

SWEET START
CHILD CARE

PARENT HANDBOOK



☎ 469-747-3073

➤ 115 W. Beltline Rd. | Desoto, TX 75115

➤ SweetStartChildcare.com

✉ sweetstartchildcare@gmail.com

Sweet Start Childcare is a Texas Rising Star early learning program. The Texas Rising Star program is a quality rating and improvement system for Texas early childcare programs participating in the Texas Workforce Commission's (TWC) Child Care Services. We are committed to providing high-quality childcare that exceeds the state's minimum childcare licensing standards in the following categories:

1. Director and Staff Qualifications, Orientation, and Training
2. Teacher-Child Interactions
3. Program Administration
4. Indoor/Outdoor Learning Environments.

Children who attend high-quality early learning programs, especially at-risk children, can make significant gains in their knowledge, skills, and abilities. For more information go to <https://texasrisingstar.org/parents/>

1. MISSION, VISION, & PHILOSOPHY

Mission: The mission of Sweet Start Childcare is to provide a safe, creative and caring environment for children ages 1 month to 5 years. Our focus is to provide an encouraging educational experience, promoting social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. Committed to the families we serve, we strive to give parents complete peace of mind, while being seen as THE example of what a quality child care center should be!

Vision: The ultimate vision we have for our facility is twofold, and rooted in both present and future. For the present, our goal is for parents to feel good about their childcare choice, and that the children are safe, engaged, educated, and smiling. And for the future, we want these children to warmly look back at their experience with us, and see it as a cherished part of their childhood.

Philosophy: Sweet Start Childcare is here to offer your children the care, comfort, fun and safety they deserve. And for you, the peace of mind that comes from knowing your child is in the best of hands. Each day promises an exciting new adventure, and we make sure each child experiences the joys of a truly caring environment. We also strive to be your partner. We are completely transparent in our programs and curriculum, we continuously self-assess and look to improve, and we make communication with you a paramount part of the childcare environment.

SWEET START CHILD CARE

Hours of operation are: 6:00am-6:30pm Monday-Friday.
In the event of inclement weather: You will be notified via Brightwheel.

2024 CLOSURE DATES

Monday, January 1st
New Years Day

Monday January 15th
MLK Day

Monday, February 19th
President's Day

Friday, March 29th
Good Friday

Monday, May 27th
Memorial Day

Wednesday, June 19th
Juneteenth

Thursday, July 4th
Independence Day

Monday, September 2nd
Labor Day

Monday, October 14th
Columbus Day

Thursday, October 31st Close Early @2pm
Staff Development

Monday, November 11th
Veteran's Day

Wednesday, November 27th Close Early @2pm
Staff Development

Thursday, November 28th
Thanksgiving

Friday, November 29th
Thanksgiving

Tuesday, December 24th Close Early @12pm
Staff Development

Wednesday, December 25th
Christmas

Thursday, December 26th
Christmas

Tuesday, December 31st Close Early @12pm
Staff Development

"WHERE WE DREAM BIG"



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3. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Sweet Start Childcare does not discriminate in providing services to children and their families on the basis of race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, marital status, and/or disabilities.

Children are enrolled on a first-come, first-serve basis, depending on availability in the most developmentally appropriate class. Children are placed on a waiting list if there is no availability in the most appropriate class.

Before your child can be officially enrolled in Sweet Start Childcare you must complete and provide the following:

- Non-refundable Registration fee must be paid (\$50 per family)
- Parent policy handbook and fee contract (end of this packet)
- Complete enrollment forms & copy of immunization records
- Parent orientation to make sure that Sweet Start is the right choice for you.
- For new students, all required documents and registration fee must be turned in and paid by Wednesday at noon to begin the next Monday. Documents received after this time will delay enrollment.
- Download the Brightwheel app.

First Day

Preparing for the first day can be exciting, but it can also be an overwhelming and anxious time – we understand! We will work with you to make your child's first day the best it can be. You're always welcome to call any time to see how your child's adjusting or utilize the Brightwheel app for updates throughout the day.

On the first day, we ask that you send in the items listed below. Please make sure to label each item with your child's name.

- Please provide two complete sets of extra clothes, including socks, for your child. It's always a good idea to keep a sweater or sweatshirt at the center, too. Clothing should be updated periodically to make sure it still fits and is appropriate for the season.
- Diapers and wipes (if applicable). These items will stay at school.
- A small blanket for a nap, a small pillow, or a comfort item is optional. We'll keep these items in your child's cubby and ask that you take them home weekly to wash them.

- A child-sized tote or backpack to send soiled clothes and art projects home in, REQUIRED.
- Labeled bottles/cup(s) for ages 0-17 month olds. Bottles must be pre-made with formula.

*Please keep in mind that registration and first week payment must be made before children can attend.

*Children will be allowed to begin care on Mondays only.

Withdrawal

If parents decide to withdraw their child for any reason from the program, we require a parent to fill out a **withdrawal form via sweetstartchildcare.com in the parent portal** and submit **at least two weeks prior to withdrawal date (10 business days)**. Even if your child does not attend during that two week period, payment is still required. Any fees not paid on time with regards to termination of child care services will also be subject to daily late fees, until full payment is received. If you do not withdraw according to our policy, you will be required to clear your balance and pay a double registration fee if you decide to re-enroll at any point.

CCA/CCMS: In addition to the policy above, you will need to contact Child Care Group to let them know you are withdrawing your child from Sweet Start Childcare 2 weeks prior to withdrawal date.

4. STATE LICENSING RULES AND REGULATIONS

Sweet Start Childcare is voluntarily licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. A copy of the Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers is available for review in the office and on the web

<https://hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/doing-business-with-hhs/provider-portal/protective-services/ccl/min-standards/chapter-746-centers.pdf>

Our center is state-licensed and regularly inspected to ensure everything meets or exceeds standards, including child-to-teacher ratios and safe facilities. Sweet Start Childcare is subject to inspection by state and local health, fire, licensing, and building agencies. Regulations and inspections pertain to staff qualifications, the

facility and playground, nutrition, health and safety matters, record-keeping, and child-to-staff ratios.

5. TUITION & FEES

Payment Procedures

Currently, the only form of payment we accept for registration, weekly tuition and uniform shirts is through our childcare management app: Brightwheel. Processing fees: Credit Card Fee: 2.9%. ACH Fee:\$0.60/transaction. We do not provide physical receipts. Once payment is received you will receive an email with your receipt of payment.

Enrollment Fee

A \$50 non-refundable fee is due when your child's application is submitted.

Annual Enrollment Fee

A non-refundable enrollment fee of \$50 per family is required annually and must be paid via Brightwheel. This enrollment fee will go toward supplies. This is an annual enrollment fee and will be charged each August. Enrollment fees for families enrolling between the months of January and July will be either waived or discounted.

Re-Enrollment

If you withdraw from our center and would like to return, a new enrollment form and registration fee must be submitted and an opening must be available.

Weekly Tuition & Late Fees

ALL PAYMENTS MUST BE PAID IN ADVANCE FOR THE CURRENT WEEK. All weekly tuition fees must be paid every Monday by 9am. If payment is not received by Monday at 9am, a late payment fee will be applied to your account at the rate of \$25 plus \$5 per additional day. If tuition is not paid by 6pm Tuesday, your child may not return until balance is taken care of.

It must be understood that to hold your child's space, weekly tuition fees must

be paid whether your child attends that week or not. If payment is not made, your child's name will be removed from current enrollment. Payment is based on contract not attendance.

Suspension of Care for Non-Payment

If care is suspended, there will be two weeks given to take care of balance. If the balance is not paid within 2 weeks of suspension, care will be terminated.

Copay for Families with Child Care Assistance

Families who receive child care assistance must pay copay(if applicable) by the 1st of every month. If payment is not received on the 1st of the month by 9am, a late payment fee will be applied to your account at the rate of \$25 for the first day, plus \$5 per additional day. If not paid within 5 business days, it will be reported to Child Care Assistance.

Drop-Ins

Sweet Start Child Care offers full time care only. Drop-ins are not allowed.

Absentee Credit

What is Absentee Credit? A pre-planned, pre-approved, reduced price week of tuition for **full time students only**. Because Sweet Start Childcare does not offer free weeks of tuition for any reason, we will offer 2 weeks of discounted tuition to each student who has a full week of a pre-planned absence at a rate of 40% discount. For example, if you've planned for Sara to spend one week with her grandmother, you must put in an Absentee Form request to the center to take advantage of one of your reduced weeks allowed.

How to use: For a pre-planned absence, an Absentee Credit Request Form must be submitted online at least one week in advance; by Monday of the prior week. Any requests received after the Monday deadline will result in an absentee credit request being denied. For example, if you've planned for Sara to spend Spring Break with her grandmother (March 17-21) and you do not put your request form in until March 14th, your request will result in an automatic denial.

Steps:

- 1) Complete request form (can be found on our website) by Monday of prior week requested.
- 2) Request decision will be sent via email no later than 24 hours after receipt of request.
- 3) Pay discounted week of tuition by Monday at 9am of the week of absence, as if you were paying a regular week of tuition. Please note that late fees still apply to reduced weeks of care.

FAQS:

-If an absentee credit has been approved and tuition is not paid on time, your reduced fee will be subject to our late fee policy.

-Unused absentee credit weeks may not roll over to the following calendar year.

-Under no circumstance will Sweet Start Childcare offer free weeks. Only 2 pre-approved absentee credit weeks per child will be given each calendar year.

-Weeks that include holidays and center closure days may not be included in absentee credit weeks. Putting in a request for weeks that include holiday or center closures will be automatically denied. For example, if the center is closed on a Thursday and Friday for Christmas break, requests submitted for this week will be denied.

Late Pick-Up Policy

If you are late picking up your child you will be charged a late fee of \$15 at 6:31pm and \$1 each additional minute. This late fee will be added to your Brightwheel account and must be paid before care the following day.

Failed Payments

Any failed or non sufficient fund payments will receive a \$30 service fee and will be subject to our late fee policy of \$25 plus \$5 per additional day. Failed or non sufficient payments must be rectified no later than 6pm of same day notification to avoid termination of services.

School Age Children Tuition

If your child's school is closed one day during a school week, Sweet Start Childcare

will offer single day care. We are asking that you notify us at least one week in advance for these days.

Price List

0-17 months	\$220/week
18-35 months	\$210/week
3-5 years	\$200/week
Schoolers	\$150/week
Uniform Fee	4 shirts @ \$24
Annual Enrollment Fee	\$50/year

6. ARRIVAL

Parents must accompany their child to and from the car each day to be signed in and out.

Daily cut off is 9:00am. Children will only be accepted after cut off with a doctor's note. Breakfast ends at 8:45am. Children who arrive at or after 8:45am will be unable to eat breakfast at the center.

Car Seats: If you are dropping your child(ren) off in a car seat, please be prepared to take them out and hand the child(ren) to staff. We are unable to remove children from car seats for safety reasons.

Cell Phones: We will not serve parents on cell phones. We ask that you are free from distractions as you drop your child(ren) off.

Parent PARTICIPATION

Parents may:

- Visit Sweet Start Childcare unannounced and at any time their child is in care.
- Review/inspect any posted information located on our parent board at any time.

- Parents may contact the Texas Department of Family and Childcare Services at 1-800-862-5252 or www.dfps.state.tx.us.
- Parents have the right to breastfeed and/or provide breastmilk for their child. There will be a comfortable chair in the infant room if they decide to breastfeed during hours of operation. For the safety of the other children in our care, the nursing parent may be required to complete a background check with our center.

Communication

- To update, personal information, address, phone number, etc. Or to request a parent conference, please update it on the Brightwheel app or email us at sweetstartchildcare@gmail.com
 - You should speak privately with the Sweet Start, childcare staff, and or Director if you have a concern about your child or any other child or parent at Sweet Start childcare. All information about your child and other children who attend the center is kept confidential. All parents may request a conference at any time.
- Parents will be notified of important information through the Brightwheel app, messages sent home, verbally, etc.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers, which includes parents, are always welcome in our classrooms: however, volunteers are required to have a background check on file at the center and complete 10 hours of required training. Each volunteer is responsible for the cost of fingerprinting and training. Please communicate with the Director upfront for classroom visits or class participation.

Any information requested by the parent concerning Sweet Start Childcare will be provided, within reason. We welcome any comments or suggestions from parents.

We will be utilizing the Brightwheel Childcare Management App to communicate with parents, post pictures and more!

To review minimum standards for Childcare Centers please go to: <https://hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/doing-business-with-hhs/provider-portal/protective-services/ccl/min-standards/chapter-746-centers.pdf>

Contact for licensing: 8700 North Stemmons Freeway Suite 104 Dallas, TX 75247

214-583-4253 or 800-582-6036 or cclquestions@hhsc.state.tx.us

If and when any operational policies change, parents will be notified in writing as soon as possible. Parents will be asked to sign and date your receipt of changes.

7. RELEASE OF CHILDREN

We will only release children to their parents or someone on the approved pick up list specified on the enrollment forms. If you need to authorize a new pickup person, please send the request via Brightwheel or email us at sweetstartchildcare@gmail.com. For your child's safety, any time a person we do not recognize comes to pick up your child, we will ask for a government-issued photo ID.

Children will not be released to unauthorized individuals.

The late pick-up fee does not constitute an agreement to provide after-hours service. Sweet Start Childcare's operating hours are from 6am-6:30 daily. If you believe you will arrive after 6:30pm please alert your child's teacher via the Brightwheel app as soon as possible. Failure to pick up your child or contact Sweet Start Childcare, and if you or another authorized emergency contact cannot be reached within 15 minutes after closing time, Sweet Start Childcare staff will contact the local authorities.

Car Seats: If you dropped your child(ren) off in a car seat, please be prepared to place them into the carseat upon dismissal. We are unable to place children into car seats and buckle them in for safety reasons.

*Release Tip: Please message via Brightwheel or call us when on the way so that we can do our best to have your child(ren) ready when you arrive.

Custodial and Foster Care

Some families have legal custodial orders that address who is permitted to pick up or visit a child. If there are custody orders or protection orders relating to your child, a copy must be provided to Sweet Start Childcare for your child's file. This information is confidential and solely for the safety and well-being of your child. Families must update file when custody orders change or expire. Please note that employees cannot be responsible for supervising parenting time (visitation), and,

as a result, visitation for non-custodial parents is not permitted in our center.

For enrolled children in the foster care system, Sweet Start Childcare will need to receive a copy of the foster care paperwork. Sweet Start Childcare will release the child only to the foster parents or the child's caseworker, who must sign the child in and out on the visitor's list and provide proper identification. The caseworker must verify any additions or changes in writing (by letter or email).

Until custody has been established by a court action, one parent may not limit the other from picking up a child in our care. The center must be notified immediately of any changes in custody orders. Certified custody orders must be given to the center director.

8. CURRICULUM

My First School

- My First School is a play based curriculum. It is a way of providing children of this age time to explore and learn are appropriate activities. My First School is designed for children ages 12-24 months.
- Learning Concepts: Vocabulary, letter sounds, colors
- Areas of Development: Language, Cognitive, Fine motor skills, Gross motor skills and Sensory/Art
 - Each weeks lessons will include different activities from each area of development. Classes will focus on one unit per month. These units include all about me, food, body, routines, etc.

Preschool Palace

- Preschool Palace is designed for children ages 2-5 years old. Most daily lesson plans include circle time activities/themes, a movement activity, sensory activity, craft ideas, and a printable worksheet.
- Each day strives to promote each child's cognitive, social, gross motor, fine motor, and other kindergarten readiness skills.
- Daily Activities provide an opportunity for movement, fine motor/writing/reading, math/science, creative art, sensory and dramatic play.

- Objectives and concepts invade but not limited to: alphabets, numbers, shapes, colors and themes. Some examples of themes are recycling, outdoor adventures, opposites, animals, exercise and community helpers.

9. MEALS & NUTRITION

Breakfast, lunch, afternoon snack and supper are provided to all students daily. Weekly menus are sent via Brightwheel and posted on our Parent Board. All meals are served and prepared following the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)/USDA requirements for children ages twelve months to twelve years. This includes one protein, one grain, two fruits and/or vegetables, and milk at breakfast, lunch and supper. Breakfast and snacks include one grain and a fruit or vegetable. If you provide your child's meals and/or snacks from home, Sweet Start is not responsible for the nutritional value or for meeting your child's daily food needs. Water will be offered during each meal, snacks, during and after physical activities, and throughout the day.

Infants

Written Infant Feeding Instructions must be updated monthly and signed by a parent, for all children under 13 months or until the child is eating table food. Infants 0-11 months: Baby food will be provided by the center, with the option of providing your own. Beginning at 12 months, if your child(ren) are not yet on table food, you will be responsible for providing baby food.

Center staff cannot mix formula bottles and cannot add cereal to bottles. If a child is drinking formula, it must come to school premixed and labeled with the child's name every day. Under no circumstances will children be allowed to sleep with bottles in bed.

Special Dietary Needs

Students with food allergies must list allergies on enrollment forms as well as a FARE Form completed by a licensed physician. We can provide allergy-friendly alternatives with documentation from a doctor for students with food allergies or intolerances. We encourage all students to eat the meals provided at school; however, we understand that may not be the best option for all students. If you would like to provide your child meals from home we ask that all items are peanut free. All allergies and dietary concerns will be posted in each room.

Special Dietary Needs-Milk

During breakfast, lunch and supper we are required to serve whole milk to 1 year olds and 1% to students 2 years and older.

Celebrations

You are more than welcome to send treats for your child'(s) birthday. If you decide to bring treats we ask that they are nut free and no cupcakes or cake will be allowed. Allowable items include but are not limited to: goody bags, cookies, party favors, etc.

10. REST TIME

All children will participate in a quiet rest time. Children are not required to sleep. If a child does not fall asleep after a short rest, they are given quiet activities/toys.

For children 18 months or older sleeping on a cot: a blanket is needed and a pillow is optional. Your child's blanket and/or pillow should be taken home every Friday to be washed and returned on the following Monday.

11. POTTY TRAINING

We ask that you begin potty training at home. We strive to support your efforts here at Sweet Start Childcare.

Parents of children in diapers and of children who are toilet training must provide an ongoing supply of diapers, wipes, and additional necessary clothing. If your child is wearing pull-ups, it is helpful to send in the type with velcro sides. This allows us to help your child change without having to take off their pants and shoes.

Do not bring your child in underwear until they have naptime and bedtime control established. We also ask that during potty training, your child be dressed in "user friendly" clothing as much as possible.

12. Safe Sleep Policy

Crib Requirements and Restrictions

Infants unable to turn over on their own will be placed on their backs in a face-up sleeping position in their crib.

All full-size and non-full-size cribs must have: (1)A firm, flat mattress that snugly fits the sides of the crib and that is specifically designed for use with the crib model number. The mattress must not be supplemented with additional foam material or pads (2)Sheets that fit snugly and do not present an entanglement hazard (3)A mattress that is waterproof or washable (4)Secure mattress support hangers, and no loose hardware or improperly installed or damaged parts (5)A maximum of 2 3/8 inches between crib slats or poles (6)No corner posts over 1/16 inch above the end panels (7)No cutout areas in the headboard or footboard that would entrap an infant's head or body (8)Drop gates, if present, which fasten securely and cannot be opened by a child (9)Documentation that each crib meets the applicable federal rules at Title 16, Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 1219 or 1220, concerning "Safety Standards for Full- Size Baby Cribs" and "Safety Standards for Non-Full-Size Baby Cribs," respectively, or documentation that each crib is a medical device listed and registered with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and (10) A label with the infant's name. As an alternative, you may label cribs with a number and have a number/infant assignment map available. Revised: 1/2024 137 (b)You must sanitize each crib before a different infant uses it and when soiled. (c) You must never leave an infant in the crib with the drop gate down.

We may not lay a swaddled infant down to sleep or rest on any surface at any time unless we have a completed Sleep Exception Form that includes a signed statement from a healthcare professional stating that swaddling the child for sleeping purposes is medically necessary.

Infants must not have their heads, faces, or cribs covered by items such as blankets, linens, or clothing at any time.

Except for a tight-fitting sheet, the crib or play yard must be bare for an infant younger than 12 months of age.

Infants are not allowed to sleep in restrictive devices. If an infant falls asleep in a restrictive device, they will be removed and placed in crib immediately.

13. Field Trips

You will be asked to sign a **Field Trip Permission Form** for your child to participate in field trips. Parents will be informed of each field trip. First aid kits and

emergency contact information will be taken on all trips. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to participate in field trips.

14. HEALTH & SAFETY

We all know that safety comes first! At Sweet Start Childcare, our first goal is to keep children safe.

Health Check

Each morning when your child arrives, we will conduct a daily health check. This is a quick physical observation where we check and observe a child's behavior/mood and physical condition, including breathing, skin, eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. Additionally, we ask that you please alert us of anything out of the ordinary we need to know regarding sleep, appetite, bowel movements and urination, mood, and behavior at home and/or unusual events.

Illness

We realize that it is difficult for working parents to keep their children home, but exclusion from school will help prevent contagion and promote the health and safety of your child.

For the protection of all the children and staff, your child should be kept home and will be sent home if he/she displays any of the following signs or symptoms below:

- Fever (greater than or equal to 100.4 degrees F)
- Colored discharge from nose
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Flu
- Unusual rash
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Head Lice
- Severe cough
- Rapid breathing or labored breathing
- Severe cold
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

If your child is sent to Sweet Start Childcare with any of the above listed

symptoms, or develops during the day they will be sent home. A parent will immediately be called to come and pick them up. Sweet Start Childcare is not able to provide arrangements to care for sick children, as Sweet Start Childcare does not offer well care. Parents are required to respond as soon as possible concerning the sick child when contacted. If we cannot reach the parent within thirty minutes, we will reach out to the family's emergency contacts as stated on enrollment forms. If the illness warrants, the child's pediatrician will be contacted for consultation.

There are no refunds or discounts for days that your child does not attend. We will not accept the child for care if any of the above symptoms are present within the last 24 hours. Sweet Start reserves the right to make the final determination of exclusion due to illness. Any exceptions to our illness policy will require a written note from a licensed healthcare professional stating that the child is not contagious.

Administration of Medication

Whenever possible, we recommend that you administer medications at home. No child will be given any prescription medication unless the parent gives written permission. Permission to Administer Medication forms are to be filled out each time your child will need medicine to be administered.

Prescription medication must have the child's name, name of medication, doctor's name, name of pharmacy, prescription number, date, and directions for administering. The medication must be in the original container as dispensed by the pharmacy. Staff will indicate on administering form the date, time and dosage of medicine given at each administration, and will sign.

With any prescription antibiotics children may not return to care until they've had a full 24 hours of dosage, are no longer contagious and ready to participate in a full day of care.

Medication forms will be added to the child's file after the medication request is completed. Forms for long-term medication will be considered confidential and treated as such.

Over-the-Counter Medication

In general, Sweet Start Childcare staff will not administer over-the-counter medication except when a health professional prescribes the over-the-counter medicines. This situation is most common for chronic health conditions (ex: Benadryl for students with allergy action plans or fever-reducing medication for students with febrile seizure action plans). Sweet Start Childcare will not administer over-the-counter medicines such as cough syrup, Tylenol, ibuprofen, antibiotic cream for abrasions, or medication for upset stomach in the cases of acute illness or pain. Children that have these symptoms may need to remain at home until they are symptom-free.

Emergency Medication

If your child requires the use of emergency medications (i.e., inhalers, Epi-pen, Diastat, etc.), you will need to complete the Daycare Allergy Plan. These plans MUST have a doctor or healthcare professional's signature. Emergency medicines will be kept unlocked and easily accessible to adults but out of children's reach. This is to ensure easy access in the case of an emergency.

Sunburn & Insect Control

Written parent authorization is required for staff to administer topical medications such as sunscreen and insect repellent using a Permission to Administer Form. Clearly label your child's individual bottle with his/her name. They will be applied by staff and stored out of reach of children.

15. IMMUNIZATION/HEARING RECORDS

Sweet Start Childcare requires an up to date copy of each child's immunization and hearing record prior to enrollment. As the child receives new immunizations, the date and type of shot or immunization should be reported to administration to be added to the child's record.

*If your child is not immunized:

- Please provide a signed and dated letter stating that you have chosen not to immunize your child and that you understand the importance of immunizations, side-effects and dangers of not being immunized.
- Please understand that should there be a suspected or real outbreak of any communicable disease, you may have to remove your child(ren) from Sweet

Start Childcare until cleared by medical staff.

The requirements for VISION AND HEARING SCREENING apply each year for children enrolled in any licensed child care center, child care home or school program at the ages or grades listed below:

WHO MUST BE SCREENED	WHEN SCREENING MUST BE DONE
4 year olds by September 1 st Kindergartners Any other first time entrants (4 years -12 grade)	Within 120 days of admission
1 st , 3 rd , 5 th & 7 th graders	Anytime within the school year (preferably within 120 days)

School Age Students

You may provide up to date hearing/vision and immunization records for children attending school or specify in enrollment forms that they are on file at your child's school.

16. ACCOMMODATIONS FOR FAMILIES

Sweet Start Childcare will do the following in regards to activities for children with special care needs:

- (1) Accommodate with recommendations by a health-care professional or qualified professional affiliated with the local school district or early childhood intervention program.
- (2) Utilize as recommended any adaptive equipment that has been provided to the center for a child's use.
- (3) Ensure that a child who receives early intervention services or special education services can receive those services from a qualified service provider at the operation, with parental request and approval.
- (4) Ensure that activities integrate children with and without special care needs.
- (5) Ensure that caregivers adapt equipment and procedures and vary methods as necessary to ensure that you care for a child with special needs in a natural environment.

17. INJURIES & ACCIDENTS

Your child's safety is of our utmost concern, but we recognize that minor bumps and scrapes are an everyday part of your child exploring and learning through experience.

All educators and staff at Sweet Start Childcare are trained in infant/child CPR and first aid.

Known minor injuries sustained at school are reported to parents in Brightwheel and on an Incident Report Form of which you will need to sign upon pick up the same day. Copies will be available upon request. If your child is injured in our care, our first step is to administer first aid. The most common treatment is ice on bumps, soap and water cleansing, and a bandage on a minor wound.

If an accident is more than minor, a parent will be called to discuss the need for possible medical treatment. If the accident is more serious, a parent will be contacted and requested to come immediately. In the event of a life-threatening illness or injury, an ambulance will be called. To ensure your child's safety, your Enrollment Agreement provides a record of names, addresses, and phone numbers of the people you have authorized to pick up your child. We ask you to keep this information current and supply names and phone numbers for your child's doctor and preferred hospital.

19. REQUIRED REPORTING

Sweet Start Childcare is a mandated reporter of suspected abuse, neglect, or deprivation of a child. This means the law requires Sweet Start Childcare to report any known or suspected abuse, neglect, or deprivation to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Sweet Start Childcare is not permitted to contact the parent. Reporting procedures are designed to protect the child. Our concern is the safety and well-being of the child first. Report abuse by phone: 1-800-252-5400.

Caregivers are required to have at least one clock hour of annual training hours that focus on prevention, recognition, and reporting of child maltreatment,



EMERGENCY FIRE CHECKLIST

1. DO NOT panic
2. Grab emergency backpack and cellphone/ipad
3. Name to Face Check (Brightwheel)
4. Move kids quickly through designated routes to safety **3 minutes**
5. Once to designated area, Name to Face Check (Brightwheel)
6. Wait for all clear to move kids back to classrooms
7. Wait for for further instructions

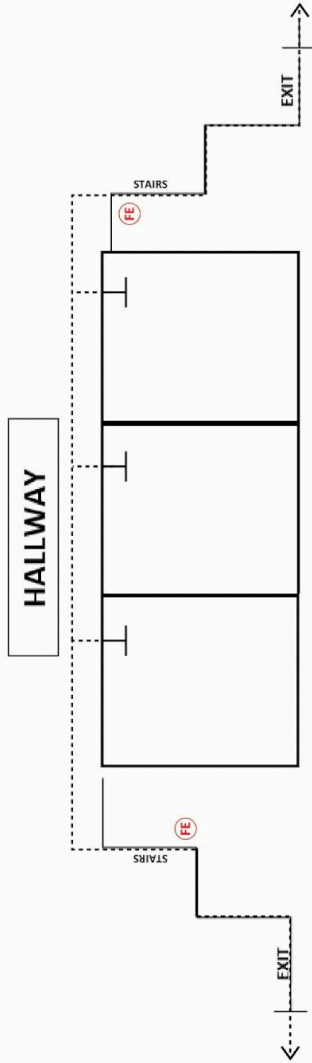


EMERGENCY EVACUATION AND RELOCATION DIAGRAM

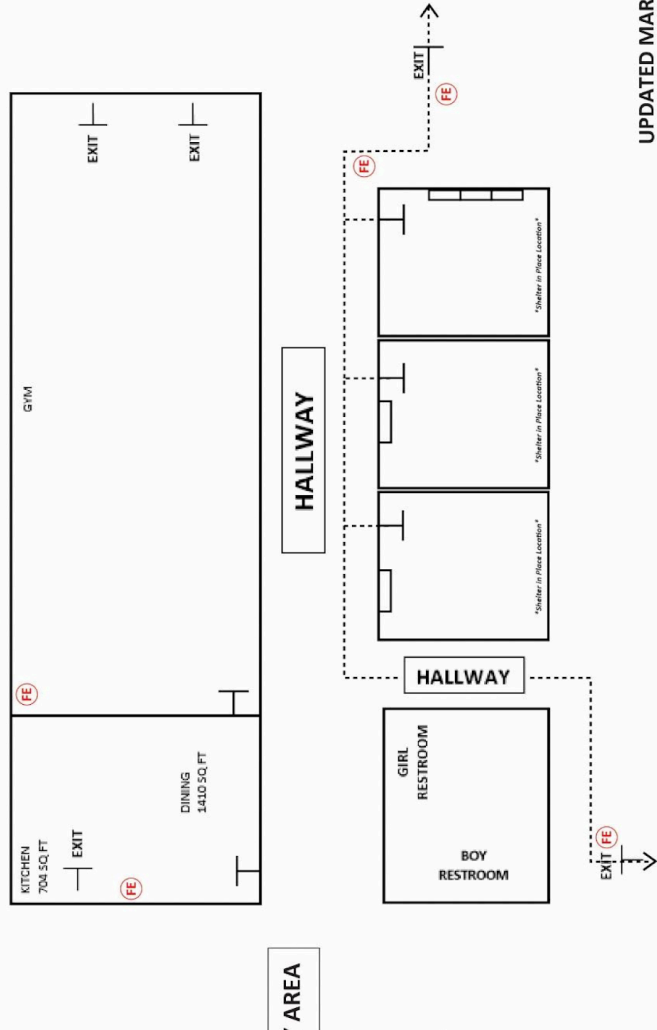


115 W. Beltline Rd.
Desoto, Texas 75115
469-747-3073

UPSTAIRS



DOWNSTAIRS



(FE) FIRE EXTINGUISHER LOCATION
- - - - - EVACUATION ROUTE

Back Parking Lot
Designated location to meet

UPDATED MARCH 2024



EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

This emergency preparedness plan is designed to ensure the safety of children during an emergency by addressing staff responsibility and facility readiness with respect to:

- An **emergency evacuation** of the children and caregivers to a designated safe area in an emergency (such as a fire or gas leak).
- A **relocation** of the children and caregivers to a designated, alternate shelter in an emergency (such as a flood, a hurricane, medical emergency or communicable disease outbreak).
- The **sheltering and lock-down** of children and caregivers within the center to temporarily protect them from situations (such as a tornado, volatile person on the premises, or an endangered person in the area).

Center Information

Center Name:	Sweet Start Childcare
Center Address:	115 W. Beltline Rd. Desoto, Texas 75115
Center Phone:	469-747-3073
Center Main Contact:	Latasha Williams 214-290-2297
Main First Aid Kit Location:	Front Exit/Table
Fire Extinguisher Locations:	End of every main hallway near classrooms
Number of Children:	95

Emergency Contacts

Fire/Rescue (911)	972-230-9680	http://www.ci.desoto.tx.us/24/Fire-Rescue
Police (911)	469-658-3000	http://www.ci.desoto.tx.us/17/Police
Poison Control	800-222-1222	https://www.poisoncontrol.org/home/
Local Health Department	972-230-7308	https://www.ci.desoto.tx.us/512/Health-D-epartment
DFPS Child Abuse Hotline:	1-800-252-5400	www.txabusehotline.org
Childcare Licensing:	214-583-4253 800-582-6036	cclquestions@hsc.state.tx.us

Updated 3.12.24

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

reporting child abuse or neglect.



SEVERE WEATHER/TORNADO

In the case of severe weather or tornadoes, infants & preschoolers will remain in their rooms. When school is out, all children will join the Infant 2 room.

Children should be instructed to sit close together on the floor, with their backs against the wall if possible, with knees up, head tucked into their lap and arms covering their head. Staff must also assume this position. All will remain in their location and in position until all clear is sounded.

SHELTERING/LOCK DOWN

(INCLUDES WEAPON, HOSTAGE INCIDENT INTRUDER, TRESPASSING, OR DISTURBANCE)

To ensure that the children in our care are safe in the event that a person who intends harm gains access to our building we have enacted the following measures:

- The director or person in charge will announce/send messages via the app Groupme and/or Brightwheel and will call 9-1-1.
- All staff must grab and silence cell phones & emergency backpacks as well as grab the flashlight from the backpack.
- Upstairs classrooms will combine with downstairs classrooms. Toddler 2 combines with Toddler, Toddler 3 combines with infant 2
- Close all classroom doors and lock them.
- All children should be instructed to sit as quietly as possible away from the windows.
- Turn off the lights.
- Staff should await further instructions from the director or person in charge or emergency personnel.

MISSING CHILD

To insure that no child is left unattended, all child-care center employees, including persons not counted in the child/caregiver ratio, must:

- Know which children they are responsible for;
- Know each child's name and have information showing each child's age;
- Ensure the children are not out of control;
- Be free from activities not directly involving the teaching, care, and supervision of children
- Ensure continuity of care for children by sharing with incoming caregivers information about each child's activities during the previous shift and any verbal or written instructions given by the parent.

Updated 3.12.24

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

UPDATED 3/2024

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Methods for Increasing employee & parent awareness of issues and prevention

Sweet Start Childcare, its policies, may change, alter, suspend, or discontinue parts of its policy in its entirety, at any time without prior notice. In the event of a policy change, family will be notified. Any such action shall apply to existing as well as to future families.

regarding child abuse & neglect: Readily available resources including websites & brochures located in the resource binder.

Warning Signs of Abuse

Suspect Physical Abuse When You See:

- Frequent injuries such as bruises, cuts, black eyes, or burns without adequate explanations
- Frequent complaints of pain without obvious injury
- Burns or bruises in unusual patterns that may indicate the use of an instrument or human bite; cigarette burns on any part of the body
- Lack of reaction to pain
- Extreme fear of going home or seeing parents
- Injuries that appear after a child has not been seen for several days
- Unreasonable clothing that may hide injuries to arms or legs

Suspect Neglect When You See:

- Obvious malnourishment
- Consistent concern for lack of personal hygiene that poses a health risk
- Stealing or begging for food
- Child unattended for long periods of time
- Unaddressed need for dental care or other medical attention

Suspect Sexual Abuse When You See:

- Physical signs of sexually transmitted diseases
- Evidence of injury to the genital area
- Pregnancy in a young girl
- Difficulty in sitting or walking
- Extreme fear of being alone with adults of a certain sex
- Sexual comments, behaviors, or play beyond what is considered age-appropriate behavior
- Knowledge of sexual relations beyond what is expected for a child's age

- Sexual victimization of other children

Suspect Emotional Abuse When You See:

- Over compliance or low self-esteem caused by scapegoating or verbal abuse by caregivers
- Severe depression, anxiety, or aggression
- Lagging in physical, emotional, and intellectual development
- Caregiver who belittles the child, withholds love, and seems unconcerned about the child's problems
- Significant changes to behavior, such as withdrawal or over-aggression
- Significant changes to weight, such as substantial weight gain or weight loss.

Strategies for coordination between the center and appropriate community organizations:

- Get out into your community and participate in local events hosted by organizations who provide services you support. This allows you to get to know your community members and build relationships with your neighbors.

Actions that the parent of a child who is a victim of abuse or neglect should take to obtain assistance and intervention: Please visit the Texas Abuse Hotline at <https://www.txabusehotline.org/Login/Default.aspx> or By phone: 1-800-252-5400.

20. Center Policies

TRANSPORTATION

A **transportation agreement** must be signed for children who will be transported by Sweet Start Childcare from the center to school and from school to the center. This agreement must be filled out completely, signed and returned before child(ren)'s first day of care.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

We follow the Desoto ISD for inclement weather closings. If Desoto ISD schools close, we will also be closed. We will post it on our Facebook and Instagram pages as well as send an ALERT through BRIGHTWHEEL.

GANG FREE ZONE

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1,000 feet of a child care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalties.

CLASSROOM ANIMALS AND PETS

No live animals are to be inside the Sweet Start Childcare building or classrooms at any time.

INDOOR & OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

-Free Play/Indoor Play

Teachers are expected to actively participate with the children during free play activities by asking questions about what the children are doing, participating in their pretend play, reading books when prompted, encouraging children to try new activities or play with a new toy, etc.

-Outdoor Play

In the event of rain, severe wind/cold, or extreme heat, children are permitted to remain indoors. There is less structure in an outdoor learning environment; however, it is expected that staff members actively engage in activities when prompted by the children.

Outdoor play is an opportunity for children to run, jump, climb and use their bodies in ways that would otherwise be unsafe in an indoor classroom. In addition, a large amount of social interaction takes place when children play outdoors. Because they are engaged in fewer teacher-directed activities and more child directed play, children are able to choose their friends and who to interact with. The outdoor learning environment is an extension of the indoor classroom. Concepts taught indoors can be expanded upon while outdoors. For example, building with blocks on an uneven surface **outside, or playing with toy cars in the grass teaches children about different textures, sounds, and smells because the environment is naturally different from the indoors.**

A minimum of two daily opportunities for outdoor play, weather permitting, in which a child makes use of both small and large muscles: (A)An infant birth through 12 months of age may engage in outdoor play for an amount of time as

tolerated by the infant; and (B)An infant 13 months through 17 months of age, a toddler, or a pre-kindergarten age child must engage in outdoor play for a minimum of 60 total minutes daily.

Children should come dressed in comfortable, season appropriate “play” clothing that can get dirty and closed toe shoes.

CLOTHING GUIDELINES

All children will need at least 2 changes of clothing each day to stay at the center. Label all items to prevent loss. Closed toe shoes are always required and any infant who is walking is required to always have shoes on. Cowboy boots, crocs, sandals, flip flops are not preferred at the center for safety purposes. Should your child wear any of this inappropriate footwear, we will not be responsible or incidents or accidents. The center is not responsible for any missing items. For safety reasons, please leave all jewelry (necklaces, bracelets, rings) and hair beads at home. These items pose, choking hazards with their small pieces.

WATER ACTIVITIES

Outdoor water play is limited to tubs, buckets, containers and/or a water table. We do not participate in swimming pool activities. Children are not allowed to drink water during water play activities. When the activity period is complete, the tubs, buckets, containers and/or a water table will be drained and filled with fresh water if needed.

SCREEN TIME

No child over the age of two years old will have over one hour of screen time per day. Children under two years, will not have any screen time. Television and games may be used occasionally and during quiet time for schoolers, unless specified to the parents for special occasions.

21. TERMINATION

Although we will make every effort within our means to support our families in difficult and challenging situations, some circumstances may call for an immediate termination of the agreement and we reserve the right to exercise this option to our discretion. If an immediate termination occurs, tuition will be prorated for that month, and unused amounts will be refunded (deposits and registration fee are non-refundable). We will do our best to give you a two week notice if we are

terminating your services.

Some circumstances that could call for an immediate termination, but not limited to these reasons are listed below:

- Tuition payments are overdue and parents are unable to mutually agree upon suitable arrangements.
- Parent exhibits a pattern of consistently paying tuition late causing hardship to the operation of Sweet Start Childcare.
- If a child is having an extremely difficult time adjusting for an extensive period of time and making it a challenge for the teaching staff to attend to other children.
- If a child exhibits a pattern of severe emotional or social behaviors that are detrimental to the other children in the classroom.
- If a child exhibits a pattern of destructive behavior that results in the harming of the other children, harming of teaching staff or damage to the learning space or contents.
- If the child's needs are beyond the scope of Sweet Start's scope of care and our teaching professionals.
- If parent abuses the policies and procedures in the parent handbook.
- If parent abuses the closing policy and repeatedly arrives late to pick up their child.
- If parent exhibits disrespectful, threatening or intimidating behavior towards staff, children or other families.
- If a child is absent for more than five consecutive days and the parent has not contacted Sweet Start Childcare to communicate on whether the child is returning.

22. DISCIPLINE

Here at Sweet Start Childcare, discipline and guidance centers around respect and responsibility. Each child is expected to be respectful and responsible for themselves, others and property. This ranges from children cleaning up their own messes to using manners when speaking to teachers, parents and each other.

We follow the 1-2-3 timeout procedure. The child will get two warnings upon the first and second instances of the child not acting safely, being irresponsible or disrespectful. If the child continues that behavior, the child will receive a third

strike and a timeout. They will be asked to sit for a short few minutes to calm down and think about what behaviors are OK. The time outs will last the amount of time that corresponds with the child's age. For example, if the child is 3 they will get a 3-minute time out.

If your child continues to misbehave they will be placed on a behavior management program. (Please see our "Addressing Challenging Behaviors Policy" at the end of the Handbook)

ADDRESSING CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

When a child in care displays challenging behaviors on a reoccurring basis, a behavior management program will be implemented over a two-to-four-week trial period, no longer than four weeks. This program will be devised based on the individual needs of each child. A behavior management program will usually consist of the following steps:

1. A formal discussion will be carried out weekly with the child's parents to gain information regarding the child's behavior and to discuss ways of dealing positively and consistently with the challenging behavior. Parents will be encouraged to implement similar strategies from the program at home to reinforce positive behavior. Examples of strategies used in the program will be:
 - a. praising good behavior,
 - b. advising the child that his/her behavior is inappropriate and try to guide the child into using more appropriate ways to communicate.
 - c. listening to the child,
 - d. setting limits by choosing a few simple rules, explaining the rules, and repeating them periodically.
 - e. incorporating activities into the curriculum to reinforce good behavior for example through role play, arts, crafts, and reading favorite stories at story time etc.
 - f. If necessary, the child may be given a short time away from the rest of the class.
2. All incidents will be recorded and shared with the child's parents via Brightwheel and/or a Discipline Report. Confidentiality will be respected, and information will only be shared with the parties concerned.

1. At the end of the 4-week period of the behavior timeline, if the behavior hasn't not been resolved, the parents will be informed about their child's needs for future childcare, they will be provided two weeks to find alternative childcare arrangements.

Please sign indicating you understand our policy.

Parent/Guardian Printed Name: _____ Date: __ / __ / ____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: __ / __ / ____

PARENT POLICY HANDBOOK AND FEE CONTRACT

I have been provided a Sweet Start Childcare Parent Handbook and agree to abide by all the policies and procedures therein. I have read and fully understand the parent handbook for Sweet Start Childcare.

By signing this contract I consent to all the handbook policies and procedures and agree to them, including payment policies and late fee procedures. I have read all registration fees and understand the annual \$50 enrollment fee. All registration fees to reserve your child's space are non-refundable.

I hereby agree to pay the current tuition in the amount of _____ each week, and understand I'm responsible to pay tuition on Monday of each week by 9am. I understand that I'm responsible for completing a withdrawal form and submitting it to the Director at least two weeks prior to withdrawal date (10 business days). I understand that I am still responsible for paying the 2 weeks tuition even if I give a 2 weeks notice. The penalty for not giving a two week notice and withdrawing my child(ren), is that a late fee will continue to accrue for the 2 weeks after I withdraw my child(ren).

By signing this agreement I acknowledge that the information supplied in the registration form regarding my child(ren) is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

*Any additions or changes to this policy will be given out in the form of a memo and will need to be signed and returned.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: __ / __ / ____

Owner/Director Signature: _____ Date: __ / __ / ____