



PIONEER PATHWAYS  
LEARNING CENTER

# PARENT HANDBOOK

Revised February 2024

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Pioneer Drive Pathways Learning Center has been serving Abilene families and children for over 50 years. We became the first licensed day care in Abilene in the 1970's. Our program gives children ages 6-weeks through 8-years enriching opportunities to develop the whole child. The Learning Center is established to fulfill and to encourage the spiritual growth of children by providing a safe, loving, Christian environment in which to learn. We believe that early childhood should be a time of fun, exploration, and discovery. Our staff will strive to nurture and encourage each child to be the creative, unique individual God has designed them to be.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY:**

Pioneer Pathways Learning Center does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, religion, or national origin in admittance, education, or other administrative policies and this extends to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally made available to students enrolled at the center.

Pioneer Pathways supports our families and children who may need additional accommodations, to include home language, differing abilities and cultural backgrounds. Please notify the Director if you or your children require accommodations, and we will ensure that we do our part in making sure your needs are met. Please note: Our teachers and staff are not trained to care for some needs of children. We will do our best to accommodate our families and children within our abilities and trainings.

Below are ways that our program can partner with families.

1. If specific therapies are needed during the day while the child is in our care, we will provide space to accommodate sessions.
2. Participation in comprehensive care meetings, if needed.
3. Complete supporting documentation from authorized medical professional for any accommodations related to the child's physical or developmental needs.
4. Provide materials and resources in parents/child's primary language, if available.

## **REQUIRED POLICIES**

Pioneer Pathways Learning Center is licensed and regulated by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and is in compliance with their rules and regulations. The following policies are required by Child Care Licensing per "The Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers 746.501." A copy of the Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers and the most recent licensing report is available for review upon request. Please contact the director for any information.

To contact your local child-care licensing office, call (325) 795-5545, or write to:

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services  
Child Care Licensing  
4601 S. 1<sup>st</sup>  
Abilene, TX 79605

DFPS Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400

DFPS Website: [www.DFPS.state.tx.us](http://www.DFPS.state.tx.us)

## **MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR CHILD CARE CENTERS**

Pioneer Pathways Learning Center is licensed and regulated by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, and we follow the Texas Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers. Parents may review a copy of these standards in our front office or view the standards online at:

[www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Care/Child\\_Care\\_Standards\\_and\\_Regulations/default.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Child_Care_Standards_and_Regulations/default.asp)

## **HOURS OF OPERATION**

Pioneer Pathways Learning Center is open from 7 a.m.-6 p.m., Monday-Friday, year-round. **The office will be staffed from 8:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m.** We close to observe the following holidays: New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving (2.5 days) and Christmas (5 days). Full tuition is due for holiday weeks. We also have two In-Service Days that we close: March and August.

There are additional fees that will be applied to school age children's tuition for the days not listed above; these will be in your fees application that you received when you enrolled your child. Please see the calendar on the following page.

## SCHOOL CALENDAR 2024-2025

### 2024

March 15 – Closed	Staff Training & Cleaning Facility
March 30 – Closed	Good Friday
May 27 – Closed	Memorial Day
June 19 – Closed	Juneteenth
July 4 & 5 – Closed	Fourth of July
August 15 – Early Closing	Close at Noon
August 16 – Closed	Staff Development Day
August 19	Promotion Day
September 2 – Closed	Labor Day
November 27 – Early Closing	Thanksgiving Break Begins
November 28 & 28 – Closed	Thanksgiving Holiday
December 23 - 27 – Closed	Christmas Holiday *** Closed all week ***
December 31– Early Closing	Close at Noon

### 2025

January 1 – Closed	New Year’s Day
January 20 – Closed	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
March 14 – Closed	Staff Training & Cleaning Facility
April 18 – Closed	Good Friday
May 26 – Closed	Memorial Day
June 19 – Closed	Juneteenth
July 4 – Closed	Fourth of July

\*\*\* Dates are always subject to change. \*\*\*

In some cases, if the holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, Pioneer Pathways Learning Center may close the day before or the day after the holiday. Parents will be updated on each year’s holiday schedule in January. All closures are subject to change.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER CLOSURE POLICY**

Due to weather only, beyond our control, we will follow the AISD Schedule for openings and closings. However, when we open 2 hours late that will be determined from our opening time of 7a.m. (Ex. 2-hour delay-center will open at 9 a.m.)

We reserve the right to open or close at our own discretion for safety and health reasons. See Pandemic Policy for additional information.

Please listen to your local radio and TV channels for updates on openings and closings.

In case of serious emergencies such as earthquakes, fire, storms, or loss of power/water, parents will be notified, and children will be cared for until parents or emergency contacts arrive.

## **ADMISSIONS POLICY**

Pioneer Pathways Learning Center will accept preschool children age's six weeks through 5 years of age. We offer an after-school program for children in Pre-K through 3rd grade. Upon selecting Pioneer Pathways Learning Center to meet your child's educational needs, **all enrollment paperwork is required before the child can start our program**. Incomplete paperwork will not be accepted. Paperwork required for enrollment includes:

1. Application form
2. Copy of Child's Birth Certificate
3. Health Statement
4. Immunization Record
5. Parent agreement form
6. Parent Drivers Licenses
7. Medical forms
8. Transportation form
9. Child release forms
10. In some cases, a notarized custody declaration may be required
11. Registration fee of \$50 per child, an annual fee
12. First month tuition
13. Tuition Agreement
14. Safety Policy

## **QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS**

If parents have questions or concerns about our program, we encourage you to have open communication with your child's teacher and the Director of the facility. Through open communication, we can ensure that all parties are well-informed and working as partners in the child's education. If parents have a concern, we will ask that they fill out the parent concern form. These forms will only be accepted by the legal guardian of the child. Any other person that picks up the child will have to consult with the legal guardian who may then fill out a parent concern form for the Director of the center.

## OPEN DOOR POLICY

We welcome parents at any time; however, all parents must check in at the office after they have already dropped their child off or before picking up their child. We will not discuss center business in front of children for any reason. Pioneer Pathways Learning Center is a privately owned and operated facility; therefore, we reserve the right to refuse service to anyone for any reason.

## PARENT PARTICIPATION

We encourage parent involvement, especially on field trips and helping with class parties. Also, if you have a concern, please schedule a time to meet with the classroom teacher and/or the Director of the facility.

## PARENT NOTIFICATIONS

Open Communication with parents is very important to children's success. Pioneer Pathways Learning Center has multiple ways of communicating with parents. In some situations, parents may be asked to sign documents acknowledging that communication has taken place. Listed below are ways Pioneer Pathways Learning Center may communicate with parents:

- BrightWheel App
- Phone call
- Verbal communication with the child's teachers and director
- Website: [www.pioneerdrive.org/pplc](http://www.pioneerdrive.org/pplc)
- Written memos placed by your child's classroom
- Written memos located throughout the center and by entrance

## UPDATING CONTACT INFORMATION

It is your responsibility that we have updated contact information at all times. Correct phone numbers, correct address, authorized pickup contacts, immunizations, dietary needs, allergies, etc., as well as any changes that might change during your admission here at the Center. Child and family information can be updated in the office or on the BrightWheel website or app.

## ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

To ensure your child receives the full learning experience here at Pioneer Pathways Learning Center we encourage consistency and arrival on time. **Our learning time begins promptly at 9:00; children arriving after that time will not be able to attend for the remainder of the day.** Special circumstances may apply; however, we need to be notified ASAP.

- If a child will be absent from the center for any reason, please notify the center.
- If you are planning vacations or extended leave time for any reason, we must be notified in writing of dates you will be out. Not doing so could forfeit your child's spot and you could possibly be charged another registration fee and/or supply fee.
- A **two-week** written notice is required for all children prior to removal from the Center (see accounts receivable policy). Other charges could apply.



## ARRIVAL AND RELEASE OF CHILDREN

Per Texas state laws, parents have a right to access their child at any time. If a parent is unable to pick up their child, they may authorize another legal adult to pick up. Children will not be released to a minor for any reason. Authorized adults must be listed on the enrollment form to pick up and the authorized adult must bring a picture ID. Children will not be released to adults without a picture ID.

### ARRIVAL AT THE PIONEER PATHWAYS LEARNING CENTER:

- An adult must accompany a child into the Child Development Center each day.
- Children must be signed in using the app or the tablet at the classroom entrance. Failure to do so could result in a \$5 fee per offense. This is required by State Licensing of Texas.

### PICKUP FROM PIONEER PATHWAYS LEARNING CENTER:

- An authorized adult over 18 must pick up child.
- Children must be signed out using the app or the tablet at the classroom entrance. Failure to do so could result in a \$5 fee per offense. This is required by State Licensing of Texas.
- A picture ID must be shown to office personnel if someone other than the child's parent picks him/her up.
- Each child must be picked up no later than 6 p.m. Late fees are detailed in the **Accounts Receivable Policy**. Fee must be paid before child can return the next business day we are open.
- We highly recommend that children do not stay in the center longer than 10-hours per day. If there are special circumstances, please discuss this with the Director.

## ILLNESS AND EXCLUSION POLICY

Pioneer Pathways Learning Center observes the standards set by the Texas Health and Human Services for ill children. 26 Tex. Admin. Code § 746.3601 and guidance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Pioneer Pathways Learning Center reserves the right to temporarily deny any child admittance to the school for reasons of obvious illness, or to request early departure should symptoms become apparent during the day. Any child who seems unable to participate in our program for any reason will be sent home. This policy is to ensure the continued wellness of all children and staff at the center.

In the event of an outbreak of a highly contagious disease it is up to the discretion of the Director to close the center for cleaning and disinfecting.

*Children should not come if they are unwell.*

The following are the most typical criteria for exclusion. If your child meets any of these, they must be kept at home:

- Temperature of 100 or higher.
- Vomiting or diarrhea.
- Any signs of a pediatric illness, including Chicken Pox, German Measles, Scarlet Fever, Mumps, Upper Respiratory Infections, etc.
- Any eye infection, including pus, discharge as well as Viral and/or Bacterial Conjunctivitis.
- Any unexplained rash or skin infection
- Sore throat, including Strep Throat.
- Lice (may visit 24 hours following *initial* treatment)

- Illness that prevents the child from participating in childcare activities, including outdoor play.
- Illness results in a greater need for care than caregivers can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children.
- Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrollable diarrhea.
- If there is more than one sibling at the daycare ill in the household, the other sibling must also stay home for observation.

\*Due to COVID, children must be fever-free for 48 hours without fever-reducing medication. We also ask that if your child shows COVID symptoms, we receive a physician's note to allow your child to return to Pioneer Pathways.

Before returning to Pioneer Pathways, children must have a fever-free 48 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

The teacher or director will notify the parent for prompt pick-up if a child exhibits signs of illness while in our care. Our directors will decide whether the child must be sent home.

The contact listed on the registration form for the emergency pickup will be made if the parent is not available for prompt pick-up. The physician listed on the enrollment form will be notified if medical attention is urgent and neither the parents nor the emergency contact person can be reached. In the event of a serious injury or illness, the center will access 9-1-1.

## DESCRIPTIONS OF CHILDHOOD ILLNESS

### RASH

Any rash with fever other than a common diaper rash or skin irritation will require that child to be sent home for an evaluation and diagnosis from their doctor in writing. They may return to school based on that written doctor's clearance.

### INFLUENZA (FLU)

Flu signs and symptoms usually come on suddenly. The Flu is contagious and can be spread to other children and staff. Children who are sick with flu should stay home for at least 48 hours after they no longer have a fever or signs of the Flu without the use of fever-reducing medicine.

### HAND, FOOT, AND MOUTH DISEASE (HFMD)

Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease is *very contagious*. If your child is showing any symptoms for HFMD, they will be sent home. People with HFMD are usually most contagious during the first week they are sick. Sickness can range from 3-10 days but can last longer. Keep your child home from daycare until they have gone 24 hours without a fever *and* mouth sores *and* open blisters have healed over.

Most of the symptoms for HFMD include:

- Fever
- Eating or drinking less
- Sore throat
- Feeling unwell
- Drooling (more than usual)
- Only wanting to drink cold fluids.

- Rash, blisters or sores on their palms, mouth, hands, and soles of feet. The rash is not usually itchy and looks flat or slightly raised with blisters. The blisters contain fluid that can contain the virus that causes HFMD.

#### CONJUNCTIVITIS (PINK EYE)

Conjunctivitis includes eyes that are pink or red and have an unusual amount of discharge from or irritation to their eye(s) and must stay home the next day for observation. Before returning to school, they will need a written evaluation and diagnosis from their doctor.

If the diagnosis is BACTERIAL CONJUNCTIVITIS, the child must have received treatment for at least 24 hours prior to returning.

If the diagnosis is VIRAL Conjunctivitis, the child may return to the center **as long as there is no discharge**. If they do have discharge, they will be sent back home.

#### THICK WHITE, GREEN, OR YELLOW DISCHARGE

Thick white, green, or yellow discharge from the child's nose is often indicative of an infection, and they must stay home the next day for observation. Before returning to school, they will need an evaluation and diagnosis from their doctor in writing and at least 24 hours of treatment. The Department of Health and most doctors are of the opinion that once on antibiotics for 24 hours, the discharge is no longer contagious even though it may persist for up to two weeks.

#### DIARRHEA

Two or more loose bowel movements that are above the normal for that child. Children must be free from diarrhea for 24 hours with at least 1 regular bowel movement.

#### MOUTH SORES AND DROOLING

Mouth sores are common ailments that affect many people at some point in their lives. These sores can appear on any of the soft tissues of your mouth, including the lips, inside of your cheeks, gums, tongue, and floor and roof of your mouth.

Mouth sores, which include canker sores, are usually a minor irritation and last only 1 or 2 weeks. In some cases, they can indicate an infection from a virus. If we feel it is severe enough to have you clear them by a doctor, we will ask; this way we can assure everyone is safe from illness. Drooling can be common when teething; however, if there is a fever present, we will ask for you to come pick up your child. For more on mouth sores and drooling, please review Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease.

#### RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS INFECTION (RSV)

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) is a common respiratory virus that usually causes mild, cold like symptoms putting infants and some younger children in the center at risk for infection. People are usually infected with RSV and show symptoms within 4 to 6 days after being infected. RSV can lead to more serious health problems and is the leading cause of bronchiolitis and pneumonia in children younger than 1 year of age. Symptoms of RSV include:

- Runny nose
- Decrease in appetite
- Coughing
- Sneezing
- Fever

- Wheezing
- Irritability
- Decreased activity
- Breathing difficulties

You will be asked to come pick them up and get them seen by a physician as RSV is contagious and spreads fast. Your child would be able to return to the center after they are fever free or showing no symptoms after 24 hours or with a signed note from your child's physician with the diagnosis of your child, so we can protect those at a higher risk of infection and possible hospitalizations.

#### LICE

Head lice are tiny insects that feed on blood from the human scalp, they usually spread through direct contact. Common signs and symptoms include itching, seeing lice on scalp, lice eggs on the hair shaft or sores on the scalp, neck, and shoulders. Treatment products are available at your local pharmacy. Children will not be readmitted until 24 hours after treatment and must be nit free. The Director will make an evaluation and determine if the child can be readmitted.

#### BRONCHIOLITIS

Bronchiolitis is a common chest infection, that can be caused by a viral infection of the lungs. If your child has bronchiolitis, they should avoid contact with other people the first few days as the virus that causes bronchiolitis is contagious. If your child is showing signs and symptoms, they will be sent home and requested they see a physician for evaluation prior to returning. The virus usually runs seven to 10 days, and most infectious the first few days of the illness.

#### COMMON COLD POLICY

Every child with a common cold will receive individualized attention. The degree of development of your child in relation to our capacity to prevent the spread of germs is one factor to consider.

It is harder to stop the transmission of germs while your child is younger. For instance: touching your face with your hands, mouthing toys, sneezing, and coughing in public, etc.

We realize that most of you are working parents and we do try to accommodate you as much as possible. However, for the health and well-being of the children in our care and our staff we feel it is vital to maintain a strict wellness policy. We ask for parents to assist by keeping sick children at home. When children are sent home, we will ask you to take the child's belongings (nap mat, jacket, etc.) to be cleaned to help stop the spread of any virus.

While we do take into consideration your physician's recommendations, it is up to our discretion when your child may return to school.

#### MEDICATION

Please inform your physician that your child is in full-day or part-day preschool and that you prefer to give medications at home, morning, and evening. Knowing this, many doctors will order longer acting medications. Limiting medications dispensed away from home prevents medication errors. Please remember, Pioneer Pathways Learning Center is designed for healthy children.

If medications need to be administered at school, the following conditions must be met:

- Prescription medication will be accepted only if it is in the original container and hasn't reached its expiration date. All medications will be administered in the office.
- Nonprescription medication may only be administered by following the manufacturer's recommendation on the label. Medication must be in the original container and accompanied with a copy of the information given to you by the pharmacy.
- Medications cannot be pre-measured and added to baby's bottles or sippy cups.
- Before any prescription or nonprescription medication can be administered, including sunscreen or bug spray, we must have permission in writing by the child's parent or guardian. Please fill out the medication forms and enter instructions into the Daily Medication Logbook. Please bring a copy of the information given to you by the pharmacy.
- Medication needs to go home after the last date that the medication is administered.
- Health forms are required to be completed at the time of enrollment showing any allergies, physical handicaps, a statement of general health, and a current immunization history. These must be updated and kept current.
- Medication may be given to children with a signed medical information sheet. Forms are located in the office and in our BrightWheel App.
- Pioneer Pathways Learning Center will not be responsible for the exact timing of administering prescribed medicines.

## **PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING EMERGENCIES**

In case of minor injury or accident, the staff will administer basic first aid. Injuries or illnesses the director deems not requiring immediate parental notification will be documented and reported to parents when the child is picked up at the end of the day.

In case of medical injury or illness requiring immediate professional care, the staff will call 9-1-1, giving location and nature of emergency. As appropriate, the staff will administer CPR or first aid measures. Parents will be notified immediately. If parents are unavailable, those individuals designated as emergency phone contacts will be notified. All children must have an emergency medical release form on file in case of such an emergency. If a child ingests or comes in contact with a poisonous substance, the staff will contact the Poison Control Center.

## **SAFE SLEEP**

Per Standard 746.2427, "Infants not yet able to turn over on their own must be placed in a face-up sleeping position in the infant's own crib, unless you have a completed Sleep Exception Form that includes a signed statement from a health-care professional stating that a different sleeping position for the child is medically necessary." In keeping with this requirement, we have adopted the Infant Safe Sleep Policy:

Infants will be placed on their backs until they can roll over on their own. The only items allowed in the crib with the baby is a sleep sack and a pacifier with no string or toys attached.

## **DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE POLICY**

At Pioneer Pathways Learning Center, our goal is to maintain a safe and orderly environment in which your child can learn. Pioneer Pathways staff members are trained to use a positive method of discipline and guidance. Therefore, we place a great emphasis on encouraging appropriate behavior of children to help them develop self-control, self-confidence, self-direction. Some examples used in this situation include praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior, reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements and redirecting behaviors.

Pioneer Pathways Learning Center staff will never use corporal punishment or negative discipline that may hurt or humiliate a child. Parents may not use any form of corporal punishment on their child on the property of Pioneer Drive.

Research has shown that positive guidance teaches children skills, which help them get along in their physical and social environment. This aim is to develop personal standards in self-discipline, not to enforce a set of inflexible rules. Giving children understandable guidelines and redirecting their behavior helps them to develop internal control of their actions and encourages acceptable behavior. Positive cooperation is required from the family when dealing with disruptive behavior. We feel that consistency from all parties involved is the best way to handle these issues.

To ensure the safety of all participants and staff, Pathways Preschool staff will implement a positive discipline program. An effort is made to help children understand why some behaviors are not acceptable, and suggestions for more desirable behaviors are offered. Children involved in our program are expected to follow the rules and direction of Pathways staff. The following are guidelines used when disciplinary action becomes necessary due to unacceptable behavior.

Classroom expectations children are expected to follow are:

1. Be safe by keeping your hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
2. Be respectful and kind to others.
3. Be responsible for yourself and your play area.
4. Be a good listener, especially to your teacher.

Discipline will be:

- Individualized and consistent for each child.
- Appropriate to the child's level of understanding.
- Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control; and
- A positive method of discipline and guidance that encourages self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, including the following:
  - Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior.
  - Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements.
  - Redirecting behavior using positive statements; and
  - 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.

## Consequences of Behavior

- Positive redirection
- Verbal warning for specific unacceptable behavior
- Separation from group with a warning of future consequences for repeated behavior
- Separation from group with a warning and write-up for repeated behavior
- Separation from group with a call to parent or guardian and write-up
- Parent/Guardian conference to discuss corrective action and consequences for future incidents.
- Suspension - 1 to 2 days from the program and/or remainder of the day.
- Repeated aggressive/inappropriate behavior with 1-3 suspensions will result in removal from the program with approval from the Director.

## **SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION**

If the remedial actions above have not worked, the child's parent/guardian will be advised verbally and in writing about the child's or parent's behavior warranting a suspension. A suspension action is meant to be a period so that the parent/guardian may work on the child's behavior or to come to an agreement with the school.

The parent/guardian will be informed regarding the length of the suspension and the expected behavioral changes required in order for the child or parent to return to the school.

### PARENTAL ACTIONS FOR CHILD'S EXPULSION

- Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payment.
- Failure to complete required forms including the child's immunization records.
- Verbal abuse to staff.
- Parent threatens physical or intimidating actions toward staff members.

### CHILD'S ACTIONS FOR EXPULSION

- Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time.
- Uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts.
- Ongoing physical abuse to staff or other children.

Pioneer Pathways reserves the rights to withdraw a participant from the program if all discipline options have been exhausted and/or demonstration of extreme behavior that may put participants and/or staff in danger.

## **CHILD-TO-STAFF RATIOS**

Pioneer Pathways Learning Center follows State licensing ratios and will not be non-compliant on this unless under emergency situations and even then, it will be on a temporary basis.

## **NAP TIME**

Supervised rest periods are provided for all children under five years of age who remain at Pioneer Pathways Learning Center for six or more hours a day, and for all other children who show a need for a rest time. Please provide a nap mat, clean blanket and sheet for naptime and take them home Fridays for washing. You may also bring in a special blanket, pillow, or stuffed animal if desired, but they must be able to fit in your child's cubby.

## **CLOTHING**

Preschool children must have a complete change of clothing, clearly marked with the child's name, left at Pioneer Pathways Learning Center. Preschool children need to be dressed for the weather. Caps, mittens, and warm clothing must be worn during the cooler seasons for the daily outdoor playtime. Accidents can happen, even for the older preschoolers, when they wait too long before going to the bathroom, or if they get wet on the playground. If a change of clothing is not provided, we will place clothing and or diapers that we have on hand as to keep children properly clothed. We prefer closed toed shoes. Children must always wear shoes, including nap time.

## **PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

Parents must supply all bottles, diapers, wipes, and any ointment for their child. Please label everything with your child's first and last name. We use washable crayons, markers, and paint during art time, but the children's clothing may get stained from just being kids! Please dress your children in play clothes since PLAY is what we do!! Please leave all valuable items at home since Pioneer Pathways Learning Center cannot be responsible for broken or lost items. Please label child's belongings. We cannot be responsible for items lost.

## **FOOD SERVICE & PREPARATION**

Good nutrition is vital to children's overall development and well-being. In an effort to provide the best possible nutrition environment for the children in our facility, Pioneer Pathways Learning Center follows childcare nutrition policies to encourage the development of good eating habits that will last a lifetime.

We follow a healthy eating pattern that includes the following:

- A variety of fruits and vegetables.
- Whole grains.
- Fat-free and low-fat dairy products.
- A variety of protein foods.
- Oils.

We do not charge an extra fee for meals or snacks. Pioneer Pathways Learning Center provides breakfast for all children present by 8:15 a.m., any child not here before 8:30 a.m. will need to eat prior to coming to school. **Due to the serving of breakfast in the classrooms, we ask that no additional outside food be brought into the center.** Lunch time begins approximately at 11 a.m. and ends approximately at 12 p.m. Afternoon snack is served after the rest period around 3 p.m., and again at 4 p.m. for the school-age kids as they arrive after school. Menus are sent home at the beginning of the month. Please advise the center of any allergies. If a child requires an alternative meal or substitution due to allergies, 1. We would need a



doctor's note and 2. you, the parent, must supply this meal. It does need to follow the dietary guidelines of the state food program. You are more than welcome to send lunch anytime you wish, however, it must follow the dietary guidelines designated by the state food program.

Low-sugar snacks and treats are encouraged for holiday/birthday parties.

**Please do not send candy to the center.**

**\*\* We are a peanut free facility. \*\*** Please be aware of this when you bring snacks for special events.

## **BREASTFEEDING**

Pioneer Pathways Learning Center will provide a comfortable place with a seat for mothers to breastfeed their child if they choose to do so. Parents may also provide breast milk for their child to be served while in our care.

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides federal grants to states for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age 5 who are found to be at nutritional risk.

We can provide you and your family with more information about our programs that are offered within our church and outside that can benefit your family.

## **IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS**

Immunization records must be current for all children enrolled in the Infant-Toddler, Preschool and Pre-K programs and a copy must be in the child's file. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that your child's immunizations are current. Failure to keep children current on immunizations may lead to dismissal. We are currently using the ImmTrac2 system, and you will receive a form upon enrollment that will allow us to pull your child's records.

From time-to-time Pioneer Pathways Learning Center may have children enrolled that have not received immunizations due to personal belief. A notarized affidavit must be on file for these children.

## **TUBERCULIN TESTING REQUIREMENTS**

Based on local health department guidelines, proof of TB testing is not required in order to be enrolled in our program.

## **HEARING AND VISION SCREENING**

Hearing and Vision Screening is required by the Special Senses and Communication Disorders Act, Texas Health & Safety Code, Chapter 36, for children who are 4-years old. Pioneer Pathways Learning Center will schedule annual screenings at our school. Parents may also bring in screening proof from their local pediatrician.

## **FIELD TRIPS AND TRANSPORTATION**

School-age summer programming will often have weekly field trips. Transportation for field trips may be by school van, bus, or walking. Parents will be notified in writing of any field trips requiring transportation by van. For children that are required to have car seats, we will ask for parents to provide those so children can be in their personal car seat.

In addition to our regular program, age-appropriate field trips will be planned.

- Information will be posted 48 hours in advance of these activities.
- Parents who want to participate on a field trip must be cleared through a screening process. The Department of Human Services mandates this requirement.
- If the Director deems a child's behavior a safety risk for themselves or others, they will not be allowed to attend the field trip, therefore not able to attend the center that day.

State law requires:

- Vehicles transporting children shall be in safe operating condition and drivers shall have a current Texas Driver's License.
- Children shall be loaded and unloaded at the curbside of the vehicle, or in a protected parking area.
- A child shall not be taken on field trips unless a parent or guardian has signed permission forms.

We do not guarantee that we will take any field trip at any time. This is an extra activity within our program. We will inform parents if we can accommodate this activity.

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN**

Each Room has a copy of this plan above the light switch.

Below is the Emergency Preparedness Plan designed for Pioneer Pathways Learning Center. Parents are encouraged to read this information carefully. In the event a parent is present in the building during an emergency, Pioneer Pathways Learning Center will ask parents to participate accordingly.

During any emergency the best course of action is to BREATHE AND STAY CALM, know how many children you have, and have your sign-in and sign-out log and transition sheet in your hands.

If you have children of your own in the facility, but in another classroom, trust that their teachers will take care of them just as you are taking care of the children in your care.

### **TORNADO/BAD WEATHER**

- Stay calm. Watch the kids, not the situation.
- Get your sign-in/sign-out sheet and your transition sheet and stuff it in your clothing. Grab your emergency backpack.
- Take all of your children to the music suite. Have the children sit as close together as possible and have the children duck and cover. This will be familiar to the children since we practice this each time, we have a severe weather drill.
- Infant classroom: we place babies in two cribs and cover the top with a mattress from another crib. Place mattress sideways across top of the crib and huddle next to it. Role the cribs to the music suite.
- Stay there until advised that the bad weather has passed.

- It can be helpful to quietly sing songs with the children to help them keep calm.
- The Director in charge will monitor local weather stations and the weather alert radio for updates.

#### COMMUNICABLE DISEASE OUTBREAK

All staff members will vigilantly follow policies and procedures regarding diaper changes, toileting, handwashing, food preparation and general common-sense measures such as keeping surfaces clean, changing bedding, teaching children how to cover coughs and sneezes, etc. to prevent the spread of germs that cause illness.

- In the event of an outbreak, the Director, or person in charge, will notify the Health Department and Child Care Licensing to inform them of the situation and ask for instructions and guidelines to follow for specific illness or outbreak.
- The Director, or person in charge, will inform all staff members of instructions and guidelines and require them to follow the same.
- The Director, or person in charge, will also notify all parents about the situation in writing within 48-hours as required by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and Child Care Licensing.
- All staff is to follow the school's confidentiality policies when speaking of the above outbreak. Any violation of the confidentiality policy is grounds for immediate termination.

#### LOCK DOWN (INCLUDES WEAPON, HOSTAGE INCIDENT, INTRUDER, TRESPASSING, DISTURBANCE)

The Director, or person in charge, will announce over the intercom, "Lock Down" or other discrete code and will call 911. The director, or designated person, will supervise the front desk at all times during the incident, if possible.

Upon hearing this, or sooner if you are aware that an intruder has entered the building or immediate vicinity, say calmly to the children a discrete phrase, such as "Rabbits in the Hole"; the children will know what to do because you practice this every month.

Infant classroom: Place babies in two or three cribs with a few quiet toys. Place another empty crib or two in front of your classroom door. This might cause an intruder to change his/her mind about entering your classroom.

- First Plan of Action is to remove the children from the building as safely as possible.
- Get your sign-in/out sheet and your transition sheet in your hands and stuff them into your clothing.
- First Plan of Action is to remove the children from the building as safely as possible.
- Close all your classroom doors and lock them if possible.
- Turn off the lights.
- If you have reason to believe that no one else in the center is aware of the danger, and you can safely do so, use the intercom to calmly announce the secret code for "Lock Down".
- Whisper and remind the children "we are to be very quiet."
- Do a name/face check silently.
- Keep the children and yourself safe, in place, and away from all interior and exterior windows.
- Watch the children, not the situation!
- If the intruder enters your classroom, do not argue with him.
- The Director, or person in charge, will ensure that all building entrances and exits are locked and that no unauthorized individuals leave or enter the building.
- Await further instructions from the Director, or person in charge, or emergency personnel.

## ACCIDENT

- Breathe and stay calm.
- Make sure all children are supervised. If you are alone, tell them to sit down near you.
- Comfort the child by speaking in a low, quiet voice.
- Apply first aid as needed.
- Call the office if you need further assistance and/or the Director, or person in charge to call 911
- If the child is bleeding profusely, apply pressure to stop the bleeding. (In an extreme case, take off the child's shirt and use that.
- If injury is to the head or face, report it to the office immediately - even if it is minor.
- Complete an Accident/Incident Report and have the parent sign it when the child is picked up.
- Turn the Accident/Incident Report into the Director, or person in charge, before you leave on the same day.
- Keep the Accident/Incident Report confidential while in your presence.
- Parent's may request a copy of any incident report in their child's file.
- In the event of serious illness or injury involving an adult, contact the office and the Director of the facility, or the designated person in charge, will call 911 and/or the person's emergency contact.
- Any incident or illness that requires the child to see a medical professional within 48 hours must be reported to the center director, which will then be reported to State Licensing.

## PANDEMIC POLICY

### INTRODUCTION

We place special emphasis at Pioneer Drive Baptist Church Child Development Center on our employees as individuals and recognize that no manual can cover all situations.

### ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

Upon arrival at Pathways Learning Center, the parents or the adult dropping the child off must sign the child into care on the sign-in sheet located at the front door. A health check will be completed on both the child/children and parent/adult. If either present with a temperature above normal or signs of a possible illness, the child will be excluded from care. Children will be dropped off in our foyer and escorted to class by a member of management or designated staff. Parents are encouraged to drop off at the front door but may enter the facility if necessary.

### ILLNESS EXCLUSION

Children will not be admitted into care if they have the following symptoms:

- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea that cannot be contained in a diaper

When children are ill, they must not return to the facility until they are symptom free without medication for **48 hours**. If the ill child has a sibling, they must be out as well. If your child has experienced any of these symptoms in the last 48 hours, please keep them home!

#### FEVER POLICY

If a child is sent home sick from our program, they may not return until the child is symptom and/or fever free for 48 hours **WITHOUT** fever-reducing medication.

\*DISCLAIMER: Not all thermometers read the same. We will do our best to monitor the child's temperature if it is low-grade. If we feel it is necessary for the child and the Center, the child will be sent home.

#### PANDEMIC TUITION POLICY

Should the Center need to close for pandemic reasons, full tuition will be due for the first two (2) weeks of closure. If the Center is closed longer than two (2) weeks, 50% of tuition will be due. Parents may give a notice to withdraw from the program if they feel it is in the best interest of their family. If you choose to withdraw from the program, a full registration fee will be required to re-enroll in the program after the pandemic. If you wish to hold a guaranteed spot for your child, you will be required to pay 50% tuition to hold that spot.

#### DISCLOSURE STATEMENTS

I understand that outside of care, in order to control my child's exposure in the community, I will comply with any and all state, county, or local stay-at-home orders.

I will immediately notify Pathways Learning Center management if I become aware of any person with whom my child or I have had contact exhibits any of the symptoms listed above, is advised to self-isolate, quarantine, or has tested positive, or is presumed positive, for COVID-19 or any other infectious illness, whether or not I have had direct contact with that person.

#### OUT OF THE COUNTRY TRAVEL

Parent will notify Pathways Learning Center management any time they have traveled outside of the United States. Pathways Learning Center has the right to exclude the child from care if they or a member of the household has traveled to a country that has been identified by the CDC as an "at risk" country.

#### EMPLOYEE ILLNESS EXCLUSION

Employees will not be allowed to work if they have the following symptoms:

- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell

When employees are ill, they must not return to the facility until they are symptom free without medication for **48 hours**.

## FOOD SERVICE

Children will be served individual plates of food. Family style meal service is discouraged until further notice.

## PERSONAL PROTECTION EQUIPMENT

Employees may use Personal Protection Equipment such as masks, gloves, and face shields, as needed, as long as this is done in a way that does not harm or scare the children.

## EMPLOYEE DISCLOSURE STATEMENTS

I understand that outside of the Center, in order to control my exposure in the community, I will comply with any and all state, county, or local stay-at-home orders.

I will immediately notify Pathways Learning Center management if I become aware of any person with whom I have had contact exhibits any of the symptoms listed above, is advised to self-isolate, quarantine, or has tested positive, or is presumed positive for COVID-19 or any other infectious illness.

## TUITION AND FEES

The Pioneer Pathways Learning Center shall provide a fee schedule at the time of enrollment stating tuition fee, registration fee, and summer activity fee. All fees, unless authorized by the Director of the facility, will be payable prior to child's attendance.

### Tuition is as follows:

- Infants up to age 2 years: \$750.00 per month
- Toddlers: \$685.00 per month
- School Age (School Year) \$250.00 per month
- School Age (Summer Care) \$685.00 per month
- Older Sibling Discount 10%

\$50 enrollment fee is due for each infant through Pre-K will be due at time of enrollment and each September for fall enrollment.

\$30 a month field trip fee will be added to your tuition during the months of June, July, and August for school-age children only. This will not include any money you choose to send for concession stands.

There may be times that we ask for additional fees that would apply to field trips and/or special events.

The annual fee goes toward the administration costs and other costs incurred when enrolling a child to the center.

All tuition and fees for any new child enrolled in the Pioneer Pathways Learning Center must be paid in full prior to attendance.

All fees for any returning child enrolled in the Pioneer Pathways Learning Center must be paid in full each September prior to promotion for the new school year.

Each family will receive one key fob for the safety doors. Any additional fob may be purchased from the office for \$10. When you return your key fobs (\$10 ones) that you paid for, you will be reimbursed by a check within 15 days of withdraw or dismissal. If you misplace any key fob, it will be a \$25 fee regardless

of how many you have received. **(Please notify office immediately of misplaced fobs so that it may be deactivated.)**

Everyone who needs access to the children's area must have a key fob.

## **LATE FEES**

Arrangements must be made to pick up children on time. There will be a \$5 per minute charge that a child is left at the center past his/her scheduled pickup time. This fee must be paid before the child can return the next business day we are open.

Late fees must be paid as incurred for the child to remain in care. Consistent tardiness may result in the loss of childcare space in the program. During holidays and early closures, late fees can be doubled at the Center's discretion.

## **DISMISSAL POLICY**

The Child Development Center reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child and refuse service at any time. Children also can be dismissed for the following reasons.

1. Non-payment or excessive late payments of fees.
2. Not observing the rules of the center as outlined in the parent agreement.
3. Child has special needs, which we cannot adequately meet with our current staffing patterns.
4. Physical and/or verbal abuse of staff or children by parent or child.
5. We have the right to refuse service to anyone at any time.

## **DROP-IN FEES**

Pioneer Pathways Learning Center will provide drop-in care on a space available basis at current rate of \$50 per day per child, with an additional \$25 per sibling. We will need to have all necessary paperwork before child can begin care.

## ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLES POLICY

1. Tuition covers the current month. Tuition must be paid for the current month to maintain enrollment.
2. Pioneer Pathways Learning Center tuition is due on the first of each month. Pioneer Pathways Learning Center tuition may be paid in three different ways: (1) full payment for one month, (2) split monthly payments payable in two equal installments.
3. We require our payments through our Automatic Draft Program. Every family must set this up before the child enters the facility as a student.
4. To guarantee a spot in our program a non-refundable deposit in the amount of half the tuition for that room is due as a guaranteed placement of child. This payment will not be applied to future tuition, this is a payment in itself. This is not required, if you would like you can choose to take a chance on our waiting list. If you are on our waiting list, you will not be guaranteed a spot in any room in our center. If someone else comes in and enrolls in a spot hold, that will bump you down the list.
5. The split tuition will be paid in two payments as follows:
  - a. The first half of the monthly tuition is due before the 1st
  - b. The second half of the monthly tuition is due before the 20th
6. Consideration of other payment arrangements must be made in writing to the Director of the facility and approved by the Pathways Learning Center Committee.
7. Tuition is considered late if not paid by the due date. A flat 10% charge will be assessed.
8. For bi-monthly payments, on or about the 20th of the month the Business or Finance Officer of the facility will make contact with every family having an outstanding balance. The family will be provided with a copy of the invoice at this time.
9. For monthly payments, on or about the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month the Business or Finance Officer of the facility will make contact with every family having an outstanding balance. The family will be provided with a copy of the invoice at this time.
10. Failure for non-payment will result in the dismissal of the child from the Pioneer Pathways Learning Center. All fees must be paid without deduction for absences.
11. We do not give refunds or credit of any kind. Examples are: holidays, sick children, spring breaks, dismissal of a child when full childcare has been paid for, transferring out of center before the end of the month. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Director.
12. The Pioneer Pathways Learning Center Committee must approve any acceptations to the Fee and Payment Policy and/or Accounts Receivable Policy.
13. In the event of a NSF check return, a \$50 "Insufficient funds" check penalty will be added to the account immediately following notifications. If Pioneer Pathways Learning Center receives 3 or more NSF checks or ACH returns in a one-year period of time, your enrollment may be terminated.
14. If you do not give proper two-week notice of withdrawal, for any reason, you will be charged \$75.
15. Any child attending after the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month is required to pay full month tuition. We do not prorate care for early withdraw regardless of the circumstances.



## **COLLECTIONS**

If for some reason your child's account is not paid in full on leaving or dismissal, we will attempt to collect this debt in the following ways: Fees will be assessed to the families account in addition to amount owed.

1. Phone Call
2. Letter
3. Certified Letter
4. Collections Office

## **ADDITIONAL FEES**

A non-refundable annual registration fee of \$50 is due at the time of enrollment and every October. During summer months and holiday times, an activity fee may be charged. Activity fees are for additional activities outside our normal planned curriculum. Parents will be notified 30 days in advance of activity fee options.

## **REFERRAL PROGRAM**

We greatly appreciate your business and know that you will be pleased with our service, and you will tell your friends and acquaintances about us! If one of those families decides to enroll their child(ren), we will credit your account the amount of one (1) week's tuition after that family has been with us for 30 days. The referred family must mention the referral at the time of the initial visit to our program. Our greatest advertising asset is you!

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

While your child is enrolled in our program, parents may come across confidential information about our program, our staff, and sometimes other children. All information received from Pioneer Pathways Learning Center must remain confidential at all times. Breaching confidentiality may lead to disenrollment.

## **PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **CELL PHONES**

We ask that you refrain from being on your cell phone as you enter the building. We do not allow our teachers to use their phones due to it being a distraction from supervision of the children; therefore, we ask the same of you as you drop off and pick up your child. They need your undivided attention.

### **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. Pioneer Pathways Learning Center 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. Pioneer Pathways Learning Center 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. Pioneer Pathways Learning Center 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

Pioneer Pathways Learning Center 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 is not limited to, cigarettes, vapor devices, and chewing tobacco.

## SAFETY PRACTICES

Pioneer Pathways Learning Center 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 is 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.

## 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.

## VIOLATION OF CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Pioneer Pathways Learning Center takes the responsibility of maintaining the confidentiality of all persons associated with our school very seriously. 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.

## OUTSIDE RELATIONSHIPS

While your child is enrolled at Pioneer Drive Baptist Church Child Development Center, there will be no outside relationships, dating, or intimate, with any Center employee. Violation of this policy will result in your child's immediate withdrawal from the Center along with the termination of employment of the staff member.

## PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Children must be signed in and out by the custodial parent or adult person approved by the parent(s). Parents who continue to fail to sign their children in or out could be dismissed. Please understand that due to liability issues, staff of Pioneer along with the termination of employment by the staff member is not permitted to take children home from our center.

Per Licensing Standard 746.631 If a parent fails to **SIGN THEIR CHILD IN**, they will be charged a \$5 penalty fee. Licensing Standard 746.631 is found on page 25 of the minimum standards for childcare centers. We will add this fee to your bill and payment will come out first before tuition is paid.

In order to not confuse school toys with a child's personal property, we ask that children not bring playthings from home. Staff cannot be responsible for lost or broken personal toys. Two exceptions to this are a stuffed animal for use during naptime by full-day preschool children and for Show & Tell purposes. You will be notified by your child's teacher if and when the class will have Show & Tell. Pioneer Pathways Learning Center and any associated entities will not be responsible for any lost, broken, or stolen items while at the center.

There are several ways you can help us maintain the best possible teaching atmosphere for your child:

- Communicate any concerns regarding our program or your child immediately to staff.
- Pick up and read the notices and information left for you in your child's folder and/or posted outside your child's classroom, at the reception desk, or via e-mail.
- Pick up your child's papers/projects daily. Their work is very important to them and provides another means of communication between parent and child and helps the parent share in the child's day.
- Please be aware of the scheduled mealtimes of breakfast and lunch, 8:00 a.m.-8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.-12 p.m., and make sure your child arrives in time to be included in those meals, if necessary. It is very difficult to try and feed a child later than the scheduled mealtime, and causes a disruption in the classroom schedule, which affects all the children in the classroom.
- Please do not allow your child to bring gum or candy to the classroom. We strongly encourage you to allow your child to eat what we are serving that day, unless food allergies are a concern. In that case, we ask that you bring a note from your physician. Any food brought from home will only be served at the same time that the other children are eating and **MUST** be taken home at the end of the day.
- Periodically check on your child's supply of diapers, wipes, and clothing. Please take-home soiled clothing promptly.

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services does not allow smoking on the premises, either indoors or outdoors.

## **WITHDRAWAL FROM PRESCHOOL PROGRAM**

Two-week written notice must be given for withdrawing a child from Pioneer Pathways Learning Center. If a family fails to give a two-week notice on the form that we provide, Pioneer Drive Baptist Church Child Development Center has a right to charge for the remaining weeks to the family's account plus a \$75 penalty for failure to submit a withdraw form that can be obtained in the Pioneer Pathways Learning Center office. Pioneer Pathways Learning Center has a right to refuse service to any family for any reason. **We do not prorate care if you choose to withdraw after the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month.**

## **CUSTODY SITUATIONS**

Pioneer Pathways Learning Center WILL NOT get involved with custody disputes. Pioneer Pathways Learning Center will follow a court order exactly as written. If your family has a court order on file, please provide us with the most recent copy. PLEASE NOTE: PER STATE LAW, IN THE ABSENCE OF A COURT ORDER, BOTH PARENTS HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS. With this being said, it is imperative that all enrollment forms are completed with both parent's information. A copy of the child's birth certificate must be on file. In the event that a custody dispute takes place on our property, the local police will be called and asked to handle the dispute. Our staff will not be placed in the middle of such disputes. If a custody issue creates a risk for our facility or staff, Pioneer Pathways Learning Center reserves the right to terminate care.

## **PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES**

We strive to make your child's experience at Pioneer Pathways Learning Center a positive one. One of the ways we do this is with Parent-Teacher conferences. Teachers could possibly ask for times that they can meet. Parents can also request a conference at any time by using a conference request form provided in the office. We will do our best to have date and time set in a timely manner. However, we do have an open-door policy with any of our office personnel of the facility at any time he/she is present. Meetings must be scheduled in advance.

## **CURRICULUM**

Pioneer Pathways Learning Center utilizes Frog Street curriculum from ages 2 up to Pre-K. Frog Street is a comprehensive, research-based program that integrates instruction across developmental domains and early learning disciplines. The program is engaging for both teachers and children and focuses on the following cornerstones: conscious discipline, social and emotional development, differentiated instruction and a joyful approach to learning. Pioneer Pathways Learning Center wishes to fulfill and encourage the spiritual growth of children by providing a safe, loving, Christian environment in which to learn. Our curriculum is a bible-based curriculum that also adds some secular studies with monthly themes. Pioneer Pathways Learning Center believes that children learn best through actively engaging with people and things in their environment. Children are involved in hands-on experiences, real-life adventures, and assisted discovery as they explore concepts through play. We believe that early childhood should be a time of fun, security, exploration, and discovery. Our staff will strive to nurture and encourage each child to be the creative, unique individual God has designed them to be.

On Wednesday mornings from Labor Day through Vacation Bible School we will have Chapel in the Allen room (carpet side) for the upstairs classrooms. We will have the two-year-old rooms join us in the spring.

Each teacher will have their daily, and/or monthly schedules posted in the classroom. This schedule will also be posted in the BrightWheel App.

#### PROMOTION OF INDOOR AND OUTDOOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Pioneer Pathways Learning Center strongly believes and supports the need for physical activity 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.

Pioneer Pathways Learning Center 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:

- 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. Children are highly encouraged to wear closed-toed shoes with rubber soles. This will help ensure the safety of the children. 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.

Physical activity will take place on the playground, in the gym, or in the Allen Room. Toddlers ages 15 to 24 months will have physical activity time in the atrium. When weather conditions prohibit outdoor play, physical activities will occur in the classroom during the scheduled outside time. If a teacher deems it unsafe to go outside, they will provide alternative indoor physical activities planned for "rainy days".

## **SCREEN TIME**

We do not allow screen time for our children under the age of two.

On occasion we will use a screen time activity to supplement, but not replace, an activity for a child who is 2 years and older. The appropriate screen time must meet the following requirements: related to the planned activities, age appropriate, does not exceed an hour a day, not used during mealtimes, nap time or rest times, does not contain violence, or advertising and is turned off when not in use.

Other times we can offer screen time might include special days: such as holidays, national days, birthdays, and weather days. The screen time is not to exceed an hour a day.

## **WATER ACTIVITIES**

Occasionally, we may have water activities such as sprinklers, splashing/wading pools, slip-n-slide, inflatables, and water table play here on campus. These activities will take place in the courtyard area and under the covered parking. Parents will be notified in writing before the event takes place. It is important that parents inform staff of any special needs of the student such as ear plugs, special sunscreen lotions, swallowing water, seizures, etc. We want the student's water activity experience to be a fun and safe one. Water activity permission forms are included in the registration form and must be signed and dated.

## **CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENTS**

Classroom assignments are based on each individual child's chronological age, developmental age, emotional age, and physical age. Pioneer Pathways Learning Center typically will transition children to new classrooms twice a year, however from time to time we may request a transition sooner based on the individual child's needs and or availability in other classrooms to continue the nurturing process of the child developmentally.

## **OUTDOOR PLAY**

Outdoor play is a regular part of the daily routine. Children should be prepared to play outside some part of every day. Please do not request that your child stay indoors. Per the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, children too sick to go outside should not be at school. **Children may not wear flip-flops due to the danger these shoes may cause on the playground.**

## **BIRTHDAYS**

Most children enjoy celebrating special events with their preschool friends (birthdays, new babies, and holidays). Parents may send a “store bought” treat to share with the class. Please make arrangements with the teacher several days in advance.

## **SCHOOL SAFETY POLICIES**

Parents **MUST** personally escort their child(ren) inside the building to sign in and out when their children enter and leave the facility. See Arrival and Release of Children Policy. Each classroom has a window for viewing activity from the hallway. Parents are welcome to visit the Center any time during the day to observe their child, with office consent. However, if you would like to stay and spend time with your child during activities, please see the office so we can do a proper criminal history check, as required by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Exceptions to this include:

- Pandemic
- Emergency crisis, such as:
- Lockdowns
- Weather crisis
- Other emergency situations

We will not deny you access to your child; however, in an emergency situation, we need to protect your child.

Our facility is equipped with a fire sprinkler system and fire drills are practiced monthly.

You will be notified of any incidents other than minor scrapes or bumps with a phone call. We will also give you a written report at pick up time. First aid will be applied to minor incidents. In the event medical attention is required, we will notify you immediately. Parents are responsible for all medical fees.

Children must be signed out by an authorized adult each day. They must be signed out from their class regardless of the class’s location. Children will not be brought to the office for pickup. See **Fees** for more information regarding failure to sign children out.

## **PHOTOGRAPHS**

Pioneer Pathways Learning Center believes in the benefit of using real life pictures in our educational program. Photos taken of the children will be done with a school owned camera and will only be used in our program. If parents choose to take pictures of events held at our program, they may only photograph their child, unless written permission is given by the other parent. Please note: during certain parent events such as Pre-K graduation, Christmas programs, and arrivals, photographs may be taken. If you do not wish for your child to be photographed, you may want to remove them from these events.

## **CYBER IDENTITY/SOCIAL NETWORKING WEB SITES**

Cyber identity and social networking are very exciting these days. However, please understand that employees of Pioneer Drive Baptist Church Child Development Center are prohibited from participating in social networking with parents and children regarding center business. This includes, but is not limited to, all social media sites.

## **BITING**

Biting is a common issue in early child development. Toddlers may bite when they feel stressed. They may bite as a strategy to get a toy or bite to show frustration. The message the toddlers are sending with biting behaviors is "I know no other way to get what I want or express my frustration. Help! I am stressed and overwhelmed."

The best way to deal with biting is consistency between providers and parents. Biting could occur for multiple reasons. Pioneer Pathways Learning Center will work with parents when biting becomes a problem. We will make every effort to solve the issue as soon as possible. If the issue cannot be worked out Pioneer Pathways Learning Center will reserve the right to dismiss the child.

## **CELL PHONES**

Proper parent communication is imperative when working with young children. It is difficult to communicate when cell phones are in use. Effective December 1, 2010, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services passed new regulations prohibiting the personal use of cell phones in classrooms. Please help us stay in compliance with Licensing Standard 746.1203 Division 3, Subchapter #6(D)<sup>d</sup>.

We do not allow our teachers to use their cell phones to communicate with our families at the Pathways Learning Center. If you need to visit with your child's teachers, please contact the office and set up a conference time that suits you both. Violation of this policy will result in your child's immediate withdrawal from the Center along with the termination of employment of the staff member.

## **OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT: EXTRACURRICULAR BABYSITTING**

We discourage Center staff members from accepting extracurricular babysitting jobs from parents at our Center. Our teachers are childcare professionals and deserve to be treated as such and should not be viewed as babysitters by parents. In addition, after spending a busy day with children at the center, all staff members need free time away from the children and vice-versa.

We must ensure that all children and parents at the center are treated equally. Teachers who babysit the same children could naturally display favoritism toward those children or parents, however unintentional. Such favoritism is unfair to the rest of the children and parents and would be considered disruptive and unethical behavior. Babysitting for a Pathways Learning Center family will be permitted as long as the following conditions are met:

- The Director reserves the right to approve an employee outside employment with a family.
- In no way will any extracurricular babysitting arrangement be permitted to interfere with the daily operations of the Center. Parents and staff members must make all such arrangements on their own time away from the Center. Staff members will not be permitted to accept or make telephone calls for this purpose.
- Extracurricular babysitting will not be allowed to interfere with the employee's ability to perform his/her duties at the Center.
- Under no circumstances will staff members be permitted to take children home from the Center.
- Staff members are prohibited from babysitting during Pathways Learning Center's operating hours.
- Staff members *MAY NOT* discuss any aspect of the business of PLC with a family.



- Staff members will not solicit customers from Pathways Learning Center either for babysitting, in-home childcare, to nanny for, or for any other reason.
- Pathways Learning Center will not be held responsible for any actions or circumstances resulting from any interaction between its staff members and customers that occur away from the center.
- Pathways Learning Center reserves the right to direct any employee to terminate any babysitting arrangement that they determine is not in the best interest of, or is having a negative impact on, the Center, its staff members, or clients.

We realize that some teachers enjoy babysitting and need the extra income that they earn from doing so. We encourage our teachers to babysit for families that do not attend Pathways Learning Center.

## **STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

Participation in training is required for our staff to retain employment with the Center. It is mandatory that Employees of the Center attend training meetings held by the center; an exception to this policy will only be made for staff who have provided a class schedule demonstrating that they will be in class during the training and/or meeting hours or have obtained a note from their doctor for an excused absence. All staff members are required to maintain a current Infant/Child and Adult CPR certificate along with a current First Aid Certification

Our staff of Pioneer Pathways will be expected to complete and document their training file with a minimum of 36 hours of professional growth training each calendar year, however staff must complete 24 hours of training in the first ninety (90) days of employment. All new staff must be trained in the requirements of the Texas DFPS Policy Manual, the facility's childcare policies found in the Employee Handbook, Operations Manual and Parent Handbook, the Frog Street Curriculum, the procedures to follow in handling emergencies, and the use of all fire extinguishers. Emergency Maps and Exits will be displayed throughout the Center.

Individuals hired as a teacher will also receive training on building parent relationships, classroom management and leadership skills during their first (90) days of employment.

Directors must complete and document their training file with a minimum of 36 hours of professional growth training each calendar year; with a minimum of 6 hours in program administration, management, and supervision.

Staff must complete and document their training file with a minimum of 30 hours of professional growth training each calendar year. Training topics may be selected from the following areas:

- Child development
- Adult and child safety
- Nutrition and safety
- Curriculum planning
- Risk management
- Identification and care of ill children
- Recognition of child abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse, and the responsibility of reporting incidents
- Professional development
- Parent relations
- Licensing policies
- Parent communication system (currently implementing)

Each staff member is required to go through a thorough "Employee Training Plan" that will enable them to become familiar with Pathways. This training is documented in each employee's person training folder.

Below are some of the items to be discussed during Orientation.

- Texas Rising Star program and criteria
- Policies of the Center
- Overview of the developmental needs and expectations in the assigned age groups
- Planned daily activities
- Ministry Safe, Child Abuse Program
- Food Handlers
- First Aid and CPR
- Child Abuse and Neglect

Each staff member when completing a specific training will receive a certificate stating the Training, the Trainer, the hours received and the date the training took place.

## **CONCLUSION**

We at Pioneer Pathways Learning Center know that you trust us with your most valuable treasure, your child, and we strive to serve our families the absolute best in preschool education and childcare. We believe that excellent early childhood development is the foundation for a bright future for our children at Pioneer Drive Baptist Church Child Development Center.

The Pioneer Pathways Committee and the Director of the Center review and update the handbook and its policies annually.

Our current handbook is located on our website at: [www.pioneerdrive.org/pplc](http://www.pioneerdrive.org/pplc)

A hard copy can be requested from our office.

# RECEIPT AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF PIONEER PATHWAYS LEARNING CENTER PARENT HANDBOOK

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND RECEIPT OF PARENT HANDBOOK

I have received and read a copy of Pioneer Pathways Learning Center’s Parent Handbook. I understand that the policies and benefits described in it are subject to change at the sole discretion of Pioneer Pathways Learning Center at any time.

I further understand that I must follow all aspects of the manual.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Child 1

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Child 2

\*\*Keep this page for your records.

# RECEIPT AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF PIONEER PATHWAYS LEARNING CENTER PARENT HANDBOOK

Please read the Parent Handbook located at [www.pioneerdrive.org/pplc](http://www.pioneerdrive.org/pplc) and then sign and return this page to the Pioneer Pathways Learning Center Office.

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Date

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Name of Child 1

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Child 2

\*\*Return this page to the Pioneer Pathways Learning Center Office.