesitate to contact us. Thank you for your cooperation in prioritizing the well-being of our community at Journeys of the Heart Inc.

Vision and Hearing Screening

At Journeys of the Heart Inc., we prioritize the overall health and well-being of the children in our care, including their vision and hearing health. To ensure early detection of any potential issues, we may conduct periodic vision and hearing screenings.

These screenings are conducted in accordance with Texas state licensing requirements and are typically recommended for children aged four and older. It is mandated by Texas state licensing that every four-year-old have proof of vision and hearing screening, with documentation placed in the child's file.

Parents will be notified of the results of these screenings, and if any issues are identified, recommendations for follow-up care will be provided. We encourage parents to schedule vision and hearing screenings with their child's physician, as these screenings can also be performed during regular check-ups.

Ensuring that children have optimal vision and hearing health is essential for their overall development and academic success. If you have any questions or concerns regarding our vision and hearing screening policy, please feel free to reach out to us.

Thank you for your cooperation in prioritizing the health and well-being of your child at Journeys of the Heart Inc.

Allergies and Doctors Notes

Please inform us of any allergies or medical conditions that your child may have. A doctor's note may be required for certain accommodations or modifications to our program.

Thank you for choosing Journeys of the Heart Inc. as your childcare provider. We are committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and enriching environment for your child's growth and development. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Contact Information

Childcare Director: Dyshel Stanford
President/Owner: Lakisha Price
Phone: 903-372-7365
Email: info@journeysoftheheartdaycare.org



Please feel free to reach out to us with any questions, concerns, or feedback. We are here to support you and your child every step of the way.