

Emmaus Catholic Parish Early Childhood Education Program



2026-2027 Family Handbook

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ECEP- A Ministry of Emmaus Catholic Parish

Our Mission

The Emmaus Catholic Parish Early Childhood Education Program (ECEP) is a ministry of Emmaus Catholic Parish, serving families with children ages 2 to 5 years.

We provide a child-centered, developmentally appropriate program founded on the stages of early child development where the whole child—physical, spiritual, emotional, social, and intellectual—can grow and thrive in a nurturing Catholic environment.

Rooted in current research on early child development, our program emphasizes learning through play. Our classrooms are where *authentic* learning takes place through hands-on learning centers that foster discovery, creativity, and a love of God while helping children explore the world around them.

Enrollment is open all children regardless of race, nationality or religious background, with priority given to registered parishioner families.

Our Goals

- Foster a faith in God, with empathy, acceptance and respect for self and others.
- Encourage children to think critically, reason, question, experiment and develop self-regulation and decision-making skills.
- Provide authentic opportunities for children to learn through play.
- Create centers for learning that inspire wonder, creativity, and problem-solving, supporting each child's spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and physical growth.
- Cultivate a loving and safe environment for all children.

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Overview of the Program

Our Governing Body

Our program is a ministry of Emmaus Catholic Parish in Lakeway, Texas. The program is run by the Preschool Director who reports directly to the Chief Operating Officer of Emmaus, Deacon Mark Fair.

The program is licensed by the Texas Department of Health and Human Services.

Our Staff

Each ECEP staff member receives 24 – 48 hours of training each year. In addition, new staff receive 8-16 hours of training before entering a classroom. All staff are certified in CPR and first aid and have completed the Diocese of Austin's Ethics in Ministry training which includes a background check. Teaching teams meet weekly to discuss such topics as discipline and guidance, curriculum, emotional and social development, health and safety and more.

Our Facility

Our program is located at 1718 Lohmans Crossing Road on the grounds of Emmaus Catholic Parish. Classrooms are located in the Parish Life Center rooms 101, 102, 103, 104, 105 A & B, and 201. Our hours of operation are Tuesday to Friday 9:15AM to 2:00PM. The PLC is a multi-use facility shared by various organizations of the church, including, but not limited to, Faith Formation, Bright Horizons, Adult Formation, the Music Ministry and various prayer groups.

Our playground is clean, spacious and furnished with safe and age-appropriate playground equipment. It also has covered shade over the majority of the playground.

Our Curriculum

Our curriculum is based on the High Scope model of intentional teaching, whereby teachers and children are active partners in the learning process. Adult-child interaction is the process of working alongside children and communicating with

them both verbally and nonverbally to encourage learning. One of our most important strategies for adult-child interaction is sharing control with children: creating a balanced climate where adults and children are partners in the learning process.



The classroom is divided into interest areas stocked with a stimulating range of materials designed for specific types of play. These materials are arranged in consistent places and the shelves are tagged with child-friendly labels so that children can get out and put away materials themselves. Even the outdoor play area is considered part of the learning environment and is arranged and equipped to support all areas of child development.

There are five main content areas for learning activities: 1) approaches to learning; 2) language, literacy & communication; 3) social and emotional development; 4) physical development, health and well-being; and 5) arts and sciences.

Learning is not simply a process of adults giving information to children. Rather, children discover things through direct experience with people, objects, events and ideas. They learn best by pursuing their own interests while being actively supported and challenged by adults. The five ingredients of this active learning are 1) materials; 2) manipulation; 3) choice; 4) child language and thought; and 5) adult scaffolding, supporting the child.

The daily routine is a consistent framework for the day that provides a balanced variety of experiences and learning opportunities. The most important segment of the daily routine is the Plan-Do-Review sequence, in which children make choices about what they will do, carry out their ideas, and reflect upon their activities with adults and other children.

You will find a weekly development plan posted in each classroom on the parent information board.

Teacher / Student Ratios

ECEP ratios allow us to guarantee that each child receives individual attention and quality care.

Preschool Twos Ages 2-3s class: 2 teachers per 8-10 students

Preschool Threes Ages 3-4s class: 2 teachers per 10-12 students

PK4 Ages 4-5s class: 2 teachers per 12-14 students

Program Calendar

The program runs from Tuesday, August 25, 2026 through Wednesday, May 19, 2027. We follow the Lake Travis ISD calendar for major holidays (Thanksgiving week, Christmas, Winter and Spring Break). On LTISD elementary early release days, our program will be closed. Our calendar also reflects 2 parent/teacher visits and other activities happening at ECEP.

Operational Policies and Procedures



Preparing for Separation

Transitioning into a new environment can be difficult for some children and parents. The staff will help you and your child adjust. The following are suggestions to ease the transition:

- Introduce your child to his/her teachers and friends.
- Talk with your child about their teachers and friends.
- Develop a routine and follow it each time.
- **ARRIVE ON TIME** and make good-byes brief.
- In order to help build a trusting relationship between your child and teacher (especially if your child has difficulty separating), give your child a hug, assure your child that you will be back, and then leave quickly. We recommend that you DO not linger or prolong the goodbye.
- Encourage your child to be independent. Upon arrival, allow them to put their own lunch, snack and water in the appropriate containers, wash their own hands and then find a table activity in which to engage.

Arrival

DROP OFF IS BETWEEN 9:15 AM-9:30 AM. Parents should be lined up in the carline ready to drop off their children beginning at 9:15 AM. Teachers use

the time before 9:15 AM for preparation. We ask that those families arriving earlier than 9:15 AM wait in their cars for the car line drop off to start.

Children are escorted to the classroom by a teacher each day from the carline area. *Each child is to wash their hands when they enter the classroom.* The children should be encouraged to place snack and water bottles in the appropriate baskets independently. Lunch boxes and other items should be placed in the child's cubbie. **All children will be signed in and out each day electronically by a teacher.**

We **highly** discourage late drop offs because this disrupts the classroom. In addition, the child arriving late usually has difficulty adjusting to the day's school routine. It is at the teacher's discretion to admit the child to the classroom at the appropriate time. Therefore, the parent must wait outside with the child until the appropriate time determined by the teacher.

Dismissal

Children should be picked up **no later than 2:00 PM**. Children are dismissed from the classroom and are to be picked up by a parent or caregiver at the classroom door. **Any changes to pick-up must be in writing through Brightwheel, our parent communication system. If an emergency situation arises, and you will be late picking up your child from school, please call the school at 512-261-8500 EXT 305 as soon as possible to make proper arrangements.**

Our teachers use the time from 2:00-2:30 to prepare for the next day, so any child not yet picked up by 2:05 PM will be escorted to the foyer (and be under the supervision of the Director and/or the Director's Administrative Assistant) for pick-up. In the event that a child is picked up after 2:10 PM, **a late pick-up charge of \$10 per 5 minutes late may be assessed.**

Parent Supervision

Parents are responsible for the supervision and safety of their children *before and after school hours*. This includes while in our building and on our church property. Emmaus ECEP assumes responsibility for the child when the parent/guardian drops off the child and until the parent/guardian picks up the child from the classroom at the end of the day.

Inclement Weather/School Closings

Emmaus ECEP follows the Lake Travis ISD bad weather schedule. In the event that Lake Travis ISD closes due to bad weather, Emmaus ECEP will also be closed.

If Lake Travis ISD has a delayed start, Emmaus ECEP will have the same delayed start as the Middle and High Schools. If LTISD's delay is after 11am, Emmaus ECEP will be closed for that day. Parents will be notified via Lillio for confirmation of late starts or closings.

In the event that the school must close due to an emergency situation, a schoolwide message will be sent to inform parents.



Student Absences

Please use Brightwheel to notify the school if your child will be absent from school. **There is no refund of tuition or make-ups for days that a child misses due to, but not limited to, illness, school holiday(s), vacations, parent/teacher visit days, teacher in-service days, or school closures due to inclement weather or emergency situations.**

Discipline and Guidance

We use the Conscious Discipline model in our approach to classroom guidance. It is an emotional intelligence program based on current brain research, child development information, and best educational practices that teaches children how to positively react or respond to situations. Everyday life events are used as teachable moments and guide children to develop self-control, self-regulation, and conflict resolution skills to boost self-esteem and foster positive relationships and

social skills. Conscious Discipline is specifically designed to teach helpfulness (pro-social skills), cooperation, empathy, and problem solving while utilizing tools for anger management, impulse control, and assertiveness.

Conscious Discipline promotes a positive relationship-based community in the classroom. As we develop our “school family,” students will learn about physical and emotional safety, trust and problem solving.

In our classrooms, students learn through:

- Creating a School Family
- Cultivating higher order thinking skills through brain smart activities
- Class meetings
- The 7 Basic Skills of Conscious Discipline
- The Safe Place
- Meaningful classroom jobs
- Instant replay center
- Celebration station
- Friends and family board

The following discipline and guidance are prohibited:

- Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment
- Punishment associated with food, naps or toilet training
- Pinching, shaking or biting of a child
- Hitting a child with a hand or object
- Putting anything in or on a child’s mouth
- Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting or yelling at a child
- Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive or profane language
- Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom or closet with the door closed
- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for a child’s age

Health and Safety Policies

Illness



Every effort to prevent the spread of disease is made by the ECEP staff. This includes frequent hand washing by children and teachers. Care is taken to disinfect diaper changing areas after each change.

The following guidelines are set by the Texas Department of Family & Protective Services in order to protect your child as well as others from contagious illness. While we regret the inconvenience caused by strict adherence to these guidelines, our concern for all the children dictates a conservative approach when dealing with health matters.

If a child becomes ill:

1. The parent will be notified immediately and is expected to pick up their child within 30 minutes of being called.
2. In the event a parent cannot be reached after a period of time, a person listed on the child's emergency contact list will be notified and asked to come for the child.
3. The child will be in the director's office until picked up.

A child will be sent home if any of the following symptoms are seen:

- Fever over 99.6
- Pink eye with discharge
- Vomiting
- 2 diarrheas over the course of 2 hours
- Head lice or nits
- Rashes with fever
- **Any other condition the Director deems necessary** for the well-being of the child and the other students.

If a child has been ill and must stay indoors, it is required that the child be kept at home until he/she is able to participate fully in all of the daily activities

of the program. No child is allowed to stay in the office or with another class during this time.

If your child's physician diagnoses your child with a contagious disease or illness, please notify the school immediately.

Severe Allergy and Emergency/ Prescription Medication Policy

Children with serious medical issues such as, but not limited to, asthma attacks or severe allergic reactions, must have a Medication Authorization Form in their file (signed by parent and the child's healthcare provider) allowing our staff to administer the emergency medication should symptoms occur at school (i.e. Benadryl, or Epi-pen, rescue inhaler). If the child's allergy requires emergency medication, such as an Epi-Pen, a Severe Allergy Action Plan must be submitted prior to the first day in attendance. Parents are to provide all necessary medications and documentation. Children with documentation requiring emergency medication will not be admitted to school without the medication on site at all times, for this reason we do not permit emergency medications (Epi-Pens) to travel back and forth between home and school each day. Severe Allergy Action plans must be on file and updated every 6 months.

Medications

Medications will not be administered at Emmaus ECEP. If a child needs medication, the parent must return to the program and administer the medication.

If you wish for your child to have sunscreen or insect repellent, it must be applied by the parents prior to the child arriving at the program.

Immunizations

Emmaus ECEP requires students be fully immunized according to the Texas State Health Department Schedule. ECEP requires all records be on file with our school prior to the first day of class and must be signed by a healthcare professional who has examined the child within the past year. If you/ your child's physician prefers to delay these immunizations, you must submit an original notarized state affidavit accompanied by signed documentation from the pediatrician stating the planned dates to obtain vaccination(s) that will be kept in your child's file at ECEP. You may request the form by going online to the following website: <https://co->

request.dshs.texas.gov Please visit <https://dshs.texas.gov/immunizations/school> for current immunization requirements for Texas childcare centers.

Texas Administrative Code, Title 25 Health Services, §§97.61-97.72

Children in our program are required to have the most updated shot records on file prior to the first day of school.

Any time your child receives an immunization, please give a copy of the record to ECEP as soon as possible for your child's file.

Hearing/Vision Screening Report

All children 4 years and older, are required by the state, to complete a vision and hearing screening with numeric results. Please obtain a copy of these screenings from your physician. Parents must submit the report from this screening to ECEP within one week of the child's start date, or the child will not be admitted to school. For children that will turn 4 after their initial start date, it is the parent's responsibility to make sure this screening is completed and that ECEP has a report on file within one week of the child's 4th birthday. You may ask your pediatrician to fax these directly to our office.

For your convenience, Emmaus ECEP offers on-sight hearing and vision screenings in the fall of every school year.

At this time, the state of Texas does not require TB tests for children in Travis County.

Field Trips

Currently, Emmaus ECEP does not participate in off campus field trips or transport children to events outside of the Emmaus Catholic Church grounds. Any future field trips would be with parents transporting their own children.

Emergencies

The following steps have been put into place for emergency purposes:

In the event of a medical emergency, a child's emergency care card (yellow form) will be activated.

1. Parents are notified in the order listed on your emergency care card.
2. If parents cannot be reached, ECEP will contact the individuals listed on the child's emergency care card.
3. If no one can be reached, the child's physician will be called to determine what action should be taken.
4. If the emergency requires immediate medical attention, EMS will be called to transport the child to the nearest medical facility.

Tornado

In the event of a tornado, staff will escort all children to our tornado evacuation site in the Parish Life Center (multi-use room A) located off the main foyer entrance. Drills are practiced four times a year.

Fire

In the event of a fire, Emmaus ECEP staff will evacuate children from the classrooms using our primary or secondary routes (see classroom maps) to our main evacuation site which is the front entrance of the church. In the event that the front of the church is not safe, the staff will go to our secondary evacuation location which is the rosary garden next to the church office. Drills are practiced monthly.

Lock Down

In addition to fire and tornado drills, Texas Minimum Standards requires that we practice lock down drills four times a year. We practice two types of lock-down scenarios with the children: a "stay-in place" drill where we resume activities but remain in our classrooms with the doors locked and an "intruder on campus" drill where we secure the children in the classrooms out of visual sight.

In the event we need to evacuate the campus, ECEP will relocate to Lakeway Christian Church.

Release of Child to Authorized Persons

All children in our program are **only** released to parents or guardians listed on enrollment paperwork. If someone other than the normal caregiver is picking up the child, that person must be listed on the child's list of authorized people to pick up the child **AND** the parent will need to notify staff through Brightwheel. **All changes to pick-up must be made in writing through Brightwheel, our parent communication system.** All pick-up persons are asked to show their driver's license when picking up a child for the first time. In the event of an emergency, the center will use your child's Emergency Care Card for pick-up.

Child Abuse

All teachers are required, under the Texas Family Code, Section 34.01, to report any suspected cases of child abuse to the Department of Human Services Protective Services office and a local or state law enforcement agency.

Clothing

Children need to be sent to school in clothing that allows them to move freely and easily both inside the classroom and outside on the playground. Clothing should be simple to allow the child to manage alone. Belts, complicated straps and snaps are discouraged. Preschoolers are very active, so please do not send them in their "Sunday Best."

Well fitted, closed toed, rubber soled shoes are required. Crocs, sandals, flip-flops, and cowboy boots are not allowed. Two changes of clothes in a labeled zip-lock bag (including underwear, socks and a pair of shoes) are to be left at school at all times. Please be sure to label all items with your child's name.

Outdoor play is an essential part of our curriculum and essential for the children's health. Children will go out every day unless it is raining, the temperature is below 40° (or chill factor below 40°) or over 95° (or heat index of 95°). Please be sure that your child is dressed appropriately for the day with coats, hats, and mittens for cold days or have sunscreen applied on sunny days.

Food Guidelines

Parents are responsible for sending a nutritious snack, lunch and a water bottle for their child **every day**. We ask that food items reflect selections from the nutrition pyramid fresh fruits and vegetables, healthy whole grains, low-fat dairy and lean proteins.

All soda, cookies, chips, candy, and food with high sugar, high salt, high saturated fats or foods with less than 1 gram of fiber are not allowed in our program. Please send water ONLY for snack and lunch. Fast food and lunchables are also not permitted. If any of these items are sent to school our staff will not serve them to your child. To help foster independence and self-reliance, children are encouraged to be involved in getting and preparing their own snack and lunch. Please send your child's food in easy to open containers. Please be sure to pack at least one ice pack in your child's lunch to keep items cool and fresh. Milk and yogurt must be placed in the classroom refrigerator. Please let your child's teacher know if you need assistance with this.

Due to the risk of choking, we ask all children to bring grapes, olives, cherry tomatoes, and other similarly sized items cut up into quarter pieces only. Hot dogs must be cut length-wise into sticks. Please no hard nuts.

Fresh cut fruit cups, fruit-kabobs, muffins or all natural frozen fruit bars are permitted for special birthday celebrations. The classroom teacher must be notified if a birthday snack is coming **one week** in advance to post in the classroom for other parents to see. **If there is a food allergy in the classroom, that food is not permitted at any time into the classroom for birthdays. Food allergy information will be posted in each classroom at the beginning of the school year.**

Due to possible allergic reactions, our students are not allowed to exchange food with other students, teachers or parents. Your child is asked to eat what he/she brings to school each day and not to accept food from anyone else.

Severe Allergy Plan of Action (Food, Insect, or Environmental)

If a child has a severe allergy, parents are asked to submit a letter from their child's doctor **prior to starting our program** that states:

1. Child's name
2. Name of allergy
3. Plan of action recommended
4. Letter must be signed by a doctor and on letterhead
5. Letter must also be signed by the parent

This information will be used to create a personal allergy plan of action for the child. Allergy action plans are posted in the child's classroom for staff to use when needed.

Water Activities

Each classroom is equipped with a sensory table and sometimes there is water play. In the winter we will have a "Winter Wonderland" day where we play with ice and snow in water tables and small pools. In the spring we will have a "Splash Day" where the children will use sprinklers, water toys, water tables and small pools. Parents are notified at least one week in advance of Winter Wonderland and Splash Day. Water table play in the classrooms is posted on the weekly development plans posted on the classroom information boards. The children will be supervised at all times during these events.

Staff Providing Childcare

We are aware that from time to time our preschool parents may ask our staff to provide childcare for their children. Emmaus ECEP does not refer, recommend, or endorse any employee, and shall be held harmless in and/or not responsible/liable in *any* situation where an employee may independently provide care outside of their regular work schedule on or off the Emmaus campus. Moreover, staff members are not acting as agents of the preschool when providing care for Emmaus ECEP families. Please be advised that our program policy is:

- Teachers may not babysit children within their own classrooms.
- Staff are not allowed to transport students to or from Emmaus ECEP.

- Emmaus ECEP may not be used for extended care with our staff outside of our enrolled extended care program.

Pesticides

As part of our commitment to provide your child with a safe, pest-free learning environment, the preschool applies quarterly pesticides to help manage insects, weeds or pathogens. Pesticide applications on the church property are made only by trained and licensed Texas Department of Agriculture technicians. Should you have any questions about our pest management program or wish to be notified in advance of pesticide applications, you may contact the preschool office at 512-261-8500 EXT 305.

Animals

Parents will be notified one week in advance if animals are to be brought into the classroom. Animals will have proof of vaccines, be up to date on all vaccines, and be approved by the Director before coming on campus.

Outside Play

Outside play facilities are available for your child to develop his/her gross motor skills. Outdoor play provides for greater freedom and flexibility, fuller expression through loud talk, and a greater range of active movement. Moderate to vigorous active play extends opportunities for large/small muscle and social-emotional development, by offering variety, challenge, and complexity in ways that are not attainable in a confined indoor space.

On inclement weather days, alternative physical activities will be provided indoors. All age groups play outdoors daily, weather permitting*. Please send your child with a coat, hat and gloves for cold weather. **Children should wear closed-toe shoes for safety.** Sunscreen and/or insect repellent should be applied daily, by the parent/ guardian, before arrival at ECEP. In the event of extreme weather, ECEP administration will evaluate the circumstances with local weather stations and adjust recess/ outside times accordingly and then provide alternative movement/ play activities in Multi A, the Great Hall or the Youth Space. Students are ensured a minimum 30 minutes of structured and unstructured play each day up to 1.5+ hours based on individual attendance schedule and times.

*Basic Outside Guidelines

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Heat Index – How hot it feels based on temperature, humidity etc.

Guide:

Less than 90 – 30+ mins

90-100 – Mixed sun & shade play

Over 100 – Mostly shade play, limited to 10 - 20 mins

*Added emphasis on hydration

Wind Chill – How cold it feels based on temperature, wind gusts etc.

Guide:

Over 55 – Normal time

55-32 – 20+ minutes

Under 32 – based on Director/Teacher judgement

*Children must have appropriate clothing

No outside time when pouring rain & snowing

Communication and Involvement

Parent Communication



Teachers communicate daily with the parents on Brightwheel about the day's activities and any special or unusual events concerning your child.

Emmaus ECEP strives to be a “green” school with our communications to parents. We send email communications whenever possible. More detailed information will be shared about our communication systems at parent orientation. Please be sure that the Director has the most current email and cell phone number for every adult listed on the child's paperwork and emergency care card.

Our teachers' primary communication tool is an application called “Brightwheel.” This program allows parents to access information from the convenience of their

cell phone through the use of an app. School email communications come in the form of an emailed newsletter. In addition, we also ask parents to check your child's folder **daily** for classroom and program information.

In addition to these routine forms of communication, Emmaus ECEP has two parent/teacher visit days established on our school calendar. One visit is on November 9 and one is in April. There is no school on the parent/teacher visit days. Parents can also make an appointment to visit with their child's teacher **before or after** school.

If you have any concerns, questions, comments, or suggestions about the programs, policies, procedures, staff or structure, please feel free to email the Director at preschool@emmausparish.org or call the ECEP office at 512-261-8500 EXT 305.

Parent Involvement/Visitation

Parents are welcome to visit the classroom at any time during the school year. You are always welcome to observe your child for any length of time from the classroom window of the main breezeway.

In order to ensure safety of our students we do lock our classroom doors at 9:30am each day. If you need to pick-up early, we encourage you to call ahead or email through Brightwheel to let your child's teacher know. For the safety of the classrooms, our staff will not allow anyone into the classrooms if staff do not recognize them.

If a parent plans to volunteer in the classroom, the Texas State Minimum Standards states that volunteers must complete a criminal history check and attend an Emmaus ECEP Volunteer Orientation. Parents are also required to complete an Ethics in Ministry class by the Diocese of Austin. Classes are held monthly in the Austin diocese. Each family is asked to volunteer with at least one school event each school year.



Tuition Policy

Program Enrollment

Registration takes place annually in February for currently enrolled families and Emmaus parishioners for the following program year. Parents of students currently enrolled will receive a form to fill out for registration for the next school year for their children and siblings entering the program. Priority is given first to currently enrolled families and their siblings, then to parish families. Registration is done on a first come first served basis for all classrooms. Open registration begins in March for the Lake Travis community and spots are filled based on availability.

Registration is a two-step process. 1) The first step is the completion of the annual registration form and a non-refundable registration fee of \$300.00. Currently enrolled families submit these 2 items to the Director in February. 2) Step two of registration is the completion of the enrollment packet. Please submit all enrollment paperwork (including doctor's statement, shot records, etc) as soon as possible after receiving the packet. There is a supply fee: Preschool Twos & Preschool Threes (3 day) — \$400.00, Preschool Twos & Preschool Threes (4 day) — \$450.00, and Pre-K 4 year old — \$500.00. The supply fee is due no later than September 1, 2026.

Failure to complete this two-step enrollment process can impact your placement into the program for the following school year. Children will not be allowed to start school without all completed forms submitted.

The registration fee is non-refundable. The supply fee is non-refundable after September 1.

Tuition

Tuition is due by the first day of each month. Tuition received after the tenth of the month is considered late and will be charged a \$50.00 late fee.

Tuition Rates for 2026-2027 school year:

Preschool Twos & Preschool Threes
TWTh — \$600.00 or TWThF — \$700
Pre-K4
TWThF — \$700

Tuition is for space reserved for the child, not for periods of attendance. There is no refund of tuition or make-up days for days that a child misses due to, but not limited to, illness, school holiday(s), vacations, parent/teacher visit days, teacher training or in-service days or school delays or closures due to inclement weather or emergency situations.

Payments are made on-line through the Brightwheel app, by ACH or Credit Card. There is 0.6% fee (\$0.25 min/\$2.00 max) for ACH. There is a 2.95% processing fee for credit card payments.

Returned Checks

The fee for a returned check is \$25.00. Parents are notified when a check or payment is returned. Payment arrangements must be made immediately. If a second payment is returned, all future payments must be made in cash or with a money order. After 30 days of no payment, parents are notified that their child's enrollment is dropped unless payment arrangements are made. Failure to resolve the issue results in losing eligibility for a spot in the upcoming school year.

General Policies



Birthdays

Birthdays are celebrated in our program! If you wish to celebrate your child's birthday with a healthy snack, please inform the teacher at least one week in advance. We ask that treats be muffins without icing, fresh fruit cups, frozen fruit bars, or fruit kabobs. We welcome non-food treats as well!

Birthday invitations may only be sent out in the classroom if all students are invited. **For safety reasons, balloons and candles are not allowed in the classroom.**

Parent Helpful Pointers

1. Please label **all** items brought to school with your child's name.
2. Please refrain from bringing any valuable items to school.
3. Weapons and weapon-like toys are not permitted.
4. A small sturdy bag is encouraged for each child to hold notes, artwork, and lunch boxes.
5. **Please refrain from bringing toys from home.** We will have periodic show and shares throughout the year for your child to share.
6. Books and items related to classroom topics are always welcome, to share with the class.

Withdrawing from Our Program

Parent Initiated Withdraw

If you need to withdraw your child from our program, a 30-day written notice must be turned into the Director. You will be responsible for all fees due through the end of the 30 days whether or not your child attends class.

Program Initiated Withdraw

Should a situation arise where a family is asked to leave our program, the Director will submit in writing a transition plan for a smooth departure from our program. The following list are possible reasons for withdrawal initiated by the program:

- Parent threatens physical or intimidating actions towards staff members
- Parent fails to pay or is habitually late with payments
- Parent is verbally abusive to staff
- Child does not adjust to program within a reasonable amount of time
- Child's needs cannot be properly met by our program.

Child Abuse/ Maltreatment

ECEP staff are required, under the Texas Family Code, Section 34.01 to report any suspected cases of Child Abuse to the Department of Human Services Protective Services Office and a local or state law enforcement agency.

As mandated reporters, ECEP staff cannot be held liable for reports made to DFPS/ Child Protective Services, provided the report was made in good faith. Staff are not

required to discuss reports or concerns with parents prior to reporting the matter to authorities.

Best practice is to report ALL suspicions or allegations of abuse. ECEP staff receive annual training on recognizing and preventing abuse and neglect. ECEP has made a commitment to help increase awareness and prevention techniques to employees and parents through trainings supplemental materials.

Abuse Prevention Systems (www.AbusePreventionSystems.com) or AgriLife Child Maltreatment (<https://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/solutions/child-care-training-courses/>).

Additional informational materials will be provided to any interested parties. The Statewide Abuse & Neglect Hotline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 1-800-252-5400, if you would like to report any suspected abuse or neglect. If any parties feel they need assistance or intervention in any matters related to possible child abuse, neglect, or exploitation, we encourage you to get help. Please call the National Parent Hotline at 1-855-427-2736 or visit www.helpandhope.org/ or

<https://www.txabusehotline.org> for more information.

Zero Tolerance Policy

ECEP holds a zero tolerance for abuse in ECEP programs and activities. It is the responsibility of all volunteers and staff members at ECEP to act in the best interest of each child in every aspect of our program. ECEP is committed to protecting the children in our care and have implemented a physical contact policy that will promote a positive, nurturing environment while protecting children. The personal behavior of ECEP staff members or volunteers must foster trust at all times – personal conduct must be above reproach. Grooming is the process used by an abuser to select a child, win the child's trust (and the trust of the child's parent or 'gatekeeper'), manipulate the child into sexual activity and keep the child from disclosing the abuse. Because sexual abusers 'groom' children for abuse, it is possible a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to 'groom' a child for sexual abuse. Staff members and volunteers are asked to report 'grooming' behavior, any policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors directly to ECEP Administration.

We care for children and desire to protect them, ECEP requires all volunteers and staff members to complete 4 SAFETY STEPS before employment or volunteer work begins:

1. Screening Process to include:
 - a. Employment application with references
 - b. In person interview(s)
 - c. Affidavit for Applicants, Form 2985
 - d. Childcare Licensing Request for Background check, Form 2971
2. Annual Policies and Procedures training
3. Annual Sexual Abuse & maltreatment Training
4. Criminal Background Check prior to working with children

Enforcement of Policies

ECEP staff members who supervise other staff members or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all ECEP policies. Violations of policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from positions for both volunteers and staff members. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of ECEP Administration. Non- Discriminatory Policy ECEP does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, religion, or national or ethnic origin in admittance, education, or other administrative policies and extends to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally made available to students at the school.

Firearms and Weapons

At no time, is any person permitted to carry any type of firearm, ammunitions and/ or weapons on Emmaus ECEP campus for any reason. If required, anyone entering our facility will be asked to secure any weapons before entering the facility, regardless of a valid permit to carry such weapon. Weapons are considered but not limited to: firearms, knives with intended use other than common table-wear, explosives, archery equipment. Concealed carry and open carry permits are not permitted on our campus at any time. Only Law Enforcement of Government Officials are exempt from this policy.

Gang Free Zone

Under Texas Penal Code, Emmaus Early Childhood Education Program and any area within 1000 feet of Emmaus Early Childhood Education Program is a gang-free zone.

Infant Feeding Room Available

Any mother on our campus during program hours has a right to nurse or bottle feed her infant child. For your convenience, we offer room 105A (the church nursery) or the upstairs foyer as a comfortable place for you to nurse during program hours (Tuesday to Friday 9:15AM-2:00PM).

Infant Safe Sleep Policy

ECEP does not provide care for infants. ECEP staff adhere to all licensing requirements for actively monitoring children in our care during play and nap/ rest times.

Emmaus Nursery

During the school year the church will occasionally have a program or prayer group that require the use of the church nursery (room 105A) which is adjacent to the Frogs room (room 105B). We love to see our nursery friends. When the nursery is in use, the nursery has designated time that they use both the bathroom and the playground separately from our ECEP children while the ECEP program is open. Nursery staff are CPR and EIM trained.

Emmaus ECEP Policy Changes

In the event that a policy changes with Emmaus ECEP program, parents will be notified in writing by the Director.

Policy Questions or Concerns

If for any reason you have a question or concern about Emmaus ECEP policies, please call our main phone number 512-261-8500 EXT 305. You can also email the Director of the program at preschool@emmausparish.org.

The following information is provided for your convenience:

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services – Child Care Licensing
1400 Summit Drive Suite 100
Austin, Texas 78728

DFPS Child Abuse Hotline
1-800-252-5400 or txabusehotline.org

DFPS website:
dfps.texas.gov

Information about Texas minimum standards for childcare centers, fire inspections, gas inspections, sanitation inspections, liability insurance, or our most recent childcare licensing inspection report are available for you to view upon request to the Director.

Parents' Rights Addendum

SENATE BILL NO. 1098

AN ACT relating to the rights of a parent or guardian with a child in certain child-care facilities.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. This Act may be cited as the Kairo and the Kids' Law.

SECTION 2. Subchapter C, Chapter 42, Human Resources Code, is amended by adding Section 42.04271 to read as follows:

Sec.A2.04271. RIGHTS OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN WITH CHILD IN CERTAIN CHILD-CARE FACILITIES.

(a) This section applies only to a day-care center, group day-care home, before-school program, after-school program, school-age program, or registered family home.

(b) A parent or guardian of a child at a child-care facility has the right to:

(1) enter and examine the child-care facility during the facility's hours of operation without advance notice;

(2) file a complaint against the child-care facility;

(3) review the child-care facility's publicly accessible records;

(4) review the child-care facility's written records concerning the parent's or guardian's child;

(5) receive from the child-care facility the commission's inspection reports for the child-care facility and information about how to access the child-care facility's compliance history online;

(6) have the child-care facility comply with a court order preventing another parent or guardian from visiting or removing the parent's or guardian's child;

(7) be provided the contact information for the division responsible for regulating the child-care facility, including the division's name, address, and phone number;

(8) inspect any video recordings of an alleged incident of abuse or neglect involving the parent's or guardian's child, provided that:

. (A) video recordings of the alleged incident are available;

(B) The parent or guardian of the child is not allowed to retain any part of the video recording depicting a child who is not the parent's or guardian's child; and

(C) the parent or guardian of any other child captured in the video recording receives notice from the facility under Subsection (c);

(9) obtain a copy of the child-care facility's policies and procedures;

(10) review, on the request of the parent or guardian, the facility's:

(A) staff training records; and

(B) and in-house staff training curriculum used by the facility;

and

(11) be free from any retaliatory action by the child-care facility for exercising any of the parent's or guardian's rights.

(c) Before allowing a parent or guardian to inspect a video recording under Subsection (b) (8), a child-care facility must provide written notice to the parent or guardian of any other child captured in the video recording.

(d) This section does not affect the ability of a law enforcement agency or the department to access a video recording as part of an investigation of an incident depicted in the video recording.

(e) childcare facility shall provide the parent or guardian of the child with a written copy of the rights listed in Subsection (b) not later than the child's first day at the facility.

SECTION 3. Not later than September 30, 2023, a child-care facility shall provide the information required by Section 42.04271, Human Resources Code, as added by this Act, to the parent or guardian of each child enrolled at the facility on the effective date of this Act.

SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.