

The Growing Place Policies and Procedures

GOALS AND MISSION STATEMENT

The Growing Place is a low ratio preschool and child care center. Our goal is to provide a safe, age appropriate, and fun learning environment for all children. We believe all children are special and unique. We take each child where they are and help them grow and develop in all areas. We strive for them to feel loved by their teacher and peers as well as to be challenged to learn and grow.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY AND LICENSING

All personal records of children and families are kept in the strictest confidence. Information pertaining to admission, progress, health, or discharge of a child shall be confidential, unless we have written permission for disclosure from the parent or guardian.

Licensing:

The Growing Place is fully licensed by the Texas Department for Family and Protective Services to care for children ages 6 weeks to 12 years, and is inspected annually. Their address is 2221 W. Loop South, Houston, TX. 77222. Their telephone number is (713)940-3089. Current licenses, permits and inspection reports are posted in the office at the school. A copy of the state's Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers is available in the office. The DFPS website is www.dfps.state.tx.us

Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse and/or Neglect:

Parents should be aware that licensed daycare centers staff and administration is required, under penalty of law, to report all suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect. All caregivers and staff undergo training on how to detect child abuse, report child abuse and protect children from child abuse. Such cases will be referred to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and/or to the authorities immediately. The child abuse hotline number is 1-800-252-5400.

Gang-Free Zone:

As a result of House Bill 2086 that passed during the 81st Legislature, Regular Session, Chapter 42 of the Human Resource Code includes section 42.064, effective September 1, 2009. This new statute requires that information about gang-free zones be distributed to parents and guardians of children in care at licensed child care centers. A gang-free zone is a designated area around a specific location where prohibited gang related activity is subject to increased penalty under Texas law. The gang-free zone is within 1000 feet of The Growing Place. This means parents or guardians need to be informed that certain gang-related criminal activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of the school is a violation of this law and is therefore subject to increased penalty under Texas law. 4

POLICY CHANGES

The Growing Place reserves the right to make any policy or financial changes at any time when it is in the best interest of the learning center and will not compromise the quality of the children's care. All changes will be given at least a two-week notice. You will be notified as soon as possible in writing of any changes that may occur. We also reserve the right to make changes in the learning center environment without advance notice to the parents, as long as any change remains within state regulations. Policies will be reviewed annually. Current policies will be available on our Website.

TEXAS RISING STAR CERTIFIED

The Texas Rising Star program is “a voluntary, quality-based child care rating system of child care providers participating in the Texas Workforce Commission’s subsidized child care program.” TRS Certification is available to Licensed Center and Licensed and Registered Child Care Home providers who meet the certification criteria. The TRS Provider certification system offers three levels of certification (Two-Star, Three-Star, and Four-Star) to encourage providers to attain progressively higher certification requirements leading to a Four-Star level.

A Texas Rising Star (TRS) provider is a child care provider that has an agreement to serve Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)-subsidized children and that voluntarily meets requirements that exceed the State’s Minimum Child Care Licensing (CCL) Standards.

Across Texas, parents and families enroll their children into child care programs, including center-based and home-based programs. Numerous research studies have shown that at-risk children who attend higher quality child care programs are more prepared for school entry than children who do not attend quality child care programs.

Those providers that voluntarily achieve TRS provider certification, offering quality care that exceeds the State’s Minimum Child Care Licensing Standards for director and staff qualifications, caregiver-child interactions, age-appropriate curricula and activities, nutrition and indoor/outdoor activities, and parent involvement and education, are in a better position to contribute to the early development of children. As providers progress through the levels of TRS provider certification, they contribute progressively more to the development of the children they serve on a daily basis.

STAFF INFORMATION

All Growing Place programs are staffed by individuals who meet, or exceed, the Texas State Department of Education Office of Child Care requirements.

- The Growing Place is owned and operated by Cindy and Jim Tyrna.
- Substitutes may be used when regular staff is absent. Substitutes shall meet state requirements in regards to substitutes. We use a substitute service called Wee Care Services.

All staff is subject to:

- Criminal Background Checks--All staff are subject to reference checks and criminal background checks.
- Education and work experience verification.
- Vaccines--We do not require any vaccinations at this point but that is subject to change if any of the rules of our local authorities change. We do recommend that all employees get annual flu shots and stay current with all recommended vaccines for their own safety. All health information is protected by HIPAA and will not be discussed for any reason
- Emergency Certification— all of our teachers are certified in First Aid and CPR
- Training—The Growing Place is committed to ensuring that staff are competent and skillful. To that end, all learning center staff is required to attend 30 hours of training and workshops per year of employment. We believe that a school’s excellence is ultimately measured by the quality of its staff, which is why we’re extremely selective when it comes to our teachers and employees. Every employee of The Growing Place is held to the highest standards and must complete a rigorous pre-employment screening process.

ADMISSION

Children are admitted into The Growing Place regardless of sex, race, age, color, religion, political affiliation, national origin, opinions or other non-merit factors.

The following forms are required on, or before the first day of the child's attendance in the program:

- 1) Completed Enrollment application.
- 2) Health Statement completed within the previous year and signed by both the parent/guardian and physician.
- 3) Copy of a current Immunization Record.
- 4) Emergency contact information on the enrollment application must be completed, including the names, address, and phone numbers of at least one (1) emergency contact(s), other than the parent/guardian.
- 5) Proof of hearing and vision screening on fourth birthday.
- 6) Payment of a registration fee and first week's tuition.

All forms may be obtained at our office located at 228 N Texas Ave Webster Tx 77598. Call the office at 281-316-9061 for further information.

Applications are accepted on a first-come-first served basis. In the case of the center reaching full enrollment, a waiting list will be established. To secure a spot on the waiting list registration fee as well as 1st weeks' tuition will be required.

DAILY PROCEDURES

The Growing Place is open from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. 12 Months of the year.

Our regular school year runs from Mid-August until the end of May.

Our summer program runs in June, July and the first half of August.

Schedules may be changed during the summer program. The minimum is three half days. We will not hold spots over the summer.

Our core curriculum hours are 9:00 to 12:30 p.m. You will be given a copy of the typical daily schedule for your child's class, upon request.

It is very important that children follow a consistent schedule and arrive to school before the educational portion of the day. This is for the benefit of your child and to prevent the disruption of other children's learning.

We are required to provide a nap every day that is quite and relaxing. In order for this to happen, children must be tired. Drop off must be before 10:00 to ensure this.

Consistent routines help prepare children for the transition to kindergarten.

PAYMENT PROCEDURES AND FEES

Registration Fees and tuition are non-refundable and non-transferable. Please understand that tuition is based on enrollment, NOT attendance. Registration is \$50.00 per family due upon initial enrollment and annually thereafter to re-enroll for the upcoming school year.

Tuition:

The charts below show the weekly tuition rate for each age group. Schedules must stay the same each week. A full day is 6am to 6pm, and a half day is 8:30 am to 12:30 pm.

	5 Full Days	4 Full Days	3 Full Days	5 Half Days	4 Half Days	3 Half Days
0-11 Months	\$220	\$205	\$180	\$180	\$165	\$150
12-17 Months	\$210	\$185	\$165	\$165	\$150	\$135
18-24 Months	\$195	\$175	\$155	\$155	\$135	\$105
2 Years Old	\$190	\$165	\$135	\$135	\$120	\$105
3 Years Old	\$175	\$150	\$135	\$135	\$105	\$90
4/5 Years Old	\$170	\$150	\$130	\$130	\$110	\$90

School Ager Group 5-11 years old		
Before School Only	\$70 5 days a week option only.	Add \$10 a day for early release. Add \$15 a day for school Holidays.
After School Only	\$90 5 days a week option only.	
Before and After School	\$100 5 days a week option only.	
Summer Camp and School Holiday Weeks, Spring Break, Christmas, and any other weeks		
5 Days	4 Days	3 Days
\$160	\$135	\$110

Tuition is due every Monday. All tuition should be paid on Brightwheel. Cash will be accepted in person, but all other payments must be paid on Brightwheel. In cases of illness or emergency closures, your payment is still expected. Tuition payments are nonrefundable.

The Growing Place reserves the right to increase tuition and other charges upon one month’s prior written notice.

Late Payment Fees:

- All tuition paid on Tuesday will be assessed a 10% late fee.
- All tuition paid on Wednesday will be assessed a 15% late fee.
- If tuition is not paid by Wednesday including late fees, the student may not return until balance is paid in full.

Late Pick-Up Fee:

Pick-up time is promptly at 12:30 p.m. for half-day children. Children who are not picked up by 12:45 will be given a nap and billed accordingly. \$10 extra if picked up before 3pm \$15 extra after 3pm

All children must be picked up by 6:00 p.m. A late pick-up fee of \$1.00 per minuteper child will be charged to you after that time. Please let us know if you will be late, so we can reassure your child. Calling The Growing Place to inform us that you will be unavoidably late does not waive your late fees.

Late pickup fees will be added to your account on Brightwheel and will be due on the same day as tuition is due(Monday). The above late fees will also be charged to you if another person is supposed to arrive to pick up your child and is late. It is your responsibility to have your child picked up on time. If you know you will be unavoidably late, it is your responsibility to have an authorized, alternate person pick up your child. We are only allowed to keep students up to one hour after closing. After that, we are required to call the police.

Absences:

Tuition must be paid in full, without deduction for absences of any duration or for any cause, and without substitution of other days of attendance. The part time schedule you chose must stay the same week to week. You may add a day if needed.

Please understand that tuition is based on enrollment NOT attendance.

Each family is granted one week of vacation time every year during which time they do not have to pay tuition. Two week written notice is required to use your vacation week. Each child must be enrolled for at least 3 months to qualify for a vacation week

Withdrawal:

When leaving The Growing Place, a two-week written notice is required to terminate the agreement. Payment is still due on Monday of each week whether your child attends or not.

The obligation for full payment of tuition continues until the date indicated by the parent or guardian as the date of withdrawal. The parent or guardian agrees to furnish The Growing Place with at least a two weeks written notice of such date of withdrawal.

TAXES AND RECEIPTS

All tuition payments are made through Brightwheel. Brightwheel automatically generates receipts that you can download and print at any time. All year end tax receipts will be on Brightwheel for you to print.

HOLIDAYS

The Growing Place will be closed in observance of the following holidays:

New Year's Day, Good Friday, Independence Day, Labor Day, Memorial Day, Thanksgiving (Thursday and Friday), Christmas Week

DROP-OFF/PICKUP/ CHECK-IN/CHECK-OUT PROCEDURES

To access The Growing Place, parents will be provided with a key code in order to enter. All children will be checked in and out by the teachers in the classroom on Brightwheel. Parents will need to escort students to class and knock on the classroom door. The teacher will receive the children and return them to the parents at the door of the classroom. Parents will only be allowed to enter classrooms if there is a specific need to do so. No child will be allowed to leave The Growing Place without being accompanied by an Authorized Person.

In an emergency, if you need to make arrangements over the phone to give permission for someone who has not been authorized to pick up your child, please ask to speak to an administrator. In all cases in which you authorize the release of your child to a person who has not picked up your child before, or whom is unknown to the staff member on duty, we will ask that person to provide appropriate picture identification. Parents may also update their pickup information on Brightwheel at any time.

It is normal for some children to have difficulty separating from parents, or cry when being dropped off. Please be very brief during drop off times because the longer you stay the harder it gets. A smile, good-bye kiss, and reassuring words that you will be back are all that is needed. In our experience, children are always quick to get involved in play activities as soon as their parents are gone.

It is critical to your children's education that they arrive prior to class starting at 9:00. Arriving late disrupts the learning of your student and the rest of the class. It is also very important for children to establish routines prior to starting kindergarten to ensure future school success.

Custody Issues:

Please let the school know if there are custody orders concerning your children. We do not have the right to withhold a child from any parent having custody or joint custody. In order to deny a parent from picking up their child, there must be a current, signed court order stating that they should not have access to the child and we must have a copy of the order in the child's file. The center cannot become involved in custody disputes; we cannot mediate or keep track of which parent can pick up on which days. We would be forced to dis-enroll a child if the school has to become involved in such disputes. We strive to keep The Growing Place a safe place for children; free of disagreements between parents.

SEPERATION

The Growing Place reserves the right to exclude the new enrollment of or terminate the existing enrollment of a child at any time, including, but not limited to, children whose behavioral and educational needs cannot be met at the Growing Place without fundamental alterations of or undue burden to our existing programs, procedures, or practices, as deemed by The Growing Place, and/or children whose fees and/or tuition payments are in arrears.

We will also try to give a 2-week notice of termination, but we reserve the right to terminate at any time for but not limited to:

1. Failure to pay fees or on time.
2. Failure to comply with policies.
3. Failure to complete forms in a timely manner.
4. Lack of communication between provider and parent.
5. Verbal or physical abuse of any person or property by child's parent, relative or friends.
6. Other reason seen fit by the director.

SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

The Growing Place provides transportation to/from local area schools for before/after school care. Check with the front office to see if your school is one we service.

Morning Procedures:

- Students must be INSIDE the daycare by 7:15. Children must be ready to leave at that time. If they need to eat breakfast here at daycare please arrive earlier.
- We cannot take any children from the parking lot. All children needing a ride to school must be dropped off before we leave the building. Once the group leaves the building we will not accept any more riders. This is for safety reasons.
- The morning van cannot wait for late arrivals. To ensure that we drop every child off to their school in time we have to keep a very tight schedule.
- Children may not eat anything while in the van. Breakfast must be finished by 7:15.
- Parents must walk your children all the way into the school. You may not drop them off in the office. Students must be dropped off to a teacher.

Afternoon Procedures:

- We will not leave a school without a child we are expecting. If a child will not need to be picked up, a parent MUST call the daycare (281-316-9061) by 1 pm. Failure to call the daycare will result in a \$10 no call fee added to your account. This balance must be paid before we will pick them up again.
- With normal traffic conditions all school runs will be back to the daycare by 3:45.
- Children may not be picked up from the parking lot. If a parent arrives to the daycare before the vans are back they must come into the office to get their child.

General Reminders:

- All children under the age of 8 are required to ride in a booster seat.
- All children are required to stay buckled the entire time they are in the vehicles.
- All children must remain facing forward, and keep voices low when talking to their friends.
- These are rules we go over with all of the children daily when they enter the vehicle. These rules are for the safety of everyone.
- When these safety rules are broken the procedure will be:
 - 1st time: Reminder of rules with Ms. Angie in the office.
 - 2nd time: Reminder of the rules with Ms. Angie and parents.
 - 3rd time: 1 day suspension from our vehicles.
 - 4th time: No longer able to transport the child to and from school.
 - Termination of care

OPEN DOOR POLICY

The Growing Place has an open door policy. Parents are welcome to drop in occasionally during regular business hours without securing prior approval to observe their child and/or the program, and even participate in activities. They are invited to read a book to the class, enjoy center time, and help in art projects.... However, please remember that younger children have a difficult time when parents come to visit and leave without taking the child with them.

We encourage and welcome parents to visit us and their child throughout the day; but we do ask you not to disturb the class during naptime. If it is necessary for you to pick-up your child during naptime, please let us know in advance, so we can minimize interruptions to the daily routine.

If you would like to have lunch at The Growing Place with your child, we ask you to arrange it with his/her teacher beforehand.

If your child is going on a field trip you may join the group as well. The parent will be responsible for any fees needed to participate in the trip, and are not permitted to ride in The Growing Place vehicles.

MEALS AND SNACKS

At The Growing Place we serve healthy, nutritious meals and snacks. Our weekly menus are posted on the refrigerator as well as on the front bulletin board. All foods and liquids hotter than 110 degrees will be kept out of children's reach at all times. We are on the food program so all students will be served a complete, nutritious meal including milk, protein, fruit, vegetable, and a grain item. We prepare enough for students to have seconds if desired. All food served is either commercially prepared or prepped in a kitchen that is regularly inspected by health officials. Lunch is served family-style at between 11:00 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Healthy snacks are served for morning and afternoon snack, and a full meal is served to school age children as they arrive. We do not serve breakfast. Children may bring breakfast from home and teacher supervision will be provided in the kitchen until 8:00. Children are encouraged to try new foods, but may refuse what they do not want to eat. Withholding food is never used as a form of discipline.

We reserve the right to substitute any menu item if the listed item is unavailable.

Parents may provide a labeled lunch or snack substitution for their child if there is a particular food he/she is allergic to. We also require a doctor's note confirming the allergy. We cannot refrigerate children's food that is brought from home, so for safety's sake, please plan accordingly and include an ice pack combined with an insulated lunch bag. We ask you not to send soft drinks, candy, gum, or anything high in sugar. These items will not be served.

Infants will always be fed according to their own schedule. Parents are required to write, date and sign monthly feeding instructions regarding children less than 1 year. Parents are to provide Breast milk, Formula (if they chose), and/or Baby Food. The Growing Place will provide 1 type of formula with Iron and some types of jar baby food if you would like to use that kind. All formula will be mixed according to manufactures directions, labeled with child's name. Any leftover formula will be discarded. **WE CAN NOT ALLOW MEDICINE OF ANY KIND TO BE MIXED WITH FORMULA.**

We support and encourage breast feeding. Breastfeeding mothers may come and feed their infant whenever they choose. Mothers are welcome in our infant room to breast feed where they feel comfortable. Mothers who choose to come to the school to breastfeed must also provide extra breastmilk or formula at the center in case Mother cannot make it to a feeding.

If your child is allergic to any foods, please let us know. We strongly urge you to monitor our menus for possible reactive foods. In particular, if your child has an allergy that can cause a life-threatening reaction such as anaphylactic shock, we urge you to work with our Director to make sure we have an agreed-upon plan for emergency situations. All staff members are educated of food allergies and take the precautions to ensure the safety of each student.

In infants and children, the most common foods that cause allergic reactions are the following:

- Egg
- Milk
- Peanut
- Tree nuts such as walnuts
- Soy
- Wheat

Please be mindful when introducing these foods for the first few times. There is new evidence to support introducing them earlier rather than later. Please discuss this with your pediatrician.

BIRTHDAYS

At The Growing Place we love to celebrate your child's birthday (unless notified otherwise). Please feel free to bring some refreshments such as cupcakes or a cake for a class party. Food items must be store packaged (home baked items are no longer allowed). Please let us know at least 2 days in advance of your plan.

PROPER DRESS

Children should be dressed in comfortable clothing that would permit them to participate freely in a variety of activities. Footwear is required at all times and closed footwear such as sneakers are required. Cowboy boots and flip flops are not allowed. Children are not permitted to go barefoot. Children should be provided with appropriate outerwear for outside activities. All outerwear should be clearly labeled with the child's name. We will go outside when the temperature is above freezing and under 100.

We encourage self-help skills. Younger children should be sent in clothing that he/she can fasten and unfasten by him/herself.

In the event of spills or toileting accidents, each child is required to have a complete change of clothes, including pants/shorts, shirt, underclothes, and socks, at the center. Each article of clothing should be labeled with the child's name and placed in a Ziploc bag. Parents will need to replenish used clothing. We cannot wash soiled clothing.

Please send your children dressed in clothes that give them freedom to get messy. We try to use only washable materials but sometimes they do not wash clean.

OUTDOOR PLAY AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The Growing Place strongly believes and supports the need for physical activity and outdoor play each day.

When children participate in physical activity every day, multiple health benefits accrue. Regular physical activity builds healthy bones and muscles, improves muscular strength and endurance, reduces the risk for developing chronic disease risk factors, improves self-esteem, and reduces stress and anxiety. Beyond these known health effects, physical activity may also have beneficial influences on academic performance. In addition, cognitive skills and motor skills appear to develop through a dynamic interaction. Research has shown that physical movement can affect the brain's physiology.

Infants will be given opportunities for physical activity, including supervised tummy time.

Toddler age children will participate a minimum of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.

Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten children will participate a minimum of 90 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.

School age children who are in attendance for a full day will participate a minimum of 90 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day. School age children who are only in attendance after-school will participate a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.

Opportunities for active play may overlap with outdoor play when weather permits.

The Growing Place will promote all children's active play every day. Children will have ample opportunity to do moderate to vigorous activities, such as running, climbing, dancing, skipping, and jumping, to the extent of their abilities.

All children will participate each day in:

- At least two occasions of active play outdoors when weather permits.
- Two or more structured or teacher-led activities or games that promote movement over the course of the day.
- Continuous opportunities to develop and practice age-appropriate gross motor and movement skills.

Physical activity may take place in the classroom or on the playground, when weather permits.

When participating in physical activity, children's clothing should protect them from sun exposure and permit easy movement (not too loose and not too tight) that enables full participation in active play. Footwear should provide support for running and climbing. Hats may be worn to protect children from sun exposure.

Examples of appropriate clothing/footwear include:

- Gym shoes or sturdy shoe equivalent
- Clothing for the weather, such as a lightweight, breathable jacket without any hood and neck strings.

Examples of inappropriate clothing/footwear include:

- Footwear that can come off while running or that provide insufficient support for climbing.
- Clothing that can catch on playground equipment, such as those with drawstrings or loops.

When weather conditions prohibit outdoor play, physical activities will occur in the classroom during the scheduled outside time. Classroom teachers have activities planned in advance for "rainy days".

This is a special time of the day to release energy and simply enjoy the physical rewards of active play. In the hot summer months, we schedule our outdoor playtimes early in the day to take advantage of the cooler morning temperatures. If you would like us to apply sunscreen or bug spray to your child prior to outdoor playtime, we will gladly do so, provided you supply us with your own bottles. Please make sure to write your child's name on the container with a permanent marker and give it to your child's teacher for safe storage. Please make sure you fill out the bug spray/sunscreen authorization form.

QUIET TIME AND NAPS

Childcare Licensing requires that all children be provided a quiet time to rest or sleep. Mats and cribs are provided. Each mat and crib is supplied with a cover sheet. Your child may bring a blanket for naptime but it must be small enough to be stored in his/her cubby when not in use. Please refrain from sending in large sheets, blankets, pillow pets, or sleeping bags.

The children have a 1½ to 2 hour naptime daily. While all children are encouraged to take a nap, they are never forced to sleep and may have a quiet, peaceful rest time instead.

CURRICULUM

Our curriculum is language and objective based, as well as age appropriate. Weekly lesson plans are written in all context areas including fine motor, gross motor, language, math, science, social studies, cooking, art, music, and sensory exploration. Lesson plans are hung outside of the classrooms for parents to view.

We believe that children learn best by actively participating in activities, you will see very few worksheet type activities.

We use themes to allow for inner related concepts to be webbed together leading to better understanding.

We strive for our activities to incorporate multiple senses to enhance learning.

SCREEN TIME

At The Growing Place we do not have TVs in our classrooms. We believe children need to use the time spent at school learning and playing. We do have educational learning tablets that we incorporate into our planned lesson activities. Children under two are not allowed to have any screen time. Tablet time is never more than an hour per classroom in older classrooms and is normally much less than that.

TOILET TRAINING

We recognize that toilet training is an important step in the early development of all children. When you believe your child is ready to begin the process, discuss what you plan to do with his/her teacher. The teacher will have suggestions to assist you. Your child will have the greatest success when parents and teachers work together in a consistent team effort. If the timing's right, it should be a natural progression, not an ordeal to worry about. Children who are in the process of toilet training must have three changes of clothing on hand every day.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

No drop-offs after 10 am will be accepted. If you have an appointment which would require a late drop off please call the office to make arrangements.

PARENT TECHNOLOGY

We request that parents limit their use of cell phones while in the building. This will improve communication between staff, children, and families and protect all of the students from overhearing adult conversations.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

It is your responsibility to make sure everything your child brings or wears to school has his/her name clearly written on it in permanent marker. All children love to bring personal items to school with them, but please understand we have plenty of toys and materials at our school already. If your child brings an item to school, it may be lost or damaged. Please leave all toys at home, unless it's something needed for a special assignment/project that has been previously arranged with your child's teacher.

Please do not send any toys, food, candy, gum, or pocket change with your child. If your child needs a special toy or item for sleeping that's okay, but it will remain put away until rest time.

HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

Emergency information:

Parents must complete the emergency contact information on the child's enrollment form, including the name, address, and phone number of at least one (1) emergency contact other than the parent/guardian, completed and signed by the parent/guardian. These person(s) should be available to pick up the child in the event that the parent/guardian is unavailable to pick up the child. Emergency person(s) should be available during the center operating hours. Parents should inform this person(s) that they have been designated as an emergency "backup" person for the child and inform them of the above mentioned responsibilities. Parents should keep the center informed of any and all changes to information regarding the emergency contact. Any changes to contact information may be done in person or emailed to the center at thegrowingplace1@aol.com or added by you on Brightwheel.

Procedure for Administering Medication:

We recognize the administration of medications is an important part of helping to maintain your child's overall state of welfare and health. We will administer all prescription medications that need to be administered more than two times daily. We do not administer medication "as needed" with the exception of allergy and asthma medications. We will also administer "as needed" sunscreen and other ointments and creams with parents approval and written instructions. Medication will be administered according to the following requirements:

All medications must be in their original containers.

For prescription medications administered more than twice daily, the pharmacy label with the child's and physician's names, the prescription number, dosage, and frequency must be current and legible.

For non-prescription medications with a physician's order, the child's name needs to be clearly labeled, must be in its original packaging and must specify the dosage, and its frequency. Parent must also indicate the time the last dosage was given.

The child must have received the first dosage of the medication prior to coming to the center. This is to ensure that the child does not experience any negative or allergic reaction to the medication.

With the exception of prescription allergy and asthma medications, medicine will not be administered on an as-needed basis. A specific time must be indicated on the authorization form. The times that we administer medication during the day are 11:30 and 3:30.

An "Authorization to Administer Medication" form must be completed in full by the parent and given, along with the medication, to an administrator. Forms are available in the office. Do not give medication or forms to your child's teacher. Clearly indicate if the medication needs to be refrigerated. We recommend you have your pharmacist prepare your child's prescription in two containers, one for home and one for school, in case you forget to take the prescription medication home at the end of the day.

Medication can be very dangerous in the hands of children and must NEVER be left in a child's backpack where it might be accidentally available to any child. We understand that sometimes children dislike taking medication and parents have become very creative in finding ways to administer medications. However, we ask that parents do not put any medications in their child's food or beverage.

First Aid:

Scratches and scrapes will be treated with soap and water then a band-aid if needed. For major emergencies that require the services of an Emergency Medical Team, the child will be transported by ambulance to the nearest hospital and you will be notified immediately. For minor emergencies, you will be notified and you will transport the child if medical treatment is needed. If circumstances warrant, and you cannot be reached, we will get in touch with your designated emergency contact.

Illness:

For children who become ill while at the center: parents will be contacted and the child could be sent home for the following reasons:

- Temperature of 101 degrees or greater.
- Vomiting
- Loose stools
- Onset of any suspicious rash
- Live lice or nits found on head. (May return once head is treated and nit free)
- If for any reason they cannot participate in the daily activities of the class, including outside play.

They will need to be picked up within an hour of contacting the parents.

When to Stay Home:

- The child has a temperature of 101 degrees or greater within the previous 24 hours. They must be fever free WITHOUT the aid of any fever reducing substance for 24 hours. Administering Tylenol to reduce your child's fever so that you can bring him/her to childcare is unacceptable.
- Persistent vomiting and/or diarrhea in the last 24 hours.
- The child has any rash or acute onset associated with fever or symptoms of illness.

Children must be able to participate in all of the classroom activities, including outside play in order to be at school.

Under NO CIRCUMSTANCES will parents be allowed to bring a sick child to our school. Sick children expose other children, as well as teachers. Do not bring your children if they are sick!

Accidents:

Parents will be asked to complete emergency information at the time of enrollment. If an accident should occur, prompt medical attention will be sought and parents/guardians will be notified. Parents/guardians will be asked to review and sign an Incident Report. A copy will be made available upon request. All minor injuries will be reported on Brightwheel.

Procedures for handling medical emergencies:

If your child becomes critically ill or has an injury that requires immediate attention of a physician, The Growing Place will:

1. Contact emergency medical services to take the child to the Clear Lake Regional emergency room;
2. Give the child first-aid treatment or CPR if needed;
3. Contact the physician identified in the child's record;
4. Contact the child's parent; and
5. Ensure supervision of other children in the group.

Emergency Closings: Notifications will be sent out on Brightwheel

1. If weather conditions warrant that CCISD is CANCELED for the day, then The Growing Place will be closed. Full tuition is due during all closures. This allows us to budget and continue to pay our staff. Tuition is based on enrollment, not attendance.

2. If CCICD closes early due to deteriorating weather conditions, procedures for emergency closing will go into effect as noted in "Emergency Closings".

3. Extended Closings Due to Inclement Weather—All information will be sent out on Brightwheel.

4. Emergency Closings—Program operation/closings is a decision made by The Growing Place's Director. If the emergency is a mechanical failure, natural disaster, or poses imminent danger to children and staff, we will contact parents immediately and request that children be picked up. If parents are unable to come for the child, the staff will call the emergency contact person designated on the child's enrollment form.

5. Fire Drills and Emergency Evacuation--Each month children and staff practice procedures to be used in the event of a fire or other emergency requiring escape from the center.

Fire: Should the fire alarm sound all children should exit the building through the safest direct route. Upon rendezvous at the designated spot, each teacher shall take attendance.

Flood: The Growing Place is well above sea level. Should flooding conditions prevail, parents will be notified to pick up children within 2 hours of notification.

Hurricane: We will not open for business if a hurricane warning is in effect before 7:00 AM. If conditions become ripe during the day, parents will be notified to pick up children within 2 hours of notification.

Chemical disaster: We will act upon the direction of the authorities in the event of chemical pollution. If children must be evacuated, the children will be relocated and parents will be notified from the retrieval point.

Radiation/Fallout: In the event of a nuclear disaster, we will act upon the direction of the authorities.

Tornado: Should a tornado warning be in effect for the Clear Lake area, all children will go into an area where there are no windows and sit on the floor. If wind damage occurs, each child will cover his/her face with hands and crouch low to the floor until the all clear is sounded.

In order to check attendance, the Director and teachers will carry the classroom tablets with contact information on them. Parents will be notified on Brightwheel and called immediately if necessary. Designated safe spot in an event the school must be evacuated will be across the street at the Physician's Hospital.

Audio and Video Surveillance:

For the safety of our children and staff every classroom, hallway, kitchen, playgrounds, and the messy room are monitored by video surveillance. The videos are observed daily by administration. Videos may be viewed by request of Texas Childcare Licensing or other law enforcement. Parents may also request to view video that relates to their child. Permission will be granted as long as it does not interfere with the privacy of other students. Under no circumstances may a parent put any sort of recording device on a child or in their backpack. This is for the privacy and safety of all of our students.

Change of Information:

Parents must inform The Growing Place of any change in address, place of work or telephone numbers. This is IMPERATIVE in the event that we must contact you because your child is sick or injured. Parents may update and contact information including emergency contacts on Brightwheel at any time.

DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE PHILOSOPHY

At The Growing Place, our philosophy is that children are instinctively eager to please. We believe that most children will learn to make appropriate choices when given the freedom to do so and some control over their environment. We strive to give children as much freedom as possible within a structure of very consistent and defined limits. It is our goal to have a happy, healthy, and safe educational environment for all of our children. Our methods of dealing with inappropriate choices are listed below. We begin with the least confronted action and progress to the most.

1. Ignore (if the behavior is minor and not harmful to people or materials.)
2. Redirect (this is done without giving any attention to the action.)
3. Offer choices (stated positively and giving at least two.)
4. Remove the child from the situation.
5. Logical Consequences
6. Assign Punishment

Time out- 1 minute per year of age

Losing privileges (no blocks today)

At The Growing Place we will try to accommodate all children in our program. If a challenging behavior persists we will try to remedy the problem by working with the parents to help make their child successful. If we are

unable to do so and a child continues to endanger themselves or others, they will be unable to return to our program. This is never our goal, but unfortunately is sometimes needed for the safety of the rest of the children.

No form of Corporal punishment will EVER be used or tolerated at The Growing Place. This includes parents disciplining their own children on our grounds. The Growing Place is a safe place for children.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parent involvement and participation are key factors of the success of our school. The Growing Place seeks to have on-going and regular communication with parents. Parents are encouraged to ask questions and express concerns at all times. Parents are invited to offer feedback about our programs anytime. Your suggestions and recommendations for how our programs can be enhanced will be appreciated. Sharing your concerns about the programs will be welcomed and addressed in a timely manner. Any concerns may be sent on Brightwheel and will be addressed by management. We also have a drop box in the office.

Teachers enjoy talking to parents. If you have a problem or concern, please schedule a conference with your child's teacher. You may also schedule conferences with the director. During the day, the teacher's job is the children. Lengthy conversations with parents are not possible when caring for children. You may also ask questions on Brightwheel. Please know that the teacher's primary responsibility is the children. They are not always available to answer quickly on Brightwheel.

Parents are also invited to multiple school events each year. These include the Halloween Carnival, Christmas Caroling, Easter Egg Hunt, field trips, their student's birthday celebrations, and others.

PARENT EDUCATION

We have a parent library that parents are welcome to borrow books from and pamphlets on multiple topics to hand out. We also regularly post articles for parents on Facebook. We are working with Collaborative for Children to start parent support groups in the future. Parents are also encouraged to borrow activity bags to do at home.

PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Cursing/Swearing:

Parents and visitors must understand young children are present in our building. Some adult language is not appropriate for young children and some adults. The Growing Place prohibits offensive words on our premises, this including but not limited to, swearing or cursing. Please also be mindful of music that may be heard from your vehicle when in our parking lot.

Threats and Confrontations:

From time to time, parents may have questions about their child's care and education. The Growing Place promotes open communication and discussion. We expect parents to handle disagreements in a calm and respectful manner. Threatening staff, children, or other parents will not be tolerated. The Growing Place has the right to terminate care in the event of disruptive behavior from any parent, guardian or visitor. In order to maintain safety, all threats will be taken seriously. In addition, all threats will be reported to the appropriate authorities and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

Discipline and Guidance:

The Growing Place must follow particular rules on discipline and guidance as outlined in the Texas Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers. All adults, including parents, must follow these rules while on our property. Regardless of a parent's personal belief on corporal punishment, failure to follow our discipline and guidance rules will lead to immediate termination of care. Please refer to our policy on discipline and guidance for further explanation of our expectations.

Use of Tobacco Products:

Per the Texas Department of Health and Human Services, the use of tobacco products is strictly prohibited on our premises. This includes, but not limited to, cigarettes, vapor devices and chewing tobacco.

Safety Practices:

The Growing Place has policies and procedures in place to maintain a safe environment for all children, staff and parents. Safety practices must be followed by all individuals on our premises. Violation of our safety policies will lead to immediate dismissal from our program. We ask that parents be mindful of safety practices at all times. This includes, but not limited to, allowing children to enter or exit the building unsupervised, allowing children to run in the hallways, opening the secured front door for individuals, and being mindful of personal belongings brought into the center during drop off and pick up time. Please remember that your children are your responsibility until you hand them to their teacher at the beginning of the day and after you take them from class at the end of the day.

Appropriate Dress:

Parents must be mindful of appropriate dress attire when on our premises. Young children and families have different values on what is appropriate or offensive. We want all families and visitors to feel comfortable when on our premises. Adults wearing offensive or inappropriate clothing, or lack of clothing will be asked to leave the property until appropriately dressed. Remember, some of our students can read.

Violation of Confidentiality Policy:

The Growing Place takes the responsibility of maintaining the confidentiality of all persons associated with our school very serious. Parents need to be aware of the confidentiality of all children, families and employees, not just their own. Any parent who shares any information considered to be confidential, pressures employees or other parents for information which is not necessary for them to know, will be considered a violation of the Confidentiality Policy and will be dismissed from the program.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are not only fun, but also educational for your child. At The Growing Place, field trips are a planned, regular occurrence for children 4 years old and older. Please be assured that safety while on a field trip is our main concern. We only take groups of a manageable size at one time in order to maintain a high level of supervision during the trip and while at the destination. Parents are always welcome and encouraged to accompany and chaperone our groups, however, parents may not ride in the center's vehicles. Parents may not take their child from the field trip if they chaperone. The child must return back to the school in the school vans. Children enjoy having mommy, daddy or grandma coming with us!

Field trip information will be given to you at least 48 hours in advance. Please note that any fees related to the field trip will be due prior to the field trip. Children must be at school and be ready to leave at the designated time. Each child must be wearing a school shirt and tennis shoes to participate. If you do not wish for your child to go on the field trip or they do not arrive at the center in time, the child must stay with the parent until after the group returns.

WATER PLAY

During the summer we will offer light water play. Light water play consists sprinkler play. On these days you will be responsible for providing a swim suit and towel for your child. Please make sure everything is labeled.

ANIMALS

Some of our classrooms have small animals for the children to observe and care for. This is an important part of their early education. We have animals such as fish, hamsters, guinea pigs, frogs, birds, rabbits, tadpoles, hermit crabs, rats, mice, butterflies and various insects. Any animal that requires vaccinations is up to date on them and safe for the students. The students will interact with the animals. If you do not want your student to interact with the animals, please provide us with a written letter. Your signing of the contract is your permission for your student to interact with the animals at the school. If any classroom will be acquiring new animals or have visiting animals, a notice will be sent out on Brightwheel at least 48 hours in advance.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEOS

We love to take pictures and videos of our students playing and learning. These will be sent on Brightwheel, posted on social media platforms, and used for advertising. Registration for our program is your permission to use images of your children. If you prefer that we do not use images of your student, please notify us at the time of registration.

SPECIAL COVID-19 POLICIES-DROP OFF AND PICKUP

At this time, all drop off and pickup of students is being handled outside of the classrooms. Parents may enter the building and go to their student's classroom. Please knock on the door and wait for a teacher to come assist you. For the safety of the students and teachers, we are not allowing parents into the classrooms currently. Please do not enter classrooms even if they are empty.

We are also asking that parents drop students off in the office if they arrive after 9 or leave before 4:30. These limits interruptions to classroom instruction and limits contact of parents when students are in common spaces.

As soon as Covid-19 is considered under control in our community, parents will be allowed to come and go as needed and enter classrooms.

If you have a need for emergency entrance into a classroom, it will be given.

Parents must wear masks when in the building and will also need to use the hand sanitizer provided in the front office.

I have received, read, and understand The Growing Place's Operational Policies and Parent Handbook. I understand the content and agree to abide by the terms outlined in the handbook. I understand that changes may be made to the policies at any time and I will be notified of any changes.

I also understand:

- The Growing Place hours are 6:00 am to 6:00 pm Monday through Friday.
- The Growing Place agrees to exceed DFPS Minimum Standards in terms of ratios, hygiene, and safety.
- The Growing Place agrees to have qualified staff.
- The Growing Place agrees to listen to any parent input.
- The Growing Place agrees to give a 10% sibling discount on full time students, and 5% on part time students. The discount will be taken from the oldest child's rate.
- Parents agree that a sick child will be picked up from school within 1 hour of being called, and kept at home until symptoms subside.
- Parent agrees to provide primary and alternate contact numbers in case of emergency.
- Parent agrees to update child history and immunization records immediately upon notification of incompleteness.
- Parent agrees to pay weekly fee prior to attendance unless other arrangements have been made with the director. Late payments must include a 10% late fee on Tuesday and 15% on Wednesday.
- Parents agree to pay for all calendar weeks except one vacation week, and the week the center is closed for Christmas. Students must attend The Growing Place for 3 months before they may use their vacation week. A two week notice must be given to use the vacation week.
- If a student leaves the program a two week written notice is required. If not given tuition is still due.
- Parent agrees to pay a late pick up fee of \$1 per minute after 6pm for full time students, and after 1pm for part time students.
- Parent agrees to care of vision and hearing screenings required by the state.
- Parent agrees to pay first week tuition to hold a spot for new children. Tuition deposits are not refundable.
- Schedule changes may be made for the summer months. The minimum schedule is 3 half days. Spots will not be held over the summer.

Students Name: _____

Weekly tuition rate: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Director Signature: _____ Date: _____

Date of admission: _____ Registration fee: _____

Please sign below if you will give permission for The Growing Place to use your students' image in school related advertising, Facebook, on Brightwheel, emails to parents, and displays in the school!

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

PARENT ORIENTATION CHECKLIST

Name of child(ren): _____

Name of parent or guardian: _____

- Opportunity to tour The Growing Place.
- Introduction to the staff working with your child(ren).
- Parent visit with the classroom teacher.
- Received a copy of the parent handbook which includes:
 - Policy of arrival and late arrival.
 - Explanation of the Texas Rising Star program.
 - Information on recourses available to TGP families.
 - The significance of consistent arrival time including:
 - Before the educational portion of the school day begins
 - Impact of disrupting other children’s learning
 - The importance of routines to make the transition to kindergarten.
 - Cell phone policy
 - Statement reflecting the role and influence of families.
 - Child development and developmental milestones

I acknowledge that I have received the information above.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Director Signature: _____ Date: _____