



Family Handbook



Eco Kids is committed to providing an eco-friendly environment that nurtures the whole child.

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INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

Thank you for choosing Eco Kids as your early care and learning provider. We are glad to have you join us!

This family handbook is designed to orient you to our policies and procedures. All newly enrolled families are asked to read this handbook. Please feel free to download a copy from our web site for your future reference.

Eco Kids takes pride in creating a community environment where all families are appreciated. We acknowledge and respect the diversity each family brings to our community. All families will have a pre- enrollment conference with the facility Director. We feel it's very important to discuss expectations and goals for your child. This is the first step in initiating our partnership with you; we look forward to a long relationship.

Eco Kids is a family owned and operated facility. We accept the significant responsibility to provide a safe, nurturing environment full of developmentally appropriate experiences. We share the belief that the early years from birth to five are the most essential years in a child's life; these years serve as the foundation for a life of learning.

Eco Kids' climate is child and family friendly. We believe that children are unique individuals and should be respected as such.

Eco Kids is an equal opportunity facility; we accept all children. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, religious preference, sex, national origin, age, disability.

Welcome to our Community!



PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY:

Eco Kids is committed to providing an eco-friendly environment that nurtures the whole child. Our organization takes pride in providing high quality care that focuses on challenging and stimulating the intellect, and implementing hands on earth friendly and healthy living practices. It is our belief that a program which focuses on these components further enhances the lives of its children, their families, and ultimately the community; creating an experience that is unique and unlike most other programs.

Our program is committed to providing an authentic Montessori education. It is our belief that this method addresses each of the components essential to creating a love of learning as well as respect for oneself, others, and the environment.

We recognize that the early childhood setting tends to be a child's first community or environment of relationships outside of the home. For that reason, Eco Kids is committed to creating an atmosphere where children experience warm, loving, and stable relationships – which research has shown to be the foundation for learning.

Furthermore, we believe that the family consists of the most significant adults in a child's life. We believe that it takes the cooperation and partnership between the home and the school to help the child meet developmental and learning milestones. We support our teachers and families with ongoing training and resources. We strive to create and maintain positive partnerships for the benefit of the child.

HOME / SCHOOL CONNECTION

Family involvement is at the core of our programs. We advocate working together in a spirit of partnership with families. This means we welcome your input, we ask for your suggestions, and we engage in problem-solving together. You are encouraged to share information that can be helpful to teachers in working with your child. Families may visit at any time during the program's regular hours of operation.

Parent Responsibility

It is important that you are comfortable with our philosophy. Your child must know that you have confidence in the Center you have chosen for his or her care. We must be able to work together to make your child's time here as fulfilling as possible. We feel strongly that open communication between parents and staff members is essential to fully meeting your child's needs. If you have any suggestions or concerns we encourage you to find comfort in knowing that your child's teacher and/or the Director are always available to listen.

Communication

As an eco-friendly center we encourage electronic communication rather than printed

materials as often as possible. Our teachers are required to maintain communication with their student's family. Each teacher will provide their family with their specific approach to communicating.

Please utilize arrival and departure transitions for a quick chat about the day. Telephone conversations (generally during lunch or after the teacher's shift) and emails are our preferred method of communicating. Please note that a meeting can be scheduled with your child's teacher at your discretion.

General forms of communication utilized by the Center are web-based newsletters, e-mails, and our activity calendar. Flyers and posting will be both web based and posted on our parent information board.

ENROLLMENT

Transitioning

At times families may find balancing the challenges of starting child care and the knowledge of your little one getting older difficult and trying. Please do not let those feelings discourage you from the wonderful experience you will receive while at Eco Kids. It is important as a family to understand Eco Kids will do everything in its power to make the transition as smooth as possible while you are away. It is important to remember that as a parent you have the biggest influence on your child's transition to school. Children have the keen ability to sense your fears, anxiety and emotions. Staying positive and strong through this process will lend a tremendous amount of support to your child. The degree of success throughout this transition process as well as, for many years to come, will be dependent upon your willingness to take control of your emotions.

Talking positively about going to school and the decision to join Eco Kids is the first step in starting the transition process. Additional ways you can prepare yourself and your little one to join the Eco Kids' community:

- *Be honest with your feelings as a parent* – growing up is a fantastic, fascinating time. Think of all of the great, new and exciting times you and your little one will be able to enjoy because of the independence, knowledge and skills which will be exploding before your eyes in just a few weeks time.
- *Bring a special item* – if old enough have your little one pick out a special blanket or "lovey" just for school to have during nap time. This can be a special moment to discuss what will be coming up soon ; a wonderful new growing and learning experience at school!
- *Routine adjustment* – start setting the routine of what it will be like for the commute to and from school for you and your little one before the first day.
- *Set a time to visit your classroom* – for an hour once, twice or three times before you officially start your enrollment. Spending time with you in the classroom helps your child know that this is a place that is safe.
- *Trust the process* – we have a lot of happy little one's at Eco Kids. Some children adjust more quickly than others, but if you have patience and build a good relationship with your child's teacher, your child too, will successfully complete the transition. Since your child is special in his or her own way, it is important not to compare your child's transition to any other, as all children respond differently.
- *Be considerate of the classroom and teachers* – though transition is difficult, it is not a time where the teacher can provide 100% of their attention to you and your child. Though you

might find it frustrating, please realize that they do devote special time to your little one.

Eco Kids' primary concern is the well-being of your child. The process of transition takes time. Feel free to communicate constructively with the teacher or Director about any difficulties along the way. We are here for you and are excited about caring for your child.

Requirements:

To enroll your child a completed *Admission Information* form, *immunization record* (Immunizations must be kept up to date during the period of your child's enrollment), and the *non-refundable registration and supply fee* must be submitted. The following other required paperwork must be submitted within one week after the date of admission:

- Handbook Acknowledgement form
- Discipline and Guidance form
- Child Profile
- Health Statement (preferred to have this statement within one week however, if your child has been examined within the past year, you may provide the health statement within one year of enrollment)
 - or a signed affidavit from the parent stating conflict with the tenets and practices of a recognized religious organization.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Our first priority is your child's health and safety and to that end, we will do all that we can to protect your family's privacy. Eco Kids policy is to abide by the state's privacy law and keep all records about your child and information about your family private and confidential, unless written permission is given to reveal specific information.

If you are experiencing changes in your family dynamics, please understand that we cannot keep your child from the other parent based solely on your wishes in the matter. Legally, both parents have access to a child unless there is a court order of protection that clearly specifies the parent cannot remove the child from this center. For us to deny access to your child, we must have a copy of the court order in your child's file.

TERMINATION OF CARE

If for any reason we can no longer provide care for your child or if you no longer wish to have us continue care of your child, the contract may be terminated with a minimum of two week's notice by either party. In the rare case that your child becomes a risk to other children or to himself, care will be terminated immediately, with no notice or refund of tuition.

PAYMENT FOR CARE

Fees are due on the first business day of the month. Failure to pay by the 3rd business day will result in a late fee of 10%. After the 5th business day, services will be interrupted until all fees are paid; unless prior arrangements have been approved by the Business Manager.

Continued late payment will result in termination of services.

Acceptable forms of payment are personal check, money order, or cashier check. If the check does not clear the bank for any reason, a fee of \$25 will be assessed. In addition you will be responsible for any charges and penalties that will be incurred as a result.

LATE FEES & CHARGES – refer to supplemental schedule for rates

Parents are given a grace period of 15 minutes to allow for unexpected delays, please call ahead to notify the center. Excessive late pick-ups (more than one per week within the “grace period”) will result in overtime charges. Overtime charges are assessed at \$1 per minute and will be assessed from your scheduled pick up time, not from the end of the grace period. Charges for overtime care are due at the time the child is picked up from care.

Parents should explore our extended care fees to reduce the amount of overtime fees that may be charged. A credit will not be applied for extended time paid for if it is not utilized. While this may seem unfair, it is a service that was requested and must be staffed therefore we must be compensated.

Occasionally the cost of providing childcare will necessitate an increase in fees. A minimum notice of 30 days will be given.

MATERNITY OR EXTENDED ABSENCE

For you to retain a place for your child during an extended absence (absent consecutively for one week or more up to one month) there will be a holding fee per week equal to one-half your current weekly child care rate. The center must be notified in writing prior to your extended absence (including vacations) for this reduction rate to apply. For any absence longer than 4 weeks, the fee will be equal to the current full time rate. Failure to pay this fee will result in termination of our agreement and possible loss of your child’s place in the program.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Eco Kids is open **Monday through Friday from 6:30am to 6:30pm** all year long; except for the observance of staff development days, family week and legal holidays. (See Holiday Section).

Eco Kids offers the following schedule for our families

- Half Day 7:30 to 11:30
- Full Day 7:30 to 5:30
- Extended Morning Care 6:30 to 7:30
- Extended Evening Care 5:30 to 6:30

Families are first and for that reason we schedule our staff to meet the rigorous demands of your schedule so that you are not charged overtime for occasional tardiness. Excessive late pick-ups will require special arrangements; including paying extended care rates (See Supplemental Rate Schedule).

Part-time care is offered on a case by case basis and is solely dependent on current and secured future enrollment. In cases of authorized part-time care, your child will only be allowed to attend on their scheduled days. No Exceptions. Please make arrangements and submit payment ahead of time should you require care outside of your authorized schedule.

HOLIDAYS & STAFF DEVELOPMENT CLOSINGS

There is no deduction in fees due to holidays - we will require payment for these days. The program will be closed for the following holidays which we observe each year:

Good Friday – Closing at 1:00 pm

Memorial Day

Independence Day

Labor Day

Columbus Day

Thanksgiving and the day after

Family Week (Christmas Eve 1:00 pm through New Year's Day)

One exception: In the event of the day after New Year's falling on a Friday Eco Kids will remain closed.

When these holidays fall on the weekend, we reserve the right to take Friday or Monday nearest the holiday.

Professional Development

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services requires a minimum amount of training each year to maintain compliance as a childcare provider. Because we are dedicated professionals in the field, we participate in additional ongoing training. Eco Kids will set aside two days per year for staff development. We offer flexible work schedules for students perusing an education in the field of Child Development or Early Childhood Education.

DAILY ATTENDANCE

Eco Kids requires all children to be present by 8:45 a.m. daily. It is important for your child to be present when the activities of the day begin. If your child is going to be absent or late for any reason please call by 8:00 a.m.. Holidays, or absences do not reduce the outlined payment. After one year of consecutive enrollment, we will provide one (1) week credit for vacation per year.

- Drop-off/Pick-ups

Parents, guardians, or other authorized individuals are required to accompany their child(ren) into and out of the Center. Parents are required to sign their child(ren) in and out. Before leaving the center, parents must notify the caregiver of their child's arrival and/or departure. While the parent, guardian or authorized individual is present in the child's classroom, the child(ren) is/are the responsibility of that parent, guardian, or authorized individual. Touring parents and their children must always remain together.

AUTHORIZED PICK-UP FOR YOUR CHILD

Your child will only be allowed to leave with parents/guardians that have enrolled them in the program or those designated as authorized individuals on the Admission Information form. If those individuals are not able to pick up the child, the following must happen

- Parent may fax a signed letter stating the full name of the person picking up their child.
 - Upon arrival the authorized person must show state approved picture identification; siblings under the age of 18 may present a school identification card.
 - The authorized person must sign the child out.
- OR, Parent may leave a signed note with the Director that morning stating who will be picking up their child. Same procedures as above apply.

The only exception is if your child is ill and you are unable to be reached. In that situation your emergency backup person, listed on your admission information form, will be allowed to remove your child from the center.

CHILDREN LEFT AT SCHOOL

Specific guidelines will be followed when a child is not picked-up from the school at the end of the day:

- Six (6) attempts will be made to contact the parent/legal guardian at all phone numbers provided within the first 30 minutes.
- Persons listed as emergency contacts will be called four (4) times at all numbers provided within the second 30 minutes
- If no one can be reached after 60 minutes, the center will contact the local police and TDFPS.
- A program representative will remain with the child on the premises until the child is released to the proper authorities.

It is the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian to provide current and updated emergency contact information.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

If while in care your child displays symptoms of life threatening illness or injury requiring immediate attention of a physician, we will 1) contact emergency medical services or take the

child to the nearest emergency room, 2) give the child first-aid treatment or CPR when needed 3) contact the physician identified in the child's record, 4) contact the child's parent and 5) ensure supervision of other children in the group.

Fire:

Two escape exits are planned from every room. These exits remain uncluttered and easily opened. We have monthly fire drills and a log of these drills is maintained. The children practice how to "stop, drop and roll" and the evacuation process.

In case of a fire, our designated evacuation location is Shell Gas Station Austin, TX 78754. Communication will take place to/from the following phone numbers:

Patsy Harnage	(512) 905-2505
David Clary	(562) 212-8799

Electric and Water:

If for any reason the electricity or water is off for more than an hour, the center will close. You will be contacted to pick up your child immediately.

Severe weather conditions:

We have a designated area to go to during a severe weather situation. All necessary supplies as well as snacks, diapers etc. will be gathered and taken to our "safe place". The staff and the children will move to the "safe place" and continue with the activities there until the weather has returned to normal.

If weather conditions worsen during the day, you will be called to pick up your child early to ensure that he/she gets home safely. As child advocates, our first concern is for the safety and well being of your child.

If there are severe weather conditions that include travelers' advisories and no unnecessary travel for the area (closing of public schools, state and county offices) do not attempt to travel with your child, Eco Kids will be closed. If you are unsure of the closing, please call ahead.

Hazardous material spill:

In the event of a hazardous spill involving an evacuation, we will evacuate to a location designated by the local emergency personnel. Once evacuated and safe, all parents will be notified.

Flood and other dangers:

If evacuation becomes necessary, we will evacuate to a location designated by local emergency personnel. Once evacuated and safe, all parents will be notified.

Parents / guardians must keep us up to date on all phone numbers, so that we may reach you or your alternate in case of an emergency. It is your responsibility to pay for any medical treatments relating to injury or illness while your child is in care.

HEALTH POLICIES

Many illnesses are not preventable simply because infants, toddlers, and even older toddlers are still exploring with their mouths. Eco Kids take illnesses very seriously. We require that parents/guardians abide by the handbook and be extremely aware of your child's health. Therefore, please do not bring your child for care when he/she is sick, when you have treated them with Tylenol or the child has any of the following symptoms:

Behavior: If a child looks and acts differently; awake all night and crying, unusually tired, pale, lack of appetite, irritable or restless, yellowish/green mucus, wheezing or persistent cough.

Fever: Auxillary temperature over 99deg. C (infants and toddlers), rectal temperature over 100deg. C. Glass thermometers are discouraged for oral temperatures of children. If a child enters this facility and is known to have had temperature during the previous 36 hours, we will take his/her temperature to determine admission.

Vomiting: More than the usual infant" spitting up".

Diarrhea: Is characterized by frequent watery or green-colored bowel movements that are not related to medication or food reactions.

Rash: Undiagnosed rash other than mild diaper rash or heat rash.

Sore Throat: Sore throat that needs culturing because other signs are present.

Children with cough, runny nose or symptoms of cold, will be accepted to the care as long as the symptoms are kept under control.

If your child is sent home because of illness, they may return after being symptom free for 24 hours, without the aid of pain or fever medication. If your child is sent home with a fever of 100.8 or more, a doctor's note will also be required before he/she is allowed to return.

Chickenpox: All lesions dry and crusted.

Impetigo: (blisters covered with honey colored crusts) - not sooner than 24 hours after the start of medication. If there is no improvement in 48 hours, the child should be reassessed by a physician.

Conjunctivitis: (pink eye- redness of the eye with burning and thick purulent discharge) - at least 36 hours after the start of medication and no discharge is present.

Pin worm: No restrictions following the start of treatment. The entire family must be treated and a doctor note will be required before re admittance.

Lice and Scabies: no restriction following two medical treatments and the child must be nit free.

Hepatitis: Physician's statement required prior to re admittance to the childcare facility.

Strep throat: not sooner than 36 hours after the start of medication.

Texas law requires that all children enrolled in a childcare facility be immunized against diphtheria, polio, tetanus, pertussis, Hib, measles, rubella, Hep A, Hep B, PCV and mumps. Before a child can be accepted for care, you must provide a complete record of your child's immunizations, or the affidavit of exclusion from immunizations. Immunizations must be current and a copy of the records must be kept updated.

We request that all children receive their immunizations on Fridays so the parents can monitor the child for adverse reaction to the injection. If you are unable to make an appointment on Fridays, please make the appointment in the afternoon, so you will be with your child the rest of the day.

TDFPS has the authority to cite this center for incomplete records and close the program until all the files are current. In the event that this center is cited by TDFPS for non compliance because you have not kept your child's immunizations records up-to-date the following action will be taken:

- You will be required to pick up the child from the childcare center immediately.
- Your child will not be allowed to return to care until the records are updated or there is a medical reason, stated by a health care professional, for the delay.
- You will be assessed a forty dollar (\$40) per day fine, for every day that the files are incomplete and TDFPS fines the center for non-compliance of the licensing regulations.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICINE

Eco Kids will administer physician prescribed medication and non-prescribed medication such as ibuprofen and teething products to your child under the following conditions:

- Parents sign an authorization form and include the times center employees are to administer each medication according to label instructions;
- The medication is in the original container labeled with the child's full name;
- Medication is administered in amounts according to the label instructions or as amended by a physician;
- Medication is administered only to the child for whom it is intended; and
- Medication is not administered after its expiration date.
- Ibuprofen type products will be administered for immediate

Eco Kids has the right to refuse to administer medication at the discretion of the Director.

In the best interests of your child and other children in our care, all health policies will be strictly enforced. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated. Failure to comply will result in termination of the care.

HEARING & VISION

When a child turns four years of age, by law, parents are required to furnish hearing and

vision test documentation to their care provider. Three year olds that exhibit the ability to communicate the requirements of the test effectively are encouraged to be tested as well.

INCIDENT POLICY

To maintain the health, well-being, and safety for all at the center the following plan of action has been incorporated in the incident policy:

-Parents are contacted immediately for any incident requiring emergency or a physician's care. An *Incident Report* will be completed and provided to the parent for signature. Copies of the reports will be maintained in the center file. Parents are requested to inform the Center of the outcome of the treatment.

-Parents will be notified on a *Bump and Boo-Boo form* - for minor injuries such as scratches, scrapes and bites.

Biting/Physical Injury

Biting and other physical injuries caused by one child to another or by a child to a teacher or Director are cause for concern and must be documented. When an injury is caused to another student or teacher by your child, a *Non-emergency Incident Report* will be completed detailing the injury. The parent is asked to sign this report. The incident report becomes a part of the center's permanent record and a copy will be put in your child's file.

If your child receives a total of three incident reports, you will be asked to come and pick up your child immediately upon that third incident. A mandatory meeting will be required with the parents, teacher and Director. At this meeting a plan of action will be discussed so that both the parents and the teacher can seek a consistent way to handle the situation and hopefully remedy the behavior. Your child may come back the next scheduled day of attendance.

If after the meeting nothing changes and an additional three incident reports are completed (totaling six incident reports relating to biting or injury), the family will be given a two week notice and the child will be asked to leave the center at the end of this two week period.

Eco Kids reserves the sole right to ask your child to leave the center immediately and permanently at any given time without a two week notice if the injury that is caused to another child, teacher or Director is deemed extremely severe by the center Director. In this case, the preceding protocol will not be possible and immediate dismissal from the program will occur.

Please Note: No tuition refunds will be made for a child going home.

Biting Policy

Biting is a natural developmental stage that many children go through. It is usually a temporary condition that is most common between thirteen and twenty-four months of age. Toddlers bite other toddlers for many different reasons. A child might be teething or overly tired and frustrated. He or she might be experimenting or trying to get the attention of the teacher or his peers. Toddlers have poor verbal skills and are impulsive without a lot of self-control. Sometimes biting occurs for no apparent reason. Regardless of the reason, the safety of the children at the center is our primary concern. Eco Kids biting policy addresses the actions the staff will take if a biting incident occurs:

- Staff will stay calm and will not overreact
- The biting will be interrupted with a firm "We do not bite people" explaining that "We use our

mouths to eat food.” or “We use our mouths to talk.”

- The bitten child will be comforted and the wound will be cleaned and assessed for cold compress treatment.
- . Staff will remove the biter from the situation. The biter will be given something to do that is satisfying.
- . The parents of both children will be notified of the biting incident. Appropriate forms will be filled out. Confidentiality of all children involved will be maintained. The bitten area should continue to be observed by parents and staff for signs of infection.

At the Eco Kids, we are committed to providing the highest standards of care for your child. If you have any further questions, please feel free to request more information from our expert staff.

Parents will be notified in writing of any changes to the policy.

POSITIVE GUIDANCE AND BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Our program’s guidance and discipline policy is based on the belief that young children can be guided into the behavior we wish them to demonstrate. Our teachers create a positive environment where children learn the necessary skills to develop self control, manage impulses, participate in satisfying social relationships, and develop communication and problem-solving skills. We will help your child learn to share, take turns, to be responsible for actions and to be a friend. These are skills the children need to learn so they can cooperate with others. Recognizing that no single technique works, below are a few of the techniques we will implement:

- Establishing clear, simple, and consistent rules
- Model appropriate behavior for children
- Redirection of unwanted behavior
- Implementation of behavior management systems

TRANSPORTING OF CHILDREN

Texas law requires children under the age of eight (unless at least 4’9”) to be transported in the appropriate child safety or booster seats that are properly installed in your vehicle. We expect that you and any of your authorized pick up persons have the appropriate car seats installed when you arrive for pick up.

Eco Kids staff will complete two hours of transportation safety training annually as required by law to provide transportation for field trips occurring in the summer. We will also transport your child when absolutely necessary during medical emergencies occurring at the center.

NUTRITION

To help meet nutritional needs Eco Kids serves only wholesome organic meals and snacks. Menus are planned around the basic food groups, and meals are designed to be part of a well-balanced diet.

Because meal and snacks are served within very specific time frames, please make certain that you have your child at the center in time for the meal.

Morning Snack: 9 am – 10 am

Lunch: 11:30 am - 12:00 pm

Snack: 2:30pm – 4:00pm

If your child has a special diet, please provide his/her required foods in labeled containers together with any special instructions. A doctor's statement, indicating the specific items in the special diet, must be in our file. The center is not responsible for the nutritional value of foods provided from home.

An Infant Feeding plan for all infants not eating" table food" must be signed by the parents and updated monthly. Eco Kids will provide mothers with a place to sit and breastfeed. An adult sized chair is provided in the classroom. Additional support items may be provided at Eco Kids discretion.

Chewing gum is never allowed!

NAP TIME

We have very long and active days. In order to meet the needs of the children, we have set aside time for naps. Your child does not have to sleep, but must observe a quiet time. This allows the opportunity for the children to relax and revitalize for the afternoon activities.

Each child that is required to rest will have his/her own sleeping place. Parents should provide an appropriate sized blanket and children may use any comfort item (pacifier, blanket, etc) he/she has brought for this purpose. We will discuss your child's specific needs to nap or observe a quiet time when we enroll him/her. We will periodically review and adjust your child's rest requirements.

TOILET "TRAINING"

The time for your child to learn toileting skills can be very challenging for you and your child. We will discuss your child's signs of readiness, verbal skills and self-help skills. We will talk about the time and energy commitment that you, the parents, must make, and plan how and when we will start this process.

Toddlers will naturally want to be toilet trained unless they have had an experience that causes them to resist or be fearful of some aspect of the process. Adults can disrupt the natural learning process by rushing toddlers into premature toilet training. The nerves and muscles that control bowel and bladder functions do not start to mature until 18 to 24 months of age. Children achieve bowel and bladder control faster when they begin toilet training later.

To make the transition from diapers to big girl or big boy underpants as smooth as possible,

there are some guidelines that must be followed:

*Your child must have the ability to dress/redress himself after using bathroom. Please do not send your child in "bib" overalls, one-piece outfits that have several buttons, or outfits that button or close in the back.

*Your child must have the verbal skills to let you know that she/he must use the bathroom.

*At least 3 complete changes of clothes and several pair of training underwear must be kept at the center during the toilet training process.

*No child will be punished for toileting accidents.

If your child needs to change clothes three times during the day, your child is probably not quite ready for this process. We will wait a few weeks and try again. It is important that your child feel successful in this transition from diapers to underwear.

CLOTHING

Children should arrive at the center fully dressed and ready for the activities of the day. Your child should wear comfortable clothes. You are expected to provide a complete change of clothes (including underclothes) for your child. At least two complete changes of clothes for all infants in care. This ensures dry clothes in case of an accident or spill and for replacing clothes that may get wet during play.

As part of our daily activities, we will spend some time outside, weather permitting. This allows a chance to run freely for a while. Please be sure your child brings appropriate clothing for outdoor activities every day. This includes a light jacket for "in-between" days and a winter coat and accessories for cold days. We will advise you when these items will be needed. We do not launder or rinse soiled clothes.

Jewelry

We request that your child wear only necessary jewelry, such as studs to keep pierced ears open. Neck chains (and bracelets) can become tangled, so it is preferred to have your child leave all jewelry at home. If the staff feels that a piece of jewelry poses a risk, it will be removed. Eco Kids will not be held responsible for loss or damage to the jewelry.

SUPPLIES

Parents of infants are asked to provide bottles, water, diapers, powder, formula, ointments, wipes and multiple changes of clothes. Please ask if you are uncertain about items you must supply.

All families are required to submit a supply fee upon enrollment. Supply fees are due for the fall semester and the spring semester. Families with more than two enrolled children will pay a supply fee for two children only.

OBSERVATION AND INVOLVEMENT

Parents, guardians, and those authorized to have contact with the child are welcome to visit the facility unannounced, without securing prior approval, during normal hours of operation. You are invited to participate in activities whenever your schedule allows. We encourage feedback from you to help us improve your child's experience and to help us improve our programs.

Open House occurs each school year approximately one month after the school year begins. This is an informal time for families and staff to get together to explore the program together.

Children thrive from interacting with positive adults and building meaningful relationships, our Grandma Volunteer program fosters that need.

Each classroom will have Parent Partner volunteers to lead parent involvement in each classroom.

We will have an ongoing dialog with you to share the developmental progress of your child, concerns that we may have, and to share the daily "success stories" of your child. Parent conferences are scheduled for the fall and spring each year however, parents or teachers may request conferences on an as needed basis

If there are specific daily needs or a variation in your child's routine, please write a short note explaining the situation. This note should be handed to your child's teacher. Please DO NOT put a note in your child's bag, it may not be found during the course of the day.

A calendar of special activities is planned during the year to support the involvement of the entire family; these include but are not limited to the Fall Festival, Spring Fling, Summer Potluck Picnic, and a holiday party in December. All family members are invited to volunteer/attend these events.

ACTIVITIES

Your child is progressing through some of their most formative years. In addition to our formal curriculum, our program provides essential activities to develop the whole child. Our activities are formulated to allow the child to We are compelled to teach them the self-help skills that are so necessary to succeed in life. We work towards the social, the emotional and the educational development of your child. Activities are an important part of our childcare program. They are not formally structured, but rather informally scheduled to meet the needs of children.

- Sustainability based activities designed to cover recycling, conservation, and self sufficiency.
- Nutrition based activities designed to cover growing our own foods to hands on preparation.

- Health based activities designed to cover gross motor development and physical activities.
- Art and music based activities designed to challenge his/her creative talent and imagination.
- Group activities designed to teach cooperation and sharing.

Occasional screen viewing may be included in our program.

During the summer season, we may plan water activities, such as water sprinklers or slip and slides. Permission letters will be distributed to obtain authorization for your child's participation in these activities.

FIELD TRIPS AND SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

TDFPS describes a field trip as any activity that is off the property of the center. We may go for a walk around our neighborhood or have an afternoon picnic or fly a kite at a grassy area in the neighborhood. These outings provide an opportunity to learn and explore as well as providing a change of environment, and we look forward to them. Permission to take your child for a walk is necessary and is required as part of his/her enrollment in this program.

Birthday celebrations are some of the other activities we share throughout the year.

Permission for your child to participate in special activities is required for your child to be enrolled in this program. Some of the activities may include the following:

- Observation from TDFPS, Child-care specialists, and other child care providers. We will do our best to let you know when we will be having visitors in, but some of the agencies must be permitted to make unannounced visits.
- Pictures and videos of your child are often taken during our daily activities. These will be put in scrapbooks, given to parents, or used for classroom display. When utilizing for areas outside of our facility we will request a waiver signed by the parent/guardian.

SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN

Eco Kids offers a summer program for school age children at this time. Contact the Director for more information.

REGULATIONS

The center is licensed by the State of Texas, and is operated with the goal to exceed the minimum standards for day care centers. These standards relate to the facility staff, health, safety procedures, nutrition, ratios, and record keeping. The state and city health, fire and licensing officials routinely inspect our center. Inspection reports and licensing records of the center are available for review at any time.

You may obtain a copy of Minimum Standards from the TDFPS web-site: www.dfps.state.tx.us, or by contacting the child care information line at (512) 834-3195 (Address: 14000 Summit Drive, Austin, TX). Child abuse hot line 1(800) 252-5400. A copy is also available in the Center's office for your review.

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

The policy of Eco Kids is to accept children that have disabilities. When enrolling a child with a disability, we are committed to complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act, however, the Center may not be equipped to care for children with special requirements and each enrollment will be considered on an individual basis. We will not exclude any child from the full benefits of this program or any of its activities on the basis of race, color, sex, religious beliefs, national origin or medical or physical handicaps.

CHILD PROTECTION

In accordance with the statutes, all childcare providers are required to report all suspected case of neglect, abuse and exploitation to their licensing representative and the police. **The child abuse hot line number is 1 (800) 252-5400.**

As a result of House Hill 2086, tougher penalties are enforced for criminal activities occurring within 1000 feet of this child care facility which is more commonly known as Gang-Free Zone.

SUBSTANCE/CHEMICAL ABUSE

If the parent, in our judgment, appears to be under the influence of any chemical (drugs or alcohol), we reserve the right to call an alternate to pick up the child and not release the child to the impaired parent. Failure to comply will result in a 911 call for backup assistance. This policy will be strictly enforced. If 911 must be called, the childcare agreement is terminated immediately.

ADDRESSING CONCERNS

All concerns should be discussed with the Director. Our teachers, although very knowledgeable and capable, are limited in the area of making change which may be necessary to accommodate your needs.

The Director is available by appointment), email (albert.clary@ecokidsprek.com), or by phone at (855) ECO-KIDS (326-5437). In the absence of the Director, please feel free to contact Davida Clary, Business Manager by the same methods; email at davida.clary@ecokidsprek.com.

Mr. Clary may also be contacted for all facility related matters.

ANIMAL POLICY

Non-Eco Kids' animals will be allowed at the facility with special permission. Parents will be notified at least 48 hours in advance of any animal visiting the center.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I acknowledge that I have read the family handbook and I am fully aware of the education philosophy, discipline policy and procedures for arranging conferences with the center staff.

I have read and fully understood the fee arrangement and conditions detailed in this booklet and its inserts. I am in agreement with such conditions and will abide by it.

I understand that all policy changes will be submitted in writing and I will be given an opportunity to secure a copy at the time of the change.