





ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Serving children spiritually, intellectually,
emotionally, physically and socially in a Christ-
centered atmosphere.



 2541 Earl Rudder Fwy S., College Station, TX 77845

 <https://stabcs.org/child-center>

 979-485-8130

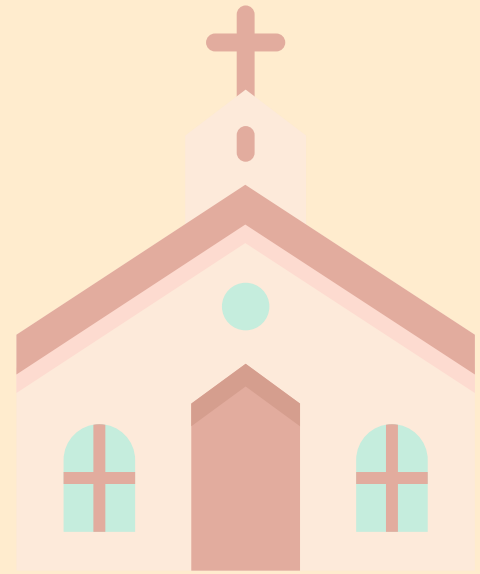
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Introduction

This Handbook serves to inform parents whose children are enrolled in our center about the policies and procedures in place. As a parent, you will be notified in writing of any changes and or additions to any policy or procedure in this handbook during the school year, no less than 10 days prior to implementation. Parents are expected to read, understand and be familiar with this Handbook as it also serves as the Parent Contract which will require your signature of receipt, understanding and agreement.



PHILOSOPHY

Believing that each child is made in the image and likeness of God, we minister to each child and his/her family as the child develops spiritually, socially, physically, emotionally, and intellectually. We focus on providing high quality, developmentally appropriate care to children in a Catholic environment. We are continually challenged to identify and to minister to the needs of our children and their families.

HISTORY

Established in January of 2001, we have grown from our humble beginnings as a Part Day Program that afforded the mothers of our parish an opportunity to run their weekly errands, while ensuring that their children would be cared for in a safe, faith filled, and developmentally appropriate environment. A Full Day Program was established in June of 2006 to meet the needs of working families in the parish and in our community.





STATEMENT OF GOALS

The overall purpose of the St. Thomas Aquinas Child Development Center is to provide developmentally appropriate and nurturing care for children in a Catholic environment for our local parish and the larger community. The following goals are necessary to meet that purpose:

- To teach basic Catholic principles by word and example
- To help children grow in their knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith through Bible stories, age-appropriate activities, and the celebration of special feast days and customs.
- To provide a safe and healthy environment that encourages play, exploration, and learning.
- To provide interactions and activities designed to foster a healthy self-esteem and a love for learning.
- To encourage each child to solve problems independently.
- To promote physical development through fine and gross motor skills.



ORGANIZATION

The St. Thomas Aquinas Child Development Center is a licensed, non-profit organization. The Pastor of the Parish is the administrator. The Child Development Center's Director is responsible for the day-to-day operations.

The Center is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 am – 5:30 p.m. for children ages 6 weeks through 4 years old year-round. Our academic calendar runs from September through August each year.

Please see the Academic Year Calendar for a complete listing of events and also dates that the Child Development Center will be closed. (We generally follow the College Station ISD calendar.)



CURRICULUM

Our curriculum includes prayer, language experiences, art, music, physical skills, manipulatives, dramatic play, science, nature, cooking, literature, outside play and more. Developmental skills, creativity, and exploration are enhanced through these units.

We have visits from community helpers, like firefighters, to give children a greater awareness of the world around them.

The St. Thomas Aquinas Child Development Center is a Catholic program committed to sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with children in age-appropriate ways. During class time, children are taught that God loves them, and we are all God's children. Basic Christian principles are taught by word and example; to love one another, to be kind to each other, to comfort those who are sad, and to share with each other. Bible stories and times of prayer are shared with the children. The priest of the parish conducts a weekly prayer time with all the children and staff.



ENROLLMENT

Once enrolled in the program, children will remain enrolled until a 30-day written withdrawal notice is received. Each academic year, children may be promoted to their appropriate classroom based on age and availability. Children may be enrolled as places become available throughout the academic year.

Enrollment for any student is subject to administrative approval.



WITHDRAWAL

A 30-day written notice is required prior to withdrawal from the Center for any reason.

A withdrawal form may be obtained from the CDC office. Monthly tuition will not be pro-rated or refunded. *Tuition includes any fees or other charges. A \$25.00 re-registration fee is due for children who withdraw and return in the same academic year. Families terminating their contract before August have the option to be placed on end of the waitlist. Families will need to fill out a waitlist form and attach the \$25 fee. This option does not guarantee placement in the fall.





TUITION

Tuition is due on the first day of each month and is considered delinquent on the 7th. Payment received after the 7th will be assessed a \$25.00 late fee. Additionally, if tuition payment and any applicable late fees are not received by the 7th, children will not be allowed to attend the CDC on or after the 8th, until the account is paid in full. Children will be dismissed if tuition is not paid by the 12th. Tuition is automatically processed through Tuition Express using a bank account draft or credit card for payment. There is a \$25.00 returned check fee for all checks returned. Tuition will NOT be prorated or refunded.

TUITION DISCOUNTS

We offer two different types of discounts to our families: Multiple children, oldest sibling discount OR a parishioner, oldest child discount (only one discount per family). If you wish to partake of the parishioner discount, the form may be obtained from the CDC office.

DROP OFF POLICY

To uphold the Child's daily schedule, we request that children be dropped off at the center no later than 10:00am except for doctor appointments, occasional needs, and emergencies. The CDC should be notified as soon as possible in advance of changes to drop off time. We ask that drop off not occur during nap (11:30am -3:00pm) as this is disruptive to the group as well as being difficult for your child.



ABSENCES

There are no refunds or prorated tuition on days your child is absent. If for any reason your child will be late, absent, or out for an extended period, of time please contact the CDC Office (979-485-8130).



Access Card Policy

Each family is given one access card for each parent. If you lose or damage a card the first replacement is free. After that you will have to pay a fee of \$10 for each replacement card needed. Please let us know if a card is lost or stolen so that we can deactivate it.

Dismissal

Some situations that demand expulsion are:

- Non-payment of tuition or fees by the 12th of the month.
- Inappropriate behavioral acts of a child as described in our below policy.

There will be no refunds of tuition for a child that is dismissed.





Inappropriate Behavior Policy

We understand that aggressive behavior and biting, unfortunately, is a part of a day care setting. Our goal is to help identify what is causing the behavior and resolve these issues. State regulations require that the parent of the child causing the incident and the parent of the child who was hurt be contacted. Names of the children are not shared with either parent.

For the child bitten/scratched/hit:

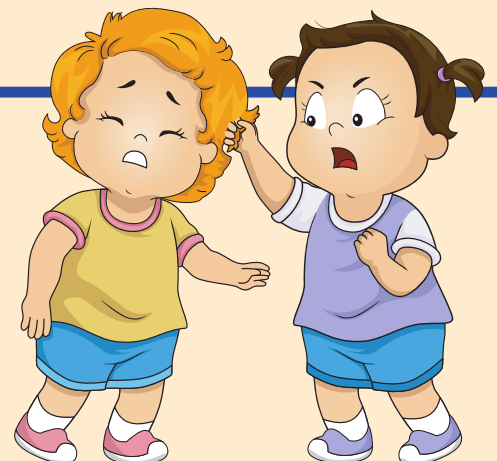
1. First aid is administered to the bite/scratch. It is cleaned with soap and water. If the skin is broken, the bite/scratch is covered with a bandage.
2. Parents are notified via our electronic system.
3. The "Accident Report" form is filled out documenting the incident. Must have form **signed, dated, and timed** by a parent/guardian at pickup, the day of the incident.

For the child that inflicted injury:

1. The teacher will firmly tell the child "NO, DO NOT BITE!" "NO! NO SCRATCH!"
2. The child will be placed in time away or a thinking square for no longer than the child's age (ex. One year old, one minute).
3. The parents are notified via our electronic system.
4. The "**Incident Report**" is filled out documenting the incident. Must have form **signed, dated, and timed** by a parent/guardian at pickup, the day of the incident.
- 5.

When Biting/Scratching Continues:

1. The child will be placed next to the teacher to help prevent any additional aggressive behavior or biting incidents.
2. The child will be observed by the classroom staff and administrative staff to determine what is causing the child's aggressive behavior or biting (teething, communication, frustration, etc.).
3. The child will be given positive attention and approval for positive behavior. We **MUST** have this form signed by a parent/guardian.
4. If the issue cannot be resolved following procedures listed above, this may result in withdrawal from the center.





DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE

STA CDC employs discipline that is:

- Individualized and consistent for each child.
- Appropriate to the child's level of understanding.
- Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control. Our caregivers use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, selfcontrol, and self-direction, which include at least the following:
- Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only on unacceptable behavior.
- Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements.
- Redirecting behavior using positive statements.
- 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. We will not tolerate harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child.

The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:

- Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment.
- Punishment associated with food, naps or toilet training.
- Pinching, shaking, or biting a child.
- Hitting a child with a hand or instrument.
- 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 the child's age.

All our discipline policies are in accordance with Texas Administrative Code, Title 40, Chapters 746 & 747, Subchapters L, Discipline & Guidance that govern our actions as a State Licensed facility.



ARRIVAL/PICK-UP

Everyone will enter and exit through the front main entrance to the Child Development Center. Please do not park in the FIRE LANE. For the safety of the children, please enter and exit the parking lot at a slow rate of speed. Each morning, children must be accompanied to their rooms by a parent or authorized adult. Children **MUST** be signed in/out on a daily attendance form in the classroom. Children should never be left in their classroom unless there is a teacher or staff member present. Please be sure the staff sees you when you bring your child into the room. The Center will not be responsible for children whose parents do not do this. Children will be released only to those persons whose names appear on the registration form. Written notice of any changes to this agreement must be signed by the parent(s) and submitted to the Director. St. Thomas Aquinas Church has no legal authority to refuse either parent the right to pick up a child unless a court has granted temporary or permanent custody to one parent or to a third party and the school has been furnished with a copy of the court order. Photo identification and documentation of one's driver's license number is required by licensing to verify identity. Please place all strollers and/or car seats in the assigned area for safety.

The Center is licensed to provide care from
7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.



LATE PICK-UP

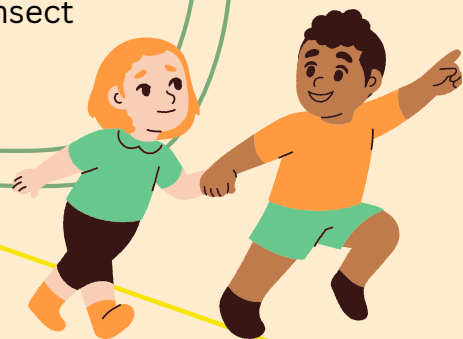
A LATE PICK-UP FEE will be assessed per child for late pick-up. The fee is \$1.00 per minute. For example: 5 minutes = \$5.00, 10 minutes = \$10.00 etc.





CLOTHING

We play in mud, sand, and water; we cook and make many marvelous goops; we glue and paint (not always just with brushes) ...so please have your child wear comfortable play clothes so that he/she will feel free to participate. Each child must have an extra set of seasonal clothing in his/her cubby or bag/backpack. Please label the clothes with your child's name. Outside is our favorite place to be, so please put sunscreen, insect repellent and appropriate seasonal clothing on your child in the morning. *Our CDC Staff is unable to put sunscreen and insect repellent on children.



SHOE POLICY

We require closed-toed shoes. For safety reasons socks and athletic (tennis) shoes are recommended. Flipflops, shoes with cleats, backless shoes and boots are discouraged.

YOUR CHILD WILL NEED

To keep at school:

- A rest mat and light blanket - please no pillows or sleeping bags or fluffy items, due to limited storage space.

To have in your child's bag/backpack daily:

- A lunch and drink (no soda, sweet tea, candy, or gum)
- A change of clothes (to remain in backpack/diaper bag)
- A back-up supply of disposable diapers/pullups and diaper cream, if applicable
- Your child may bring an item from home to have during rest time that may make him/her feel more comfortable. **However, children should not bring toys from home to play with.**

Infants:

- Formula/breast milk, water (if desired), disposable diapers and wipes
- Multiple changes of clothing
- Pacifier

Mothers who are nursing are welcome to come during the day to nurse their children. Please coordinate with your child's teacher if you wish to do so.

*Please LABEL all items brought to school.
Thank you!



PARENT INVOLVEMENT

If this is the first time your child will experience a childcare/pre-school environment, your positive attitude will greatly affect the initial adjustment to our Center.

While a majority of children have little difficulty in adjusting to new situations, some do experience teary separations. There may be tears but reassure your child of your return and leave promptly. Call the Center to check on your child as often as you like, and we will be honest with you about his or her progress.

Please remember that a child can sense any reservations on the parent's part, so a positive attitude must be maintained to assure a smooth transition. Parents are welcome to visit the program at any time during hours of operation, for any reason, without prior approval. Please be considerate of nap time.

Parent involvement is welcomed and encouraged. All parents who wish to volunteer must complete Diocesan requirements for Ethics & Integrity in Ministry, including a background check, an on-line application, and attendance at an Ethics & Integrity in Ministry workshop. See the Director for more information on how to fulfill these requirements.

Individual classroom and Center newsletters, which provide information about activities, are sent home regularly along with other notices as needed. Your child's cubby should be checked daily for important information.

Parents are provided with a daily record of diaper changes, feedings, and activities. There is a parent bulletin board by the office posting state notifications, the current month's snack menu and the most recent Licensing inspection report.

Parents, please read all notes and newsletters. We strongly encourage parents to participate and communicate with us.



LUNCH

Your child's lunch should be something he/she can feed themselves (except for infants). Remember to pack foods that your child enjoys and that are safe and healthy to eat. Children will not be allowed to share lunches. Also, please do not forget a drink for lunch (please no soda or sweet tea). For your child's safety, please do not send gum or candy. We require all food to be pre-cooked. For example, we cannot make a microwaveable mac-n-cheese as it takes more than a minute to heat, making it a safety hazard. We always aim to make lunch an enjoyable time for your child.

POTTY TRAINING

Our policy requires all children going into the 3-year-old classrooms to be potty-trained prior to entering the classroom.

SNACK

A mid-morning and an afternoon snack will be given to all children 12 months and older. This includes a variety of food items. The monthly snack menu is posted on the parent bulletin board and in each classroom.

PETS/ANIMALS

On occasion we will have animals/pets at the center for educational purposes. We will create specific areas for interaction with animals and supervise children's contact to prevent the spread of germs. All animals will be healthy, and pets will have immunization records on file. All areas will be cleaned and disinfected before and after contact with animals. Permission slips will be sent out prior to any activity. If your child has any specific allergies related to animals/pets please let us know in advance.



INFANT SAFE SLEEP POLICY

Our center will follow these safe sleep recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) for infants to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome/Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS/SUIDS):

Infants are to sleep one infant per crib on their back with a tight-fitting sheet on a firm mattress. Items that should not be placed in a crib include: soft or loose bedding, such as blankets, quilts, or comforters; pillows; stuffed toys/animals; soft objects; bumper pads; liners; or sleep positioning devices. Infants must not have their heads, faces, or cribs covered at any time by items such as blankets, linens, or clothing. If an infant needs extra warmth, use sleep clothing. Infants may use a pacifier during sleep, but the pacifier must not be attached to a stuffed animal or the infant's clothing by a string, cord, or other attaching mechanism. If the infant falls asleep in a restrictive device other than a crib (such as a bouncy chair or swing, or arrives to care asleep in a car seat), move the infant to a crib immediately. Infants sleep in a well-ventilated, temperature controlled, smoke-free room and are actively observed during sleep. Do not swaddle an infant for sleep or rest. Awake infants will have supervised "tummy time" several times daily to promote muscle growth. If an infant is able to roll back and forth from front to back, place the infant on the infant's back for sleep and allow the infant to assume a preferred sleep position.



TRANSPORTATION

The Center does not provide transportation, except on an emergency basis. Permission for emergency transportation **MUST** be given on the Consent/Release Form.

LOST ITEMS

Lost articles will be kept in the office. Any extra items of clothing should be clearly marked with your child's name, especially jackets. The Center will not be responsible for items left over 30 days.





HEALTH

Infants entering the childcare center for the first time must have a note of clearance from a doctor's office confirming the child is physically able to take part in the daycare program.

All children must have a current medical examination and immunizations, and 4-year-old must have vision and hearing screenings (when they turn 4). (TB tests are not required in this county.)

Documentation must be submitted on the first day of attendance. This is to conform to the laws of the State of Texas and the Department of Human Services. Please inform the Director and your child's teacher of any chronic medical problems or allergies before his/her first day of school. * An emergency treatment authorization must be on file for each child. *

Please keep your child at home if he/she:

Has a temperature of more than 100.3 degrees Fahrenheit (oral) in the morning. Children should be free of fever for 24 hours (without medication) before returning to the Center. Has conjunctivitis, an eye infection commonly referred to as "pink eye". The eye is generally red with some burning and there is thick yellow drainage being secreted. Has bronchitis. This can begin with hoarseness, cough, and a slight elevation in temperature. The cough may be dry and painful, but it gradually becomes productive.

Has a rash that you cannot identify or that has not been diagnosed by a physician. Has impetigo of the skin. Shows up as red pimples. These eventually become small vesicles surrounded by a reddened area. When the blister breaks, the surface is raw and weeping.

Has diarrhea (watery or greenish bowel movements that look different or are much more frequent than usual). Your child must be free of diarrhea for 24 hours. Is vomiting (more than the usual spitting up in a baby). Must have not vomited in the last 24 hours.

Has a severe cold with fever, sneezing and nose drainage. Seems sick without obvious symptoms. In this case, a child may look and act differently. There may be unusual paleness, irritability, unusual tiredness, or lack of interest. Has any contagious disease - measles (Red or German), chicken pox, mumps, roseola, etc. Please let us know if your child becomes ill with a communicable disease so that other parents may be notified. Has been diagnosed by a doctor as having an ear or throat infection until medication has been administered to the child for at least 24 hrs.

Children in attendance must be able to participate in all activities, including outside time.

Note: If a condition develops during the day, a parent will be notified, and the child must be picked up as soon as possible. A sick child will be attended to and kept comfortable in the office until parents arrive. An illness form will be filled out that must be signed by a parent/guardian when the child is picked up.

If head lice were to affect your child or another child in the school, several actions would be taken:

Parents of infected child would be notified, and the child would be immediately removed from the childcare setting until further notice. Infected student may return to school once one treatment with an effective medicated shampoo or cream is utilized and the student is lice and nit free. To assure effective treatment, the child will be checked for any evidence of new infestation daily for 10 days after treatment.

ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS

Parents are notified of any accidents or incidents. Always leave a phone number where you may be reached if it is different from the emergency numbers on file.

Accident/Incident reports are filled out by the teacher and signed by the Director or the person in charge at the time of the accident/incident. Parents are asked to sign the report for proof that you were notified.



MEDICATIONS

All medication must be turned in to the front office with an authorization form for dispensing medication.

Insurance

St. Thomas Aquinas has liability insurance in the amount of \$1,000,000 for each occurrence of negligence covering injury to a child. A copy of the certificate is available for review upon written request.



FIRST AID AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The St. Thomas Aquinas Child Development Center is extremely concerned and cognizant of its role in correctly managing situations that require first aid or emergency care. Our staff is required to be certified in CPR and basic first aid. Our staff is also trained in emergency and safety procedures. Specific safety and emergency procedures are posted in each classroom and in the Staff Handbook. We practice fire drills monthly and severe weather drills/emergency evacuation every three months. In case of an emergency requiring children to be picked up early from the site or from an alternate shelter, parents will be notified by phone and should also tune into local reporting stations (TV channel KBTX and radio stations 104.7 and 106.1). In case of a medical emergency, which requires advanced medical attention, parents will immediately be notified by phone by the Director or designee. If the situation warrants transportation to the emergency room, the Director will go with the child, and parents will be notified by phone to meet at the hospital. Consent for general first aid items is also included on the First Aid Consent Form, which must be turned in by the first day of class.

EMERGENCY READINESS PLAN

If a code is called for the facility or grounds, lockdown or shelter in place protocols will be followed. In case of an emergency requiring off-site relocation, our alternate shelter is Academy Sports and Outdoors located at 2511 Earl Rudder Fwy. S. Should off-site relocation be necessary, infants will be transported in buggies and all other students will walk to the alternate shelter. Children will remain grouped by classroom and will be supervised by their teachers. Classroom teachers will carry the classroom sign-in sheet to account for children in their care.

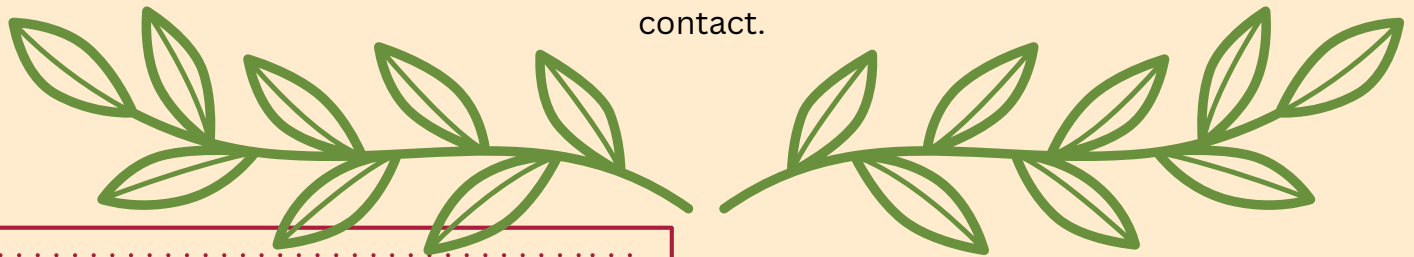
Teachers, children, and other CDC staff will exit through the back of the building and proceed across the parking lot to the side entrance of Academy.

The director's cell phone number will be the emergency contact number on file with Childcare Licensing. CDC Staff will use personal cell phones and any other available telephones to communicate with Childcare Licensing, local authorities, and parents.

Authorization Forms with emergency contact information and authorization for emergency medical care will be carried by classroom teachers in the classroom binder. A master binder with all student Authorization Forms will be carried by a designated staff member.

Once staff and children are in place at the alternate shelter and everyone has been accounted for, parents will be contacted and asked to immediately pick up their child(ren). If we are unable to reach the parent(s), the first emergency contact will be called and asked to immediately pick up the child(ren). We will expect all children to be picked up from the alternate shelter within an hour of contact.

As parents or emergency contacts arrive to pick up children, they will be asked to sign-out their child on the classroom sign-in sheet, as would normally occur. Classroom teachers will stay with their students until all students have been picked up and signed out by a parent or emergency contact.



GANG FREE ZONE

As a result of House Bill 2086, our childcare center is designated as a gang-free zone. The purpose of gang-free zones is to deter certain types of criminal activity in areas where children gather, by enforcing tougher penalties. Certain gang-related criminal activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of our center is a violation of this law and is therefore subject to increased penalty under state law.



CELEBRATIONS

We have many celebrations throughout the school year (see Calendar). If parents are interested in helping with holiday parties (see "Volunteer Requirements" in Parent Involvement section) or providing refreshments, sign-up sheets will be posted in each classroom prior to the party. Parent participation is greatly appreciated! We have many special event celebrations throughout the year. All children are encouraged to attend the Christmas Program and the Spring Program.

WATER ACTIVITIES

Each year, during the summer months, we have "Splash Day." During these times, children will experience water activities, such as sprinklers and water tables. Each class has water play time. Extra supervision is provided by staff.

LBB

Lunch box break is a parent purchased service provided twice a month. We provide the kids with pizza, snack and a juice.

BIRTHDAYS

Children love to celebrate birthdays at school. Please verify the date you wish to celebrate at least a week in advance with your child's teacher. Please send easy to handle refreshments. Some nutritional alternatives to cupcakes are raw vegetables with dip, fruit kabobs, or muffins. If you wish to send invitations to school, please send enough so that each child may receive one; otherwise, please mail the invitations. For the safety of all children at the Center, NO balloons may be brought for class parties!





CONCERNS OF WELL BEING AND SAFETY

It is our top priority to keep your child safe from all harm while in our care.

In Texas, each person is a mandated reporter of abuse or neglect, which means that if you (or our staff) suspect a child is being abused or neglected, you are required by law to report it. The Child Abuse Hotline number is 1-800-252-5400.

The local Licensing Office number is 979-731-0130, and the website is <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/>.

"Minimum Standards" and inspection reports are available on this website and in the CDC office. In addition, if at any time you see something that appears suspicious, makes you uncomfortable, or violates policy, please bring it to the Director's attention, or that of the St. Thomas Aquinas parish's Pastor, or directly to the Diocese of Austin Bishop's office at 512-476-4888.



CONCLUSION

It is our policy that each child's needs are met. If you have any questions or concerns about our Center, the policies and procedures, or the care of your child, please bring it to the attention of your child's teacher and/or the Child Development Center Director. Concerns may also be addressed with the Pastor of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish. We strive to make your child's stay at St. Thomas Aquinas Child Development Center a pleasurable experience. May God bless you and your family. We wish you a very successful and happy academic year! Thank you for choosing St. Thomas Aquinas Child Development Center!



"Let the children come to Me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these." Matthew 19:14

WEBSITE

Please see our website (www.stabcs.org) for a copy of the Parent Handbook, upcoming events, calendar information, and more!

