



# Family Handbook

Proverbs 22:6 ~ Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Updated and revised September 2024 (Policies are reviewed annually and updated if necessary.)

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden at its option, may change, delete, suspend, or discontinue parts or the policy in its entirety, at any time without prior notice. In the event of a policy change, families will be notified. Any such action shall apply to existing as well as to future families.



**Family Handbook for The Learning Garden  
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**MISSION STATEMENT**

**Policy No. 1**

At St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden, we know kids. From our experienced, caring staff and St. Paul's Lutheran Church to our clean, safe facility, we are in a class of our own. You will notice the difference from the moment you walk in the door. Our concepts put the attention solely on the kids. When they are here, it is all about them. Our goal is to nurture the child: to promote physical, cognitive, emotional, and spiritual growth. Families are encouraged to become involved in their children's activities as well as activities that the church offers. A strong happy family has strong happy children. The words of Proverbs define our philosophy of care here at The Learning Garden. We believe that we are to assist children in coming to know Jesus Christ.

**WELCOME**

**Policy No. 2**

The Learning Garden has been in operation since October of 2013. The goal was to open and operate a child care center that exceeds state and national standards and move early education into a new era. Our philosophy is simple. Provide developmentally appropriate activities, prepare children to exceed in public education and give children the skills needed to self-regulate when the world does not go their way. All while allowing the child to be a child and to learn through play.

The School Director at our school is responsible for the daily management of the facility. In the absence of the School Director the Assistant Director is the designated person in charge. A designated individual will be named as the person in charge in the absence of the Leadership Team mentioned above.

Throughout this Family Handbook, the Assistant Director will take the place of the School Director when the School Director is not available.

**2.1 SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION** *Minimum Standards 746.501 (1)*

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden  
234 N. Gohmert St. Suite B  
Yorktown, Texas 78164  
Phone (361) 564-9444  
Fax (361) 333-1541

Email: [thelearninggardenyorktown@gmail.com](mailto:thelearninggardenyorktown@gmail.com)

Website: [www.learninggardenykt.com](http://www.learninggardenykt.com)

Hours: 7:00am to 6:00pm Monday - Friday

Director

Tracie Fielding

[tfielding@learninggardenykt.com](mailto:tfielding@learninggardenykt.com)

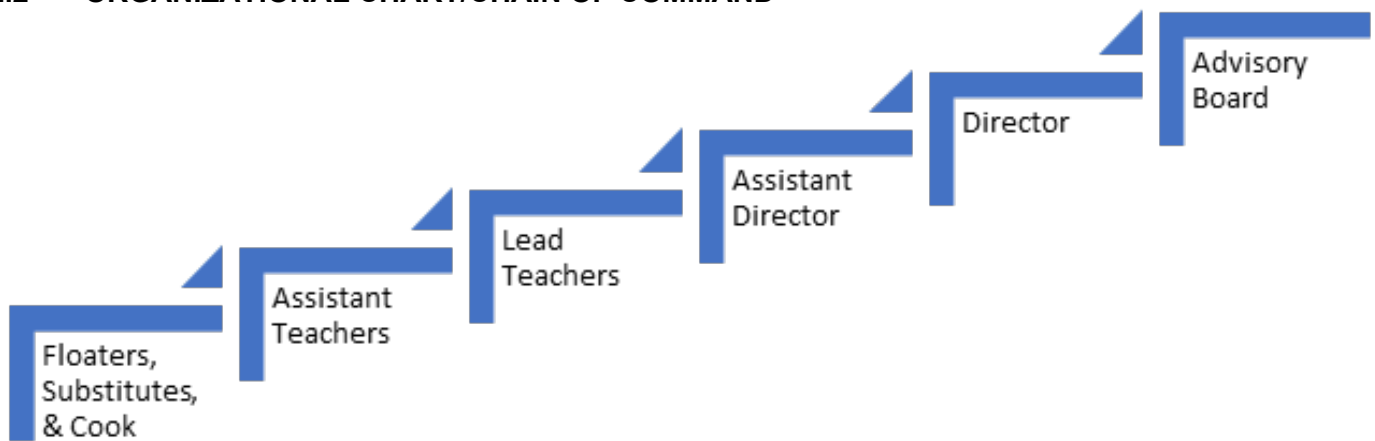
Assistant Director

Shawn Williams

[swilliams@learninggardenykt.com](mailto:swilliams@learninggardenykt.com)



## 2.2 ORGANIZATIONAL CHART/CHAIN OF COMMAND



The term “Director” in this Policy Manual will refer to the Director on duty.

Assistant Director will fill the role of School Director in the School Director’s absence.

The term “Advisory Board” in this Policy Manual consist of members of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden. It is a non-profit organization, formed in 2013 and along with the Pastor, Christian Education Director, Center Director, and Center Assistant Director establishes policies for our program. The current list of Advisory Board members is available to view on the bulletin board near the main office.

### PHILOSOPHY

### Policy No. 3

We believe that positive, early childhood experiences affect children’s successes and perspectives throughout their lives. As caregivers, we strive to support and encourage our children to learn and grow in a fun and educational setting. We will work together with our parents or guardians to ensure that our children feel safe and cared for while they are here. The following principles shall serve as the foundation for our program here at The Learning Garden.

- Young children need consistency between home and child care.
- Family is what is most meaningful to a child. Learning begins in a family, continues in early care and education settings, and depends on family involvement and caregiver guidance. A child’s home language and culture can play a significant role in the child’s cognitive and linguistic development.
- Children develop knowledge of their world through active interactions with caregivers, peers, materials, and events.
- Without a safe environment, children are not free to explore and learn. Supervision is the primary means of ensuring the safety of children.
- Outdoor experiences provide many opportunities for learning that an indoor environment cannot.
- Children naturally mimic familiar situations and places in their everyday lives. Guidance and redirection foster socialization and strengthen a child’s sense of security by providing children with boundaries and choices.
- Music and movement activities provide opportunities for large and small motor development and can be a wonderful sensory experience.

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## LICENSING INFORMATION & OTHER AFFILITE PROGRAMS

Policy No. 4

### 4.1 State Licensing Authority *Minimum Standards 746.501(21)*

Texas Department of Health and Human Services Child Care Licensing.

A full printed copy of the licensing regulations/standards can be found at the front desk. Parents or guardians may also find the licensing regulations on the internet at the following link

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

Parents or guardians may also review a copy of the child-care centers most recent licensing inspection report posted in the Binder located at the front entry of our center or the licensing website listed above. Parents or guardians may reach child care licensing by using the website above or calling the local office at 361-574-7416.

These regulations/standards are included as part of this Family Handbook as if they were written herein and it is the responsibility of every parent or guardian to read, understand and follow these regulations.

Employees are required to uphold the regulations and standards issued by The Texas Department of Health and Human Services Child Care Minimum Standards at all times.

Employees are required to immediately notify the School Director of any violations of licensing regulations by any person in the organization.

### 4.2 FROGSTREET

Frog Street, is an early childhood education company, focuses on helping to guide the next generation of children to success through research-based curriculum, digital resources, and professional development for public & private schools, Headstart programs, and childcare centers alike.

They provide teachers with intentional age-appropriate curriculum that is aligned to both federal and state standards. Our comprehensive, research-based programs integrate instruction across all key developmental domains.

Frog Street's continuum of curriculum includes all of the components teachers need to prepare students for kindergarten such as:

- Social-emotional learning using Conscious Discipline
- Easy-to-use weekly teachers' guides
- Integrated STEAM projects
- Suite of Digital Products
- And so much more!

### 4.3 O COME LET US WORSHIP HIM

Religious education for children is essential and very rewarding. O Come Let Us Worship Him is designed to help reveal God's love to the children we teach and care for at our center. Children think in concrete terms, we as teachers help show them what love is and how it feels. Our goal for the children is that the children that attend our center understand that God loves them. Each classroom incorporates the Bible Story of the week into their classrooms daily. Please refer to your child's classrooms lesson plan for more details.

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### 4.4 CIRCLE INFANT AND TODDLER CURRICULUM

The CIRCLE Infant and Toddler Curriculum provides everything our program needs to create and implement weekly lesson plans that support meaningful interactions and playful learning experiences for our infant and toddler children. The components of the curriculum have been thoughtfully designed to serve as comprehensive, user-friendly resources. They offer various support to help your child learn and gives our teachers the support that they need to plan and implement developmentally appropriate practices, regardless of their level of expertise, and gradually guide the child from foundational to advanced implementation. Curriculum components include a teacher's guide, plans for the week, activities a through z, and family engagement activities.

### 4.5 CLI ENAGE

CLI Engage provides a comprehensive, integrated resource suite that connects professional development (online courses) to classroom implementation (activity collections) and highly targeted data collection and planning (child progress monitoring and teacher observation and goal setting). Through CLIengage our teachers use practical tools for early learning. Such as screening, progress monitoring, and observations tools, online learning and professional development tools, activities and materials, quality improvement and innovation tools, and family engagement tools. This platform houses free resources for educators and families of children starting at birth and continuing to Pre-K and elementary.

### 4.6 TEXAS RISING STAR (Currently a Three-Star Center)

The Texas Rising Star program is “a voluntary, quality-based child care rating system of child care providers participating in the Texas Workforce Commission’s subsidized child care program.” TRS Certification is available to Licensed Center and Licensed and Registered Child Care Home providers who meet the certification criteria. The TRS Provider certification system offers three levels of certification (Two-Star, Three-Star, and Four-Star) to encourage providers to attain progressively higher certification requirements leading to a Four-Star level.

A Texas Rising Star (TRS) provider is a child care provider that has an agreement to serve Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)-subsidized children and that voluntarily meets requirements that exceed the State’s Minimum Child Care Licensing (CCL) Standards.

Across Texas, parents or guardians and families enroll their children into child care programs, including center-based and home-based programs. Numerous research studies have shown that at-risk children who attend higher quality child care programs are more prepared for school entry than children who do not attend quality child care programs.

Those providers that voluntarily achieve TRS provider certification, offering quality care that exceeds the State’s Minimum Child Care Licensing Standards for director and staff qualifications, caregiver-child interactions, age-appropriate curricula and activities, nutrition and indoor/outdoor activities, and family involvement and education, are in a better position to contribute to the early development of children. As provider’s progress through the levels of TRS provider certification, they contribute progressively more to the development of the children they serve on a daily basis.

A full printed copy of the Texas Rising Star standards can be found at the information station. These standards are included as part of this Family Handbook as if they were written herein.

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Employees are required to uphold the standards and guidelines published by Texas Rising Star at all times. Employees are also required to immediately notify the School Director of any violations of the Texas Rising Star standards by any person in the organization.

#### 4.7 TEXAS SCHOOL READY

Preschool teachers enrolled in TSR participate in a comprehensive teacher training program designed to help children be more prepared for kindergarten and beyond.

The four main components of TSR are:

- Curriculum
- Professional Development
- Coaching
- Child Progress Monitoring

Texas School Ready is a comprehensive preschool teacher training program that combines high quality classroom materials and curricula with ongoing professional development and progress monitoring tools. Teachers from child care centers, Head Start programs, and public-school pre-kindergarten participate in TSR. Throughout the school year, teachers enrolled in TSR are provided tools to help them learn more about the specific instructional needs of the children in their classrooms and how to support children using engaging lessons and activities. The new skills and techniques that teachers learn through TSR positively affect the classroom experience for children.

Employees are always required to uphold the standards and guidelines given to them by Texas School Ready coaches. Employees are also required to immediately notify the School Director of any violations of the Texas School Ready standards by any person in the organization.

#### 4.8 ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH <https://www.stpaulykt.org/>

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden follows the policies of St. Paul Lutheran Church. For more information or membership information please contact the Church Office at 361-564-2135.

### ENROLLMENT

### Policy No. 5

Enrollment at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden is open to children from six weeks to nine years old. Enrollment shall be granted without regard to a child's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, or disability, and without regard to a parent or guardian's race, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, gender, pregnancy, or disability. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care is not a licensed special needs center.

#### 5.1 ENROLLMENT FEE

Parents or guardians can apply for enrollment of their child at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden by completing the Enrollment Form and paying the \$125.00 Enrollment Fee. The Enrollment Fee is non-refundable and recurs yearly.

#### 5.2 ENROLLMENT FORMS

Initial enrollment is contingent upon receipt of the completed Enrollment Form, Physicians Statement, Tuition Express Application, Income Eligibility Form, Emergency Release Form, Food Program



Enrollment Form, signed Tuition Agreement, registration fee, immunization records and signed Family Handbook receipt.

Children are not allowed to attend St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care/The Learning Garden until all forms are completed and turned in.

The Enrollment Form and Tuition Agreements are not meant to serve as contracts guaranteeing service for any duration.

### **5.3 PRE-ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS *Minimum Standards 746.501(11,13)***

Each child is required to complete a pre-enrollment packet of information. This packet is to be returned to the center's office 3 business days prior to the child's first day of attendance. All children are required to have a complete up to date immunization record on file at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden. This is per our licensing regulations. If you have chosen not to have your child immunized, please ask the school director for an immunization waiver form. Immunizations may be waived for certain reasons. Please discuss this with the school director to determine whether you have the right to be enrolled and not have your child immunized. Parents/guardians are required to have a waiver on file in place of an immunization record, so that the center can maintain compliance with licensing regulations.

### **5.4 RIGHT TO REFUSE SERVICE**

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden reserves the right to dismiss any family or child at any time with or without cause.

Continued enrollment at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden is contingent upon the families, emergency contact persons' and child's adherence to the policies and procedures of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden as outlined in this handbook including, but not limited to, timely payment of all fees and tuition.

### **5.5 UPDATING ENROLLMENT INFORMATION**

Parents or guardians are required to notify St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden immediately, should any of the information collected at the time of enrollment or any time thereafter change. Failure to do so may result in the child(ren) being dis-enrolled from the program and forfeiture of any registration fee and/or tuition.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden updates all enrollment information in September of every year.

### **5.6 FALL RE-ENROLLMENT**

Fall re-enrollment will take place each spring. At that time, a re-enrollment form and a fee of \$75.00 must be submitted for each family to secure a spot in the program for the upcoming school year. The \$75.00 fee will then be credited to the family's account in September if the children are still attending. If the family does not return the fee is not refundable.



**5.7 WAITING LIST**

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden keeps waiting lists, divided by age and program. A waiting list form must be completed by the Director or Assistant Director to help secure the family’s spot. We do not require the enrollment fee to be paid to be placed on the waiting list however, it is the only way to secure your family’s spot at the center.

**TUITION**

**Policy No. 6**

All custodial parents and/or legal guardians are required to sign a Tuition Agreement prior to enrollment of their child in St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden. Parents or guardians are required to indicate to whom all billing information and correspondence are to be addressed.

Tuition is billed on Mondays for the prior week. (e.g., On Monday, September 7<sup>th</sup> you were billed for the week of September 14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>.)

**6.1 RATES (Weekly)**

Age	Full Time	Part Time
Infants (0-17 mths)	\$189.50	\$176.50
Toddlers (18-24 mths)	\$168.00	\$156.85
Twos (2 years)	\$168.00	\$156.85
Preschool (3 years)	\$145.50	\$127.25
Prekindergarten (4-5 years)	\$145.50	\$127.25
After School (6-8 years)	\$119.65	\$116.65
After School Summer (6-8 years)	\$137.10	\$116.65

**6.2 PAYMENTS**

Private pay families may choose to pay weekly, biweekly, or monthly. However, we will charge your account weekly for tuition. Payment for my child’s program is due on Friday’s as specified in the current rate schedule. Tuition is payable according to the tuition schedule whether or not the child attends.

(e.g., On Monday, September 7<sup>th</sup> you were billed for the week of September 14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>. Tuition is due Friday, September 11<sup>th</sup>.)

A fee of \$35.00 will be collected for all returned payments. If we receive two insufficient funds payments, your child will be terminated unless corrected.

**6.3 CREDIT CARD/ACH PROCESSING FEES**

When paying tuition with a credit card you will be charged a 3% processing fee. When allowing our center to pull from your bank account you will be charged a \$2.00 processing fee.

**6.4 LATE FEES**

A \$35 late fee will be added for all non-payments. If tuition and/or late fees are not paid by end of day Friday, the late fee will be applied Monday. If by end of day Monday tuition has not been paid or arrangements made, your child cannot return to care the following day.



There is no credit given for vacations less than 5 consecutive days, scheduled school holidays, child illness, or for closings due to emergency situations, inclement weather or acts of God.

Non-payment of tuition is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program. Timely payments are essential for continued enrollment at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden, however, if you anticipate difficulty with paying on time, please discuss the matter with the Center Director immediately. If alternative arrangements for payment are approved, you will be notified by the Center Director.

### **6.5 SUBSIDIZED CARE (CCS)**

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden does accept childcare subsidies.

Parents or guardians of a subsidized child must complete all required paperwork on time to continue enrollment at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden. Parents or guardians of subsidized children are also required to sign a Tuition Agreement, agreeing to be personally responsible for the payment of tuition, in the event they become ineligible to receive childcare subsidies.

Subsidized Care families are billed monthly. Your account will be charged the week before the month starts. Your parent/guardian share of cost is due by the 1<sup>st</sup> of the Month. (e.g., On the Monday prior to the new month you will be billed for the next month.) If it is not paid by the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the month your children will not be allowed to attend and it will be reported to CCS that you have not paid your parents/guardians share of the cost.

### **6.6 MULTIPLE CHILD DISCOUNTS**

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden offers a multiple child discount for one or more siblings enrolled during the same school year. The youngest sibling pays the full tuition rate and each additional child's tuition is discounted 10% per child. Discounts are only applicable when tuition payments are made on time. The full tuition rate, plus any additional late fees will be charged when tuition payments are late as per the late tuition policy stated above.

### **6.7 VACATION CREDIT**

After 1 year attending St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden your family will receive a vacation credit for five consecutive days. You may request this vacation credit equal to one week of weekly tuition. **Families must request the vacation credit in writing by email 2 weeks prior to the absence.**

### **6.8 FAMILY REFERRALS**

We greatly appreciate your business and know that you will be so pleased with our service that you will tell all your friends and acquaintances about us! If one of those families decides to enroll their child(ren), we will credit your account the amount of half a week's tuition after that family has been with us for 90 days. The referred family must mention the referral at the time of the initial visit to our program.

### **6.9 SCHOLARSHIPS**

Every private pay student attending The Learning Garden who does qualify for Child Care Subsidies is eligible to receive a scholarship sponsored by St. Paul Lutheran Church to offset increase in tuition rates.



Upon enrollment you will either accept or decline the scholarship by filling out the scholarship area in our tuition agreement.

### **CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program)**

### **Policy No. 7**

We participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in which we are in good standing. The CACFP reimburses child care centers, day care home providers, adult day care centers, and afterschool at-risk programs for part of the cost associated with serving more than 400,000 approved meals and snacks to children and adults in Texas every day. The goal of the CACFP is to improve and maintain the health and nutritional status of children and adults, promote development of good eating habits, and integrate nutritious food service with organized child and adult day care services.

### Non-Discrimination Statement:

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: <https://www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-complaint> and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992.

Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- 1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- 2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- 3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

### **7.1 FOODS *Minimum Standards 746.501(10)***

Monthly menus are prepared by the Cook. They are turned into the Assistant Director by the last week of the month. After approved they are entered into ProCare and emailed to parents or guardians. Menus are posted on the bulletin board above family mailboxes and in classrooms. We receive updates and recipes from CACFP, the Institute of Child Nutrition, National CACFP Sponsors Association, and our Child Nutrition Specialist from Region 3.

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We follow all health guidelines in preparing foods, cleaning, and providing adequate nutrition. The kitchen and our facility are inspected by the local health department.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden asks that families not bring in outside food that does not follow the CACFP healthy meal guidelines. It is our goal to offer nutritious meals and snacks to the children in our care, as nutrition is a vital part of a child's health. Children need to eat well-balanced meals in order to meet his or her daily energy needs and to help them build a strong body and mind. We know that the good food habits a child develops will help them prevent cavities, iron deficiency anemia, and obesity, etc. – all common nutritional problems in young children.

### **All age groups:**

For the safety of your child, families are required to provide notification, in the form of a doctor's note, of any allergies (food or otherwise), with instructions for treatment should a child have an allergic reaction. Please refer to the Health and Safety Policies contained herein for further information.

Families are required to provide written notification of any food/dietary restrictions. (i.e., lactose intolerance, vegetarian diets, wheat free/gluten free diets)

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden never uses food as a punishment. Children will never be denied participation in lunch or snack time for behavioral reasons.

### **Infants:**

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden provides formula for the children enrolled in our programs. If a family wishes to provide an alternate formula, they may do so at their expense. There is no reduction in fees or tuition for families who provide their own formula or food.

Families are required to complete a feeding schedule for their child on a monthly basis, or as the child's feeding requirements change. Staff will complete a daily chart for each child detailing for the family what the child ate, when, and how much.

### **1-2-year-old classrooms:**

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden offers children a morning breakfast at approximately 8:00 a.m., a half-hour lunch at approximately 11:00 a.m. and an afternoon snack at approximately 3:00 p.m.

All meals are served by the cook, with the children sitting at tables, promoting good manners, eating habits and socialization skills. Staff will encourage children to eat their main entrée first, followed by healthy snacks.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden does not allow candy bars, sodas, or candy treats such as Skittles, Starbursts or gum, as part of a child's lunch or snack. If you wish for these foods to be a part of your child's diet, please give them to your child at home.



St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden prohibits any food item in glass containers (except Baby food in the infant classrooms), as well as aluminum cans. These can be safety hazards for the children and staff.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will provide a healthy morning and afternoon snack for all children, including water, fruit juice and/or milk. A list of the daily snacks available to the children will be posted in the classroom on a monthly basis.

### **3 year and older classrooms:**

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden offers children a morning breakfast at approximately 8:30 a.m., a half-hour lunch at approximately 11:30 a.m. and an afternoon snack at approximately 3:30 p.m.

All meals are family style, with the children sitting at tables, to promote good manners, eating habits and socialization skills. Staff will encourage children to eat their main entrée first, followed by healthy snacks.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden does not allow candy bars, sodas, or candy treats such as Skittles, Starbursts or gum, as part of a child's lunch or snack. If you wish for these foods to be a part of your child's diet, please give them to your child at home.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden prohibits any food item in glass containers (except Baby food in the infant classrooms), as well as aluminum cans. These can be safety hazards for the children and staff.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will provide a healthy morning and afternoon snack for all children, including water, fruit juice and/or milk. A list of the daily snacks available to the children will be posted in the classroom on a monthly basis.

### **7.2 BREASTFEEDING** Minimum Standards 746.501(24)

Breastfeeding mothers are welcome to come to the center during the day to feed their child. An appropriate, private feeding location is available in the lounge located just off the Infant classroom. On both doors there are hangers to place on the door handle stating the room is being used for breastfeeding. When you are done breastfeeding we ask that you please flip the signs back. Please discuss your desire to come to the center to breastfeed your child with the classroom teacher.

Breastfeeding resources can be found in our enrollment packet as well as on our information board located in our hallway.

### **7.3 NUT FREE CENTER**

Due to the extreme nature of allergic reactions to nuts and products containing nuts in some children, St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden prohibits nuts and/or foods containing nut products on St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden property, and/or at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden sponsored events. These nut allergies can be so severe that exposure to nuts can result in an anaphylactic reaction. An allergic child can have a reaction from simply smelling nuts on someone's breath or touching nut oil residue left on a countertop, not only



from consuming nuts or nut products. This includes, but is not limited to, milk made with nuts such as almond milk.

Due to the possibility of cross-contamination, (this occurs when one food is prepared with items previously used to prepare foods with nuts, or nut products), St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden does not allow homemade snacks at the center. While St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden understands that parents or guardians enjoy providing homemade snacks for birthdays and holidays, we must be mindful of the safety of all children enrolled at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center.

Since St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden is a nut free environment, parents or guardians can purchase the items to make homemade snacks and plan with the classroom teacher to make the snacks as part of a classroom lesson. Only St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden utensils, bowls, and bakeware may be used to prepare these foods.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

### **Policy No. 8**

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden, confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with employees of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden who have a “need to know” in order to most appropriately and safely care for your child. Confidential and sensitive information about faculty, families and/or children will not be shared with families, as St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden strives to protect everyone’s right of privacy. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to names, addresses, phone numbers, disability information, or other health related information of anyone associated with St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden.

Outside of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden, confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when the family of the child has given express written consent, except where otherwise provided for by law. Parents or guardians will be provided with a document detailing the information that is to be shared outside of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden, persons with whom the information will be shared, and the reason(s) for sharing the information.

Any family who violates the Confidentiality policy will not be permitted on school property thereafter. Refer to the policy regarding Families Right to Immediate Access for additional information regarding dis-enrollment of a child when a parent or guardian is prohibited from accessing school property.

You may not observe children at our center who are disabled or who exhibit behavior that may appear inappropriate (i.e., biting, hitting, and spitting). You may be curious or concerned about the other child. Our Confidentiality Policy protects every child’s privacy. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you.

### **MANDATED REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND/OR NEGLECT**

### **Policy No. 9**

*Minimum Standards 746.501(25)*

Under the Child Protective Services Act, mandated reporters are required to report any **suspicion** of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. The employees of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care

Updated and revised September 2024 (Policies are reviewed annually and updated if necessary.)

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden at its option, may change, delete, suspend, or discontinue parts or the policy in its entirety, at any time without prior notice. In the event of a policy change, families will be notified. Any such action shall apply to existing as well as to future families.



Center/The Learning Garden are considered mandated reporters, under this law. The employees of St. Paul

Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents or guardians prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior or condition prior to making a report. Under the Act, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. We at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden take this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities. The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children.

As mandated reporters, the staff of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden cannot be held liable for reports made to Child Protective Services which are determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in “good faith.”

Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Unusual bruising, marks, or cuts on the child’s body
- ◆ Severe verbal reprimands
- ◆ Improper clothing relating to size, cleanliness, season
- ◆ Transporting a child without appropriate child restraints (e.g., car seats, seat belts, etc.)
- ◆ Dropping off or picking up a child while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- ◆ Not providing appropriate meals including a drink for your child
- ◆ Leaving a child unattended for any amount of time
- ◆ Failure to attend to the special needs of a disabled child
- ◆ Sending a sick child to school over medicated to hide symptoms, which would typically require the child to be kept at home until symptoms subside.
- ◆ Children who exhibit behavior consistent with an abusive situation

If parents or guardians feel they need assistance with possible child abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse, we encourage you to get help. Please call the National Parent Hotline at 1-855-427-2736 or visit [www.helpandhope.org/find-help.html](http://www.helpandhope.org/find-help.html)

The statewide Abuse & Neglect phone number is 1-800-252-5400, if you would like to report any suspected abuse or neglect.

### **FAMILY CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **Policy No. 10**

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden requires the parents or guardians of enrolled children, to behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect. One of the goals of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden is to provide the most appropriate environment in which a child can grow, learn and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of the employees of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden but, is the responsibility of each and every parent/guardian/adult that enters the center. Families are required to behave in a manner that fosters this ideal environment. **Families who violate the Family Code of Conduct will not be permitted on school property thereafter.** Please refer to the Policy on Parent’s Right to Immediate Access for additional information regarding dis-enrollment of the child when a family is prohibited from accessing school property.

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Updated and revised September 2024 (Policies are reviewed annually and updated if necessary.)

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden at its option, may change, delete, suspend, or discontinue parts or the policy in its entirety, at any time without prior notice. In the event of a policy change, families will be notified. Any such action shall apply to existing as well as to future families.



**10.1 SWEARING/CURSING:**

No parent/guardian or adult is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language on church property at any time, whether in the presence of a child or not. Such language is considered offensive by many people and will not be tolerated. If a parent/guardian or adult feels frustrated or angry, it is more appropriate to verbally express the frustration or anger using non-offensive language. At NO time shall inappropriate language be directed toward members of the staff.

**10.2 THREATENING OF EMPLOYEES, CHILDREN OTHER PARENTS/GUARDIANS OR ADULTS ASSOCIATED WITH ST. PAUL LUTHERAN YKT CHILD CARE CENTER/THE LEARNING GARDEN:**

Threats of any kind will not be tolerated. In today's society St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden cannot afford to sit by idly while threats are made. In addition, all threats will be reported to the appropriate authorities and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. While apologies for such behavior are appreciated, the school will not assume the risk of a second chance. **PARENTS/GUARDIANS MUST BE RESPONSIBLE FOR AND IN CONTROL OF THEIR BEHAVIOR AT ALL TIMES.**

**10.3 PHYSICAL/VERBAL PUNISHMENT OF YOUR CHILD OR OTHER CHILDREN AT ST. PAUL LUTHERAN YKT CHILD CARE CENTER/THE LEARNING GARDEN:**

While St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden does not necessarily support nor condone corporal punishment of children, such acts are not permitted in the childcare facility. While verbal reprimands may be appropriate it is not appropriate for parents/guardians to verbally abuse their child.

Doing so may cause undue embarrassment or emotional distress. Parents/guardians are always welcome to discuss a behavior issue with the teacher and to seek advice and guidance regarding appropriate and effective disciplinary procedures.

Parents/guardians are prohibited from addressing, for the purpose of correction or discipline, a child that is not their own. Of course, no parent/guardian/adult may physically punish any child. If a parent/guardian should witness another families child behaving in an inappropriate manner or is concerned about behavior reported to them by their own child, it is most appropriate for the parent/guardian to direct their concern to the classroom teacher and/or Center Director.

Furthermore, it is wholly inappropriate for one parent/guardian to seek out another parent/guardian to discuss their child's inappropriate behavior. All behavior concerns should be brought to the classroom teacher or director's attention. At that point, the teacher and/or director will address the issue with the other parent/guardian. Although you may be curious as to the outcome of such a discussion, teachers and/or the Center Director are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you. All children enrolled in our school have privacy rights and are further protected by our Confidentiality Policy. You may be assured that we will not discuss anything about your child with another parent/guardian or adult visiting the center.

**10.4 SMOKING:**

For the health of all St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden employees, children and associates, smoking is prohibited anywhere on school property. Parents or guardians are prohibited



from smoking in the building, on the grounds, and in the parking lot of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden. Parents or guardians who smoke in their cars must dispose of cigarettes prior to entering the parking lot.

### **10.5 ENTRY DOOR SAFETY**

For the safety of all the children, we have secured doors. Only people who are authorized can enter the building while children are present. When families enroll, they will be made aware of what their code will be. You are not to share that code with anyone except those listed on your pick-up list. These procedures are designed to protect the welfare and best interest of the employees, children, and families of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden. Upon entry or exiting, please make sure the door closes behind you for the safety of the children and staff.

### **10.6 VIOLATIONS OF THE SAFETY POLICY:**

Parents or guardians are required to follow all safety procedures at all times. These procedures are designed not as mere inconveniences, but to protect the welfare and best interest of the employees, children and associates of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden. Please be particularly mindful of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden entrance procedures. We all like to be polite. However, we need to be careful not to allow unauthorized individuals into the center. Holding the door open for the person following you may, in fact, be polite, however that person may not be authorized to enter the premises. Security procedures are only as strong as the weakest person in our organizational chain. Be alert and mindful. Immediately report any breaches to the Center Director.

### **10.7 CONFRONTATIONAL INTERACTIONS WITH EMPLOYEES, OTHER PARENTS/GUARDIANS OR ASSOCIATES OF ST. PAUL LUTHERAN YKT CHILD CARE CENTER/THE LEARNING GARDEN:**

While it is understood that parents or guardians will not always agree with the employees of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden or the parents or guardians of the other children, it is expected that all disagreements be handled in a calm and respectful manner. Confrontational interactions are not an appropriate means by which to communicate a point and are strictly prohibited.

### **10.8 VIOLATIONS OF THE CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY:**

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden takes very seriously the responsibility of maintaining the confidentiality of all persons associated with the school. Parents or guardians must understand the implications of this responsibility. Parents or guardians need to recognize that the Confidentiality Policy not only applies to their child or family, but all children, families and employees associated with St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden. Any family who shares any information considered to be confidential pressures employees or other parents or guardians for information, which is not necessary for them to know, will be considered to be in violation of the Confidentiality Policy.

### **10.9 SOCIAL MEDIA**

As part of our duty to safeguard children it is essential to maintain the privacy and security of all our families and employees. No public discussions are to be held or comments made on social media sites regarding St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden, the children, staff, administration, advisory board, or Church that could be construed to have negative impact on the



center's reputation or that would offend any member of staff or families. Any family that posts remarks or comments that breaches confidentiality, brings St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden into disrepute or that are deemed to be of a detrimental nature to the Center, its employees, or other children could result in immediate dismissal from our center.

If a parent names St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden on any social media platform, they must do so in a way that is not detrimental or derogatory to the school.

### 10.10 CELL PHONE USE

Proper family communication is imperative when working with young children. It is difficult to communicate when cell phones are in use. Effective December 1, 2010, the Texas Department of Health and Human Services passed new regulations prohibiting the personal use of cell phones in classrooms. Please end all calls prior to entering the building so that our St Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden staff can properly communicate with you.

### 10.11 QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS *Minimum Standards 746.501(19)*

If parents or guardians have questions or concerns about our program, we encourage you to have open communication with your child's teacher and the School Director. Through open communication, we can ensure that all parties are well informed and working as partners in the child's education. From time to time, the center director may complete a "Family Concern Form". Parents or guardians will receive a copy of this form with the appropriate outcome.

The parent/guardian must submit the written statement to the director within 1 business day of the parent's knowledge of the event, which caused the conflict. (Same day-next day)

### PARENT/GUARDIAN RIGHT TO IMMEDIATE ACCESS

**Policy No. 11**

*Minimum Standards 746.501(b)(1)*

Parents/guardians of a child in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child whenever they are in care at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden, as provided by law.

In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (e.g., Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order) St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden must be provided with a **Certified Copy** of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent(s) requests a more Federal variation of the order in writing. In the case where both parents are afforded shared/joint custody by order of the court, both parents must sign the request for more liberal interpretation of the order.

**In the absence of a court order** on file with St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden, **both** parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden cannot, without a court order, limit the access of a one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden suggests that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued, since our rights to retain your child are secondary to the other parent's right to immediate access.



St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden staff will contact the local police should a conflict arise.

Visitors are asked to schedule appointments with the School Director and are allowed in the childcare facility only at the discretion of the School Director. An employee of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will accompany visitors at all times, throughout the center.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will dismiss any child whose parent is prohibited from entering upon school property. Due to the parents' right to immediate access policy, as well as state and federal regulations, St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden cannot have a child at the school when the child's parent is prohibited access. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will not agree to any request to maintain a child's enrollment even if the parent agrees to stay out of the school. Such an agreement is a violation of the law and will not be entertained.

### **DISMISSAL**

### **Policy No. 12**

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden reserves the right to dismiss any child at any time, with or without cause.

Parents will be refunded any unused tuition within two weeks of the dismissal. A school check will be mailed to the address indicated in the child's file. Any past due balances must be paid within 30 days of the dismissal. An invoice detailing the past due balance will be forwarded to the address indicated in the child's file within one week of the dismissal. Any balances remaining after the 30-day period will be referred to the school's legal counsel for collection.

The School Director or designee will assist the parents in gathering their child's belongings at the time of dismissal and parents are required to leave school property in a calm and respectful manner, immediately. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will request assistance from local police should any parent become disruptive and/or uncooperative while gathering their child's belongings upon dismissal.

A dismissed child and his/her parents are required to call and request an appointment with the School Director if they wish to return to school property following a dismissal. Appointments are made at the discretion of the School Director and are not a right of the dismissed child or parent.

Following a dismissal, any parent or child who harasses, threatens or in any manner causes harm to anyone affiliated with the school by calling, writing, or any other means, will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law, by St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden.

### **WITHDRAW**

### **Policy No. 13**

A two-week written notice is required when withdrawing a child for any reason. If the proper notice is given, any unused tuition will be refunded within thirty days of the withdrawal. If the required notice is not given, parents will not be refunded any tuition that was paid in advance.

The parents and child, following their last day of enrollment, are not permitted to re-enter the center without prior permission of the School Director. A withdrawn child and his/her parents are required to call and



request an appointment with the School Director if they wish to return to the center following the last day of enrollment at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden. Appointments are made at the discretion of the School Director and are not a right of the withdrawn child or parent.

### **PART TIME ENROLLMENT**

**Policy No. 14**

Parents who enroll their children part time follow the following schedule.

3-full days (Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday)

3-half days (Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday) or

5-half days (Monday-Friday)

In the event that you need to arrange care for days other than the normal Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday we ask that you give us advance notice. Parents who wish to change those days or times of enrollment at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden, must submit a request to do so 5-7 days in advance of the proposed change.

### **COURT ORDERS EFFECTING ENROLLED CHILDREN**

**Policy No. 15**

In cases where an enrolled child is the subject of a court order (ex. Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order) St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden must be provided with a **Certified Copy** of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent(s) requests a more liberal variation of the order in writing. In the case where both parents are afforded shared/joint custody by order of the court, both parents must sign the request for more liberal interpretation of the order.

**In the absence of a court order on file with St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden administration, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law.** St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden cannot, without a court order, limit the access of a one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself, where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden suggests that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued.

If conflicting court orders are presented, the most recently dated court order will be followed.

Once presented with a Protection from Abuse Order or a Restraining Order, St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden is obligated to follow the order for the entire period it is in effect. Employees of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden cannot, at the request of anyone, except the issuing judge, allow a Protection from Abuse Order and/or a Restraining Order to be violated. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will report any violations of these orders to the court.

### **ARRIVAL PROCEDURES**

**Policy No. 16**

Upon arrival at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center, the parents or the adult dropping the child off must sign the child into care on the sign-in sheet located in the child's classroom as well as signing the child in at the front desk with your fingerprint. Children are required to be escorted by their parent or the adult dropping them off, to their designated classroom. Children are required by law to be supervised at



all times while in the childcare facility. Parents are required to help children put away their outerwear and get settled for the day.

In order for all enrolled children to benefit from the curriculum and activities planned, **all children must arrive by 9:00am**. Children will not be admitted into care after 9:00am. Children who are late due to a scheduled appointment with a health care professional must have prior permission from the school director to be allowed to arrive after 9:00am. However, children are not allowed to arrive during naptime. If a child arrives after 11am the child must be fed lunch before they arrive. Late arrival is a disruption to the classroom and other children and may break the established routine of the classroom.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden discourages parents from sneaking out of the center. Some children exhibit separation anxiety when it is time for their parents to leave. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden believes it is best for parents to tell the anxious child upon arrival that after all of the child's things are put away, the parent will kiss, hug and say goodbye to the child. This will prepare the child for their departure. The employee present in the classroom will comfort and assist the child through the anxious time. Parents are asked to leave after saying goodbye. The longer the parent of an anxious child drags out the departure, the more anxiety the child is likely to feel. The professional employees of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden are available to discuss other options if the child does not settle into the arrival routine after a reasonable period of time.

### **16.1 HEALTH CHECKS** *Minimum Standards 746.501(26)*

Parents are required to notify the child's teacher or School Director of any special instructions or needs for the child's day. The parent must present the special instructions in the form of a letter and verbally discuss them with either the classroom teacher or School Director. These special instructions include but are not limited to: Early Pick Up, Alternative Pick Up Person, health issues over the previous night which need to be observed and/or any general issues of concern which the child care providers should be aware to best meet the needs of your child throughout the day.

Parents must drop off their child by 9:00am in order for the child to be served breakfast. Breakfast will not be available or saved for any child arriving after 9:00am.

### **16.2 NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE**

Parents are required to inform the center by 9:00am if a child will not be at the center on a scheduled day. This will enable the center to more effectively maintain appropriate ratios and help the classroom teacher plan for the day.

If your child is ill, we request that you notify the school director not only of the absence, but also of the nature of the illness. This enables our faculty to keep track of any illnesses which may occur at our school. This information will only be shared with staff on a "need to know" basis. If your child has a communicable disease, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the school Director, so that the parents of the children in the school may be notified that a communicable disease is present. Once again, only the communicable disease information will be shared. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will take all measures necessary to protect your child's confidentiality. Parents are not required to disclose this information by law, and your continued enrollment will not be based whatsoever on your decision to share, (or not) the reason for your child's absence from school.



Parents who know in advance that a child will be late are required to notify the center by 9:00am so as to maintain the appropriate number of employees to ensure ratios are met when the child arrives at school.

### 16.3 SCHOOL'S RIGHT TO REFUSE ADMISSION

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden reserves the right to refuse admission to any child at any time with or without cause.

Possible reasons for the refusal of admission include but are not limited to:

1. The need to maintain compliance with Licensing Regulations.
2. We find that we cannot meet the needs of your child due to health or physical problems.
3. Staff deems the child too ill to attend.
4. Domestic Situations that present a safety risk to the child, staff or other children enrolled at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden if the child were to be present at the center.
5. Parent's failure to maintain accurate, up to date records.
6. Parents' failure to complete and return required documentation in a timely fashion.

Parents will not be reimbursed tuition for days when their child is refused admission to the program.

### PICK-UP PROCEDURES *Minimum Standards 746.501(2)*

### Policy No. 17

Parents or other authorized adults are required to sign their child out of care on the sign-out sheet located in the classroom and at the front desk with their fingerprint. Once a parent signs their child out, the parent is then solely responsible for supervising their child while on school premises. The parent may not allow a child to wander through the hallways, bathrooms, other classrooms and/or playground. Parents are required to handle all business issues prior to signing out their child and are required to directly exit the building once they have signed their child out of care.

Parents must take home all papers in the child's cubby, filing system, or school bag each day.

Parents or persons designated to act "in lieu of parent" are required to sign any incident/accident reports from the day at pick-up. The classroom teacher will be able to briefly discuss the matter with you or another authorized adult at pick-up. However, should you feel it necessary to have an in-depth discussion or meeting, it is most appropriate to schedule the meeting for a later date because the teacher is responsible for supervising the remaining children in the classroom. A telephone conference may be scheduled for later in the day or for the next day at nap/rest time if the parent(s) is unable to meet at the center during the course of the day.

### 17.1 LATE PICK-UP

Our schools are licensed to care for children from 7:00am to 6:00 pm. Parents must pick up their children no later than 6:00pm. A parent is late picking up their child at 6:00pm. All measurements of time are to be according to the St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden clock located at the front desk.

A late fee of \$2 per minute per child will be charged for late pick-ups. Late fees must be paid at the time of pick up. The child will not be allowed to return to care until all late pick-up fees are paid in full.



A child's services will be terminated should the child be picked-up late on three occasions in one school year regardless of the reasons for the late pick-up. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that someone (either a parent or Emergency/Alternate pick-up person) is available to pick up the child on time.

### **17.2 PERSONS APPEARING TO BE IMPAIRED BY DRUGS/ALCOHOL AT PICK-UP**

The staff of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will contact local police and/or the other custodial parent should a parent appear to the staff of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. The parent's right to immediate access does not permit the school from denying a custodial parent access to their child even if the parent is or appears to be impaired. However, St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden staff will delay the impaired parent as long as possible, while contacting the other parent, the local police, and Child Protective Services.

Any other authorized person who attempts to pick-up a child and appears to the staff of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol will be denied access to the child. The staff of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center will contact the child's parents, local police and Child Protective Services to notify them of the situation.

### **17.3 EMERGENCY/ALTERNATE PICK-UP**

At enrollment, parents will complete emergency/alternate pick-up information on the Enrollment Form. Parents are encouraged to include on this form any, and all persons who, in the course of events, may at one time be asked to pick-up their child from St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden. In an emergency situation, the child's parents will be called first. If they cannot be reached staff will call the people listed on this form until someone can be reached.

Should the staff contact a parent, and the parent is unable to pick up the child, it is then the responsibility of the parent to arrange for their child to be picked up by someone on the emergency list. Failure of the parents to make such arrangements will result in dismissal from the program.

Parents do not need to be listed on the emergency contact list. The nature of the parental relationship affords the parents (in the absence of a court order indicating otherwise) the right to pick up their child.

Parents will be asked to determine which persons (if any) on the emergency/alternate pick-up list have the right to act "In Lieu of Parents." In Lieu of Parents status affords the pickup person the right to discuss confidential information about the child's day including but not limited to, incident/accident reports, and behavior issues. In the absence of this designation the people on the emergency/alternate pick-up list are only afforded the right to pick up the child. Staff is not permitted to discuss the child's day with them.

The persons on the emergency/alternate pick-up list will be required to provide a Government issued photo ID prior to the school releasing the child. There will be no exceptions to this rule. All changes and/or additions to the emergency/alternate pick-up list must be made in writing and be dated and signed. Only custodial parents have the right to make changes or additions to this form.



Employees of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden are prohibited from being listed on the emergency/alternate contact list.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden reserves the right to refuse/ban any person listed on the emergency/alternate contact list for any reason, including but not limited to violations of the policies/procedures contained herein. It is the responsibility of the enrolling parent(s) to inform each person on the emergency/alternate list of the policies/procedures contained herein.

**TRANSPORTATION** *Minimum Standards 746.501(14)* **Policy No. 18**

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden does not transport children. However, School-age children will be transported to and from public school by Yorktown ISD. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden does not transport children, except in emergency situations. Children shall be unloaded at the curbside of the vehicle, or in a protected parking area.

**SCHOOL CALENDAR** *Minimum Standards 746.501(1)* **Policy No. 19**

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden is open from 7:00am-6:00pm, Monday-Friday, year-round. In August of every year a new School Calendar will be sent out to parents.

We close in observance of the following holidays: New Year's Day, Friday During Spring Break, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the following Friday, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Full tuition is due for holiday weeks.

We close on the following days for staff development days: New Year's Eve or the Friday before or Monday after if it falls on the weekend, Friday before Memorial Day, and Friday before Labor Day. Full tuition is due for staff development weeks.

NOTE: In some cases, if the holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden may close the day before or the day after the holiday. Parents will be updated on each year's holiday schedule as soon as we know the day we will be closed.

**19.1 YEARLY ACTIVITIES**

Every year our planning committee plans out the activities for the year. These activities are subject to change and/or activities may be added to the activity calendar. Plans include bulletin board themes, holiday plans, community outreach, fundraisers, etc. At the beginning of the school year a new activity plan will be sent out to parents.

**EMERGENCY CLOSINGS AND INCLEMENT WEATHER INFORMATION** **Policy No. 20**

In most cases, St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden is open during inclement weather. In the event that significant events accompany severe weather, such as a loss of power or water, the school will close.

In the event of an emergency closing and/or inclement weather, parents will be notified of the closing by Facebook, ProCare, and possibly by email.

Should the school need to close in the middle of the day, the school staff will attempt to reach the child's parents first to arrange pick up. Should the staff be unable to reach the parents, the people listed on the emergency contact form will be called until pick-up arrangements can be made. Staff will notify the



parents or emergency contact person at the time of the call; of the pickup location, should the children need to be evacuated from the child care center. Parents/Guardians or emergency contact persons should report directly to the alternate location if one is indicated.

Should the center need to close for any reason, tuition will not be refunded or reduced for closures of less than five school days. If the closure extends beyond five school days, parents will have their tuition refunded within 30 days of the closure.

### **CURRICULUM INFORMATION**

### **Policy No. 21**

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden uses Frog Street Early Learners for our infants, toddlers and two's, and Frog Street Preschool for our three-year-old's, and Frog Street Prekindergarten for our four-year-old's. We receive extensions to our lesson plans from Spark Activate Faith, Teaching Strategies Gold, and CLlengage. These curriculums believe that children learn best through actively engaging with people and things in their environment. Children are involved in hands-on experiences, real-life adventures, and assisted discovery as they explore concepts through play. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden is a place where essential readiness skills are nurtured through play, investigation, and of course, fun! These programs provide developmentally and age-appropriate activities and materials for exciting and wonder filled environments. To learn more about these programs and the wonderful things they offer, visit <http://www.frogstreet.com/>

At 9am Monday-Friday we attend Chapel where we pray, perform the pledges, and teach the Bible. On Wednesday's our Chapel is guided by our Pastor or Christian Education Director teaches our Bible curriculum. We use O Come Let Us Worship Him to teach the Bible stories. The time that we attend chapel may change at times or cancel due to events or unforeseen circumstances.

### **21.1 DAILY SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES**

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden classrooms follow a daily schedule designed specifically to meet the children's developmental, social, and emotional, and personal needs. All schedules are contingent on the needs of the children and may vary from day to day. Each classroom has their own daily schedule that they follow. Schedules are subject to change.

### **21.2 CLASS ASSIGNMENTS**

Classroom assignments are based on each individual child's chronological age, developmental age, emotional age, and physical age. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden typically will transition children to new classrooms one to two times a year, however from time to time we may request a transition sooner based on the individual child's needs.

When it becomes time to start transitioning your child into a new classroom we will send out a letter giving you notice that your child is developmentally ready to transition to the next classroom. We will schedule a conference between the family, new teacher, current teacher, and administrative staff to discuss the transition and allow you time to ask questions. After the conference we will start transitioning your child into their new classroom. This will start 2 weeks to a month before the child moves into the new class.



### 21.3 STAFF TO CHILD RATIOS

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden follows the staff to child ratios established by Texas Rising Star, which is lower than the state licensing ratios. From time to time, due to staffing shortages or other operational challenges, the school may default to state designated ratios. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will never run higher ratios than established by the Texas Department of Health and Human Services Child Care Licensing unless a significant event or emergency arises.

### 21.4 NAP AND REST TIMES

Supervised rest periods are provided for all children under five years of age who remain at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden for six or more hours a day, and for all other children who show a need for a rest time. Your child will be provided with a mat to rest on for naptime. Please provide a clean blanket and mat cover for naptime and take them home on Fridays for washing. You may also bring in a small blanket, pillow, or stuffed animal if desired, but they must be able to fit in your child's cubby. Nap and rest times are required by the Texas Department of Health and Human Services Child Care Licensing. Due to these regulations, parents/guardians cannot request that their child be exempt from nap or rest time.

### 21.5 PERSONAL CARE SUPPLIES NEEDED

Preschool children must have a complete change of clothing, **clearly marked with the child's name**, left at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden. Preschool children need to be dressed for the weather. Caps, mittens, and warm clothing must be worn during the cooler seasons for the daily outdoor playtime. Accidents can happen, even for older preschoolers, or if they get wet on the playground. For safety reasons, boots, sandals, crocs, and flip flops are prohibited. Only tennis shoes are permitted. Proper footwear needs to be placed on your children prior to entering The Learning Garden facility and the footwear must always remain on the children while at the center.

Parents/guardians must supply all bottles, toddler training cups, diapers and wipes. We will label everything with your child's first and last name. However, diapers will be labeled with initials.

We use washable crayons, markers and paint during art time, but children's clothing may get stained from just being kids! Please dress your children in play clothes since PLAY is what we do!!

Please leave all valuable items at home since St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden cannot be responsible for broken or lost items.

### 21.6 BIRTHDAY AND HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

Most children enjoy celebrating special events with their preschool friends (birthdays, new babies, and holidays). Parents/guardians may send a "store bought" treat to share with the class. Please make arrangements with the teacher three days in advance when planning a special occasion.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden believes in inclusion and celebrating each child's beliefs and important days.

In the event that a parent/guardian does not want their child to participate in a holiday celebration, they may choose to keep their child home for that day. No reduction in fees or tuition will be given.

Updated and revised September 2024 (Policies are reviewed annually and updated if necessary.)

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## 21.7 PARENT OR GUARDIAN/TEACHER CONFERENCES/COMMUNICATION

*Minimum Standards 746.501(6)*

Open Communication with parents/guardians is very important to children's success. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care/The Learning Garden has multiple ways of communicating with parents/guardians. In some situations, parents/guardians may be asked to sign documents acknowledging that communication has taken place. Signing such documents is not an admission or agreement in any way, yet acknowledgement that communication took place. Failure to sign documents is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program.

Listed below are ways that St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden may communicate with parents/guardians:

- Through email notifications
- Written memos placed in your child's weekly folders
- Social media site such as Facebook
- Smart phone notifications through ProCare
- Verbal communication with the child's teachers and director

Parents/guardians will be offered a Parent or Guardian/Teacher conference 2 to 3 times each year. This is a formal conference with your child's teacher to discuss academic and developmental progress in the classroom. Parents/guardians will be asked to sign up for a date and time for their conference. Parents/guardians will be required to sign acknowledging that they are unable to attend or do not wish to attend a Parent or Guardian/Teacher conference.

## 21.8 CHILD INFORMAL ASSESSMENTS

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden understands how important your child's education is to you. We conduct child assessments 3 times a year. Those assessments happen:

- BOY-Beginning of the Year (September/October)
- MOY-Middle of the Year (January/February)
- EOY-End of the Year (May/June)

Our Infant, Toddler, and Two-Year-Old classes use a Developmental Screening Checklist while our Preschool and Prekindergarten classes use an informal assessment through the Texas School Ready Program.

The results of these checklists and assessments are used to drive lesson planning, individualization, and will be gone over and your parent or guardian/teacher conference.

## DISCIPLINE

### Policy No. 22

*Minimum Standards 746.501(7)*

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden staff members are trained to use a positive method of discipline and guidance that encourages self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction. Just a few examples used in this situation are praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior: reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements and redirecting behaviors. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden does not use "time out" as a form of managing behavior. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child

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Care Center/The Learning Garden staff will never use Corporal Punishment or negative discipline that may hurt or humiliate a child.

Research has shown that positive guidance teaches children skills which help them get along in their physical and social environment. This aim is to develop personal standards in self-discipline, not to enforce a set of inflexible rules. Giving children understandable guidelines and redirecting their behavior helps them to develop internal control of their actions and encourages acceptable behavior. Positive cooperation is required from the family when dealing with disruptive behavior. We feel that consistency from all parties involved is the best way to handle these issues. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden reserves the right to terminate care for the child for discipline problems at any time.

When it comes to challenging behaviors, it is important that:

- We encourage collaboration on strategies to address challenging behaviors by conferencing with the family, teachers, and any therapists that are seeing the child.
- Our discussions are framed around the objective and goals of the child.
- The teacher and/or director have ongoing conversations with the family to express concerns.
- Families are informed of their child's progress through additional conference and/or classroom reports.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden employees are trained in Conscious Discipline. Conscious Discipline techniques and beliefs are used at all times in the classroom. These techniques and beliefs include:

- Our role is to teach behavior, not stop behavior.
- Adults see themselves as role models in the classroom. Adults are to behave in the same manner expected of children.
- Using active calming techniques for both children and adults
- Understanding that all behavior is a form of communication. When children act out, it is an opportunity to teach, not punish.
- Meeting the needs of the children so that they can meet the needs of their peers.
- Allowing children to express their emotions while supporting and comforting children in distress.
- Understanding that all children can only see the world through their version of reality, and helping children see the world as a positive place to live.
- Being optimistic and positive about all children enrolled in our program.
- Greeting each child every morning in a positive and impactful way.

### **22.1 SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION OF CHILDREN** Minimum Standards 746.501(8)

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden is proud of our history of working with the individual needs of our children and will work with the parents/guardians whose children may need additional support. When applicable, we will make referrals to outside support services including but limited to, early intervention, speech, occupations, and physical therapy and other types of services, and participate in IEP (Individual Education Plan) meetings where appropriate the best meet the needs of students.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/ The Learning Garden will make reasonable accommodations to their policies, practices, and procedures as appropriate in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden is not required by law to

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fundamentally alter or change the services provided for a child displaying dangerous/inappropriate behavior, developmental delays and/or disabilities as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will allow outside resources/therapists into the program to work with any child as needed, provided those services are communicated in advance, the provider of the services has the appropriate clearances to be in the building, the behavioral/therapeutic plan is shared with the administration and the resource/therapist works cooperatively with St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden staff to meet the needs of the child. The presence of the resource/therapist must mitigate any and all safety risks the child presents to themselves and to others and must be collaborative and complimentary to the program. Should the resource/therapist be disruptive to the program or not have authority or ability to mitigate, through appropriate therapeutic methods, the child's dangerous behaviors, the child may be excluded from the program.

Any child who is a safety threat to themselves or to others will be subject to suspension/exclusion and/or disenrollment from the program if the dangerous behavior cannot be eliminated through reasonable accommodations provided for under applicable federal and state laws and regulations. Temporary suspension from the school may be necessary for the safety of the child and others while any appropriate evaluations are completed and/or while securing the appropriate support services from the appropriate agency.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will at all times provide written documentation to the parents/guardians of any child that is subject to referral for outside support services for any behavior, developmental delay or disability. Further, through formal and informal conferences with the teachers and administrators, written incident and accident reports and letters, St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will communicate with parents/guardians of children exhibiting behaviors that are dangerous to themselves or to others, the steps taken to accommodate the child and notifications that the child will not be able to return to the program until support services are in place.

### **22.2 DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE (PERSONNEL)**

The teacher, assistant teachers, support staff, and administrative staff at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will be consistent in making sure children follow rules and procedures. This makes children feel secure. A well-managed class and center will keep discipline problems to a minimum.

Staff should understand that laying the foundation for internal order will help children for the rest of their lives. It is important that all teachers and assistants work together. Maintain a good relationship with the parents/guardians and keep them informed. When necessary, send home notes or make phone calls. Communication is essential.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden's Personnel Handbook States:

#### **Discipline of Children (Policy 6.9)**

Employees are prohibited from using physical forms of punishment, corporal punishment, severe verbal reprimands, embarrassing or humiliating forms of punishment including name calling, and/or withholding food from any child at any time. Employees who engage in any type of prohibited form of discipline will

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be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. In most cases an employee will be immediately terminated for any such offense.

Employees are required to use positive forms of behavior modification and discipline to stop unwanted behaviors and encourage desired behaviors. Employees are to be direct with children, providing clear descriptions of unwanted behaviors and then explain and model appropriate and desired behaviors. Children who are exhibiting behavior that is dangerous to themselves and/or to others and are not responding to corrective measures should be referred to the Director or Assistant Director.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden's staff members are to be trained to use a positive method of discipline and guidance that encourages self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction. Just a few examples used in this situation are praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior; reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements and redirecting behaviors. Staff will never use "time out" in disruptive situations. Staff will never use corporal punishment or negative discipline that may hurt or humiliate a child. The use of "time out" or corporal punishment is grounds for immediate termination.

Research has shown that positive guidance teaches children skills which help them get along in their physical and social environment. This aim is to develop personal standards in self-discipline, not to enforce a set of inflexible rules. Giving children understandable guidelines and redirecting their behavior helps them to develop internal control of their actions and encourages acceptable behavior.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden employees are trained in Conscious Discipline. Conscious Discipline techniques are to be used at all times. These techniques include:

- Our role is to teach behavior, not stop behavior.
- Adults see themselves as role models in the classroom. Adults are to behave in the same manner expected of children.
- Using active calming techniques for both children and adults
- Understanding that all behavior is a form of communication. When children act out, it is an opportunity to teach, not punish.
- Meeting the needs of the children so that they can meet the needs of their peers.
- Allowing children to express their emotions while supporting and comforting children in distress.
- Understanding that all children can only see the world through their version of reality, and helping children see the world as a positive place to live.
- Being optimistic and positive about all children enrolled in our program.
- Greeting each child every morning in a positive and impactful way.

### Steps for Dismissal of a Child

1. Conference with the Director about the issue. Sit down and make a plan of action.
2. Conference with the Parents/Guardians about the issue. Go over the plan of action.
3. Contact Child Find with parents' permission.
4. Continue to work with parents/guardians, therapists, and child.
5. We do not dismiss a child unless we are unable to give the child the services that they need.

Additionally, to St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden's policies about Discipline and Guidance which can be found in our Personnel Policies the following guidelines have been added.

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### **Gross Misconduct:**

Some offenses are so serious that they can result in termination without previous warnings. The following examples are listed for guidance of all. This list is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all prohibited activity. The follow actions may result in immediate termination:

1. Neglect or physical abuse of a child.
2. Withholding food, naps or other comfort from a child.
3. Yelling or the use of harsh tones of voice.
4. Failure to report to work with no notice.
5. Convicted of a felony of any offense.
6. Falsification of center records (employment application, time clock, time card, and your records.
7. Receiving a DUI this is for bus drivers only.
8. Leaving children unattended (inside or outside)
9. Allowing a child to leave the center with an unauthorized person.
10. Sleeping while supervising children.
11. Insubordination shows gross disrespect such as threatening, cussing, or yelling at administrators.
12. Discussing personal information about your rate of pay or payroll in any manner.
13. Unable to work with, and/or get along with other employees. (take care of you and no one else)
14. Discussing anything that has to with St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care/The Learning Garden Business, children in our center, employees at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care/The Learning Garden outside of the center is not prohibited. Any information about children or their families must be shared on a “need to know” basis only. Thus, be very sensitive about discussing children’s developmental needs and family information in a public place. Protect the interests of each child and family by keeping confidentiality. (If you have something that needs to be addressed you have to talk to your supervisor.) Also strive to be supportive of the centers efforts by avoiding negative or malicious discussions about the center issues.
15. Employees that are not up to date and/or maintain the training hours (24Hours) that are required by Minimum Standards Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

### **Behavior and Guidance:**

The goal of discipline is to help children learn self-control. Providers help teach children about appropriate behavior and how to get along with others.

1. Be consistent. Children are confused when providers respond in different ways to similar behavior.
2. Appropriate guidance needs to follow a child’s misbehavior immediately so that the child understands why he or she is being corrected. Never threaten to do something that the provider would not or could not do.
3. Be a good role model. Act with kindness and patience toward each child. Respect and talk to children about their feelings.
4. Talk with children about their behavior and what is expected. Tell children what they can do rather than what they can’t. “Please walk” is more effective than “don’t run”.
5. Follow a consistent daily schedule so that children know what to expect and are prepared for changes in activity throughout the day.
6. Give children choices whenever possible.

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7. Praise good behavior often. Children (and adults) need to hear that the good things they do are appreciated!
8. Talk to parents/guardians about both the good things their child(ren) has done while in child care and those things that require additional attention. Include parents/guardians in making decisions about effective ways to provide guidance for their child(ren). Consistency between the child's home and the child care home is most effective. Never spank or use another method of punishment that is prohibited by law or regulation, even if parents/guardians give permission.

### **Suggested Guidance for Infants and Toddlers:**

1. Remove tempting items that are off limits to infants/toddlers. By nature, they are curious about people and things. They are just learning.
2. Distract (this is also called redirection) the infant/toddler away from the activity that is not desired by attracting the child with a better choice.
3. Ignore the behavior, if the child is not in danger or causing someone else to be in danger.
4. Use the word "NO" sparingly. "NO" should only be used when the infant/toddler is approaching danger. Over using the word "NO" may result in the child learning to ignore you.
5. Provide duplicates of popular toys. Infants and toddlers do not understand the concept of "sharing".
6. Place a toy or item in "time-out"-not the child. Infants/toddlers have short attention spans and are naturally active. Time out for infants/toddlers is not appropriate.

### **Suggested Guidance for Preschool Age Children:**

Any of the above methods of guidance PLUS:

1. Allow preschool age children to make acceptable choices and let the natural consequence of the decision be the teacher (as long as the consequence is not dangerous). Be sure to offer choices you can live with!
2. Help children learn to solve problems. Offer suggestions when necessary and allow the child to decide.
3. Talk about the "rules" of the child care center. Remind the children. Children learn by repetition. Allow the preschool age children to help set the "rules".
4. Time-out should be used sparingly. Over use of "time out" or any other method of guidance causes the method to become "old hat" which causes it to lose its effectiveness. Time out provides the child the opportunity to think -cool off - calm down. Time out is not about your ability to control the child. Provide a "time out space" for the child that is nearby and which allows you to clearly supervise the child. Invite the child to rejoin the group when he/she is ready. Talk about the behavior, feelings and reassure the child when he/she rejoins the group. Never place a child in time out for long periods of time.

### **Suggested Guidance for School Age Children:**

Any of the above methods of guidance PLUS:

1. Involve school age children in planning activities.
2. Involve school age children in setting their own guidelines.
3. Allow school age children to suggest consequences when rules are "broken".

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**All caregivers are to follow Texas Health and Human Services Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers Subchapter L, Discipline and Guidance.**

**746.2803 What methods of discipline and guidance may a caregiver use?**

Discipline must be:

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

**746.2805 What types of discipline and guidance or punishment are prohibited?**

There must be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:

- 1) Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment;
- 2) Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training;
- 3) Pinching, shaking, or biting a child;
- 4) Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;
- 5) Putting anything in or on a child's mouth;
- 6) Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child;
- 7) Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language;
- 8) Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet;
- 9) Withholding active play or keeping a child inside as a consequence for behavior, unless the child is exhibiting behavior during active play that requires a brief supervised separation or time out that is consistent with 746.2803(4)(D) of this subchapter (relating to What methods of discipline and guidance may a caregiver use?); and
- 10) Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age, including requiring a child to remain in a restrictive device.

**746.2807 May my employees discipline their own children who are in care at my center?**

Yes, during operating hours an employee may discipline the employee's own child as long as the employee does not violate the requirements specified in this subchapter.

**TOYS FROM HOME**

**Policy No. 23**

Due to the risk of damage, sharing issues, and loss, children are not permitted to bring in toys from home, unless specifically requested by the classroom teacher for use as part of the curriculum. Parents/guardians are responsible for enforcing this policy with their child. Parents/guardians are encouraged to consult the classroom teacher should they find their child is having difficulty with this policy.



If the parents/guardians fail repeatedly to enforce this policy with their children, the staff will call the parents/guardians and require that they come to the school and remove the toy.

Children in classrooms with nap/rest time are permitted to include with their bedding supplies, one plush/non-musical toy with which to nap/rest. This toy is to be placed with the bedding supplies and use of it will only be allowed at nap/rest time.

All toys brought in for use as part of the curriculum, and/or for nap/rest time will be inspected by St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden staff for safety and appropriateness and may be prohibited at the sole discretion of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden.

## **DRESS CODE**

**Policy No. 24**

### **24.1 CHILDREN**

#### **Clothing:**

Children are engaged in various activities during the course of the day; some of these activities can be messy, and/or athletic in nature. Additionally, children are engaged in outdoor play daily, weather permitting. Due to these activities, children are required to be dressed in seasonably appropriate, comfortable, clothing.

Parents/guardians are prohibited from dressing children in overalls, or clothing with difficult closures. These types of clothing present particular challenges for children in relation to toileting.

If your child is not potty trained, please send them in clothing that are not difficult to take off when changing their pull-ups that don't have fastening sides. If you continue to send them in difficult clothing to take off we will ask you to send pull-ups that fasten on the side.

Coats must be provided in the winter months.

Children are not permitted to wear closed-toed or open toed, and/or open backed shoes like sandals and flip flops. For the safety of your children, we do not allow crocs (even if worn with the strap on) and boots. The required type of shoes for participation in school activities are rubber-soled, sneakers/tennis shoes. The appropriate footwear must be placed on the child before entering our center.

Children who wear dresses are required to wear shorts underneath their dress.

Children ages 3 through 5 are required to have one seasonably and size appropriate complete change of clothing at the center at all times. Children under 3 years of age are required to have two seasonably and size appropriate, complete changes of clothing at the center at all times. A complete change of clothing includes shirt, pants, underwear, socks, and shoes. Teachers will post reminders for parents/guardians to update changes of clothing as the weather begins to change.

All clothing items must be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name. This includes coats, hats, gloves, scarves, and boots. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden is not responsible for lost or damaged items of clothing.



### **Jewelry/Accessories:**

Children are not permitted to wear jewelry of any kind. It is a safety hazard for your child as well as the other children enrolled in the program. In addition, St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will not be responsible for lost or stolen valuables. It is the parents/guardians responsibility to enforce this policy with their children. Should a child come to school wearing any jewelry, parents/guardians will be required to take it with them, or to return to the school to remove the jewelry if it is discovered after the parent/guardian leaves. Repeated (more than 3 violations per school year) violations of this policy are considered to be violation of SAFETY POLICIES and will result in dismissal from the program.

Hair beads, barrettes, bobby pins, etc. are not to be worn by children. These accessories are considered to be safety hazards. When choosing accessories for your children be mindful of the potential safety issues they present not only for your child, but also for the older and younger children attending St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden is not responsible for damage to or loss of and articles of clothing.

## **24.2 FAMILIES**

### **Clothing:**

Parents/guardians are required to be dressed in appropriate clothing while at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden or involved in any St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden sponsored events. Inappropriate clothing would include revealing, extremely short, ripped/torn (in inappropriate places), and/or see-through articles of clothing. Anything with suggestive or vulgar language is prohibited.

Parents/guardians wearing high heels, work boots, or shoes with wet/dirty soles, will be required to remove their shoes prior to entering any classroom with children under 1 year of age. This will reduce the risk of injury to a child on the floor and will help to maintain a clean floor. Parents/guardians can simply leave their shoes outside the classroom door prior to entering the classroom. Parents/guardians with bare feet must wear booties when entering the classroom.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

### **Policy No. 25**

*Minimum Standards 746.501(16)*

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden sometimes supplements the in-class curriculum with field trips. Parents/guardians are required to give written permission for their child to attend these field trips.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden consider the following as field trips:

- Nature walks
- Visiting the prayer garden
- Visiting the Church
- and tending to our garden.

Updated and revised September 2024 (Policies are reviewed annually and updated if necessary.)

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St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden provides all required supervision for all field trips. The permission slips, a first aid kit, and the children emergency contact information accompanies the teachers for the field trips.

## **FAMILY PARTICIPATION/VOLUNTEERS**

**Policy No. 26**

*Minimum Standards 746.501(20)*

Parents/guardians are invited and encouraged to be involved in their child's school activities. There are many different ways in which parents/guardians can participate and volunteer at the childcare center. Parents/guardians may volunteer to attend trips, read in the classroom, assist teachers, and/or coordinate special events. Teachers will have posted in their classrooms any volunteer opportunities available. Parents/guardians not interested in volunteering directly in the classroom may donate items, do maintenance work, or assist in the front office. These volunteer opportunities are posted in the main office area on the family bulletin board.

Any parent/guardian who volunteers in the classroom on a regular basis will be required to pay for and secure all criminal background checks, as required by our licensing regulations. Any person, including parents/guardians, with felony convictions, sex offender convictions and/or open investigations into any criminal activities will not be permitted to volunteer in the classroom, or on field trips.

Parents/guardians with court orders detailing custodial arrangements will only be permitted to volunteer on days in which they are afforded custody (joint/shared custody arrangement) as per the court order. For example, if a parent/guardian is afforded custody on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, that parent/guardian will only be able to volunteer on those days. Parents/guardians with visitation only (sole/exclusive custody arrangements), will only be permitted to volunteer with the express written permission of the custodial parent/guardian.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden reserves the right to make Volunteer assignments. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden does not guarantee the volunteering parents/guardians will be assigned to locations where their child(ren) is present. An Activity Plan will be sent home yearly to let you know what plans we have for the year and how you can participate.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

**Policy No. 27**

### **27.1 POTTY TRAINING**

Is Your Child Ready to Use the Toilet?

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden believes there are two stages or steps to potty training or toilet learning. These stages are:

1. Toilet trained – The child is capable of using the toilet BUT it is the adult who gets the child to the bathroom on time by putting the child on the toilet at certain times or on a schedule. At this stage, the child often needs assistance with the whole toileting process – this includes pulling pants up and down. Accidents occur frequently in this stage. This is the first stage towards becoming toilet learned or potty trained.
2. Toilet learned (learning) or potty training – The child is not only capable of using the toilet BUT has the developmental ability to express the need to go (both urine and bowel movement). In this stage, the

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child will demonstrate all or most of the readiness signs as listed below. Accidents occur, but very infrequently at this stage.

### Verbal Stages of Potty-Training Readiness

1. Basic verbal skills – the child is able to speak in three-to-four-word sentences.
2. The child tells you when he or she has wet his/her diaper (recognizes he or she is wet).
3. The child tells you when he or she is wetting his/her diaper (recognizes the sensation of wetting a diaper).
4. The child tells you that he or she needs to go to the bathroom (can control self and go to use the toilet).

### Physical and Psychological Signs of Potty-Training Readiness

1. Child stays dry for a long time – able to hold their urine or bowel movements.
2. Has bowel movements at regular times. The child chooses when to have a bowel movement.
3. Adults can recognize when the child is having a bowel movement.
4. The child can undress and pull up their own clothing/pants.
5. Child initiates using the toilet and asks to wear underwear. This is also a sign of wanting to be independent, which is very important.
6. Emotionally ready and open to learning.
7. Can follow three to four step instructions. This is critical to learning to pee, wipe, flush, and wash hands.

Potty training should be a positive experience for everyone involved. It should only take a short period of time when your child is truly ready. Problems arise when adults (parents/guardians and caregivers) do not pay attention when your child is truly ready. It should only be determined on an individual basis, much like learning to walk. No two children will potty train in exactly the same time frame or even in the same manner.

It is the belief of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden that potty training or toilet learning should begin at home with the child's parents/guardians and at a time when there are not a lot of changes in the child's life. Life must be fairly stress free during this time for the child. We will assist your child in becoming potty trained once the signs of readiness have been established or have been observed by the parents/guardians, as well as the classroom teacher. Many children may show these signs of readiness at home, but not at school and sometimes vice versa. It is encouraged that the first steps towards potty training begin at home and on a weekend when you the parents are able to devote your weekend to helping your child. When your child is successful for a **full week**, your child can attend school in underwear. Please notify your child's teacher in the morning that your child has underwear on and not a diaper or pull-up, as to minimize any surprises. At that time, the teacher will gently remind your child from time to time (not on any set schedule) to remember to go potty. Please remember that it is nearly impossible for a busy teacher to remember to remind a child (or perhaps children) every half hour to hour to go in and use the potty, while also caring for others in the class. For that reason, your child needs to be able to communicate the need to go potty his or herself without reminders from an adult. There are times in the day that teachers remind the children to go in and go, but it is not at a set time or schedule. – the reminders come naturally throughout the day such as before rest time.

We request that the following guidelines are followed when children are potty training or wearing underwear at school:

1. Your child **MUST** wear loose-fitting clothing that is easy for the child to pull up or down.



2. NO overalls, pants that require the use of a belt, t-shirts with snaps between the legs, or pants with snaps and zippers that the child cannot get in and out of.
3. A few changes of clothing, underwear, and socks that are kept in your child's cubby in case of accidents. Please be sure to change out clothes when the weather changes.
4. Bring an extra pair of shoes if available. These can get wet too.
5. Have your child wear training pants (the thick layer underwear) if available.
6. IF your child is male, inform the caregiver if your son will be sitting or standing. This really should be determined right from the beginning of the potty-training process. It is recommended that boys first learn to sit and pee in the potty and once they are consistent then can be taught to stand and go. This will also lessen problems with learning to put BM's in the toilet and will also avoid constipation issues.
7. Keep a small supply of pull-ups available at school until the child has shown naptime dryness for a week. Your child will be in a pull-up during naptime until he or she has shown that they can stay dry for that time.
8. We do not rinse out or wash soiled clothing, so any clothing that becomes soiled during the day will need to go home that afternoon. Your child's teacher will place them in a plastic bag and will put them in your child's cubby.

Please keep in mind that often children will show readiness and have success for potty training at home before the signs are seen at school. There may be a period of time where your child is potty trained at home and not at school. That is perfectly normal and has been seen quite often. If your child comes to school with underwear on and has 2 accidents in a short period of time, a diaper or pull-up will be put on your child and we can try again another day when he or she shows signs of being ready at school. Patience is very important during this time.

### **27.2 CHILDREN WITH SEVERE ALLERGIES**

For the safety of your child, parents/guardians are required to provide a signed copy of the "Food Allergy Emergency Plan" form, detailing any allergies, food or otherwise, from which their child suffers, at the time of enrollment or when the allergy is discovered. This form must be completely filled out by the child's physician and parent/guardian(s) or legal guardian(s), and must be updated every six months, or more frequently, as needed. This form can be obtained by request from the School Director.

Any medication required to treat an allergic reaction must be provided in accordance with the Medication Policy detailed herein.

### **27.3 COMMUNICABLE DISEASES /Illnesses/Head Lice *Minimum Standards 746.501(3)***

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden follows all health/communicable disease policies as outlined in the American Academy of Pediatrics Model Health Policies and Procedures Manual. A copy of this manual is on file with the School Director and is available upon request for review. Additionally, copies can be purchased, for a nominal fee, from the National Association for the Education of the Young Child (NAEYC).

Parents/guardians are required to pick up an ill child within 1 hour of notification by phone. If a parent/guardian is reached but cannot pick their child up within 1 hour, it becomes the parent/guardians responsibility to arrange for alternate pick up with someone listed on the child's emergency contact form. The staff will not continue to call those listed on the emergency contact list once a parent/guardian is



reached. If a parent/guardian cannot be reached, the staff will begin to call the people listed on the emergency contact form, until arrangements can be made for the child to be picked up.

Children will be excluded from participation in the program if they exhibit symptoms of any communicable disease. They will not be permitted to return to the program until they are no longer contagious. Guidelines for determining the contagious period for a specific illness are based on the recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Children must present a doctor's note stating they are no longer contagious and can return to the program. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden reserves the right to refuse to allow a child to return if the center director or designee believes the child to be too ill to participate in the program.

Children are to be excluded from the center due to:

A fever may not return to the program until they are fever free, without fever reducing medication, for 24 hours. If your child is sent home due to a fever, he/she is not permitted to return to the program the following day at a minimum. A fever is defined as a temperature reading on a thermometer of at least 100 degrees Fahrenheit or more as taken under the arm.

For loose bowels or diarrhea which occur 2 or more times in a 24-hour period of time. Children may return to the program when normal bowel movements resume. At return to the center, if child continues to have loose bowels or diarrhea they will be sent home and not be able to return for 24 hours.

For an illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities (determined by caregiver.)

For an illness that requires attention greater than the caregivers can provide without jeopardizing the health and safety of the other children in the classroom.

Signs/symptoms of illness such as lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, inexplicable irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing (and/or wheezing)

- Blood in stool (not associated with diet changes, medication or hard stool)
- Vomiting until vomiting stops or vomiting is deemed not contagious by a licensed health care professional and the child is not at risk of dehydration.
- Abdominal pain for more than 2 hours or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs/symptoms of illness.
- Rash with fever or behavior change until deemed not contagious or symptom of a communicable disease by a license health care professional.
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye) until treatment has been initiated.
- Head lice until first treatment is complete and all nits are removed. At drop off your child will be checked. If lice or nits are still found your child will be sent home again.
- Scabies (highly contagious skin infection caused by mites that burrow into the skin) until treatment has been completed.
- Tuberculosis (infectious disease that is caused by bacteria that affects the lungs) until a licensed health care professional states the child is receiving appropriate therapy and may attend child care.

Updated and revised September 2024 (Policies are reviewed annually and updated if necessary.)

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- Impetigo (contagious skin infection caused by staph or strep) until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated.
- Strep throat until 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has been initiated and fever ceases.
- Chicken pox until all sores have dried and crusted (anywhere from 5-21 days)
- Pertussis (whooping cough) until 5 days of appropriate antibiotic treatment has been completed.
- Mumps (viral infection causing face/neck to swell) until 9 days after onset of symptoms.
- Hepatitis A (viral infection of liver) until 7 days after onset of illness
- Measles (highly contagious respiratory disease) until 4 days after onset of rash
- Rubella (highly contagious viral infection with a distinct red rash) until 6 days after onset of rash
- Herpes Simplex (cold sores/fever blisters) with uncontrollable drooling
- Coxsackie Virus (highly contagious viral infection causing soreness in the mouth, on the hands and feet and sometimes the buttocks) until 3-6 days after onset.
- Unspecified respiratory illness combined with another illness which requires exclusion.

If your child is absent due to illness, we request that you notify the school director. This enables our faculty to keep track of any illnesses which may occur at our school. This information will only be shared with faculty on a “need to know” basis. If your child has a communicable disease, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the school director, so that the parents/guardians of the children in the school may be notified that a communicable disease is present. Once again, only the communicable disease information will be shared. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will take all measures necessary to protect your child’s confidentiality. You are not required to disclose this information by law, and your continued enrollment will not be based whatsoever on your decision to share, (or not) the reason for your child’s absence from school.

### **27.4 TEETHING**

Teething is a natural process that can cause discomfort for infants and toddlers. Our daycare center strives to provide the best possible care for all children, including those who are teething. To ensure that every child receives adequate support during this time, we have established the following teething policy:

We encourage open communication regarding their child’s teething symptoms between parents and ourselves. Parents should inform us when their child begins showing signs of teething so we can be prepared to provide additional care if needed.

We will use various comfort measures to help alleviate teething-related discomfort in children. These may include providing cool or frozen items such as washcloths or teethers for children to chew on, giving infants gentle gum massages, or offering extra cuddles and attention when needed.

At times children may run a fever from teething. However, it is a low-grade fever. If your child is running a fever of 100.4 or more under the arm they will be sent home.

#### **Medication**

Over-the-counter medications such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) can effectively reduce pain associated with teething. However, these medications will only be administered with written permission from the child’s parent or guardian. We will follow dosage instructions carefully and monitor children closely for any adverse reactions.

Updated and revised September 2024 (Policies are reviewed annually and updated if necessary.)

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden at its option, may change, delete, suspend, or discontinue parts or the policy in its entirety, at any time without prior notice. In the event of a policy change, families will be notified. Any such action shall apply to existing as well as to future families.



During the teething process, children may drool more than usual, which increases the risk of spreading germs. We ensure that all surfaces and toys are regularly sanitized and that children's hands and faces are wiped clean frequently throughout the day.

**Individualized Care Plans:** Every child has unique needs when managing their teething symptoms. Our daycare center provides individualized care plans based on each child's specific needs and preferences.

To ensure everyone's safety at our center, we do not use products containing benzocaine like Orajel on any child under two years old due to FDA recommendations. We also prohibit the use of teething jewelry. Teething jewelry poses an unnecessary choking hazard.

By implementing these guidelines into our daily routine at our center, we hope to make your child's transition through this stage less painful while providing you with peace of mind knowing they're receiving fantastic care!

### **27.5 BITING**

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden recognizes that biting is a developmentally appropriate behavior for children in the infant through 2-year-old classrooms. Parents/guardians with children in these classrooms should expect that their children may bite or will bite another child. The staff understands that parents/guardians are concerned and can be upset when their child is involved in a biting incident. We ask that you remember this is a developmentally appropriate behavior, and that the staff is working to identify situations which provoke or elicit this behavior so it can be prevented in the future. The staff will not punish or harshly discipline children in the younger classrooms for biting behavior; they will simply redirect the children to different activities in separate areas of the classroom. Parents/guardians are expected to work with staff to identify methods and strategies to curb this behavior. Uncooperative parents/guardians will have their child's services terminated.

Children older than 3 years of age may occasionally be involved in a biting incident. For children in this age group who bite, the staff will use the discipline procedures outlined in the discipline section of this handbook, as well as observe the child to determine what provokes or elicits this inappropriate behavior. Parents/guardians are expected to cooperate with staff to help their child control this behavior. Uncooperative parents/guardians will have their child's service terminated. Furthermore, children, in the older age groups, who bite 3 times in a school year will have their services terminated since, the safety of all the children in the program is of the utmost concern of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden.

Parents/guardians will be notified by incident/accident report that a biting incident occurred during the course of the day. The staff may not discuss with either parent/guardian the identity of the other child involved in the incident. This information is considered to be confidential and cannot be disclosed. The staff of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden cannot discuss the medical history of any child involved in a biting incident with the other party. It is recommended that any child involved in a biting incident be seen by their family physician if the parents/guardians are concerned about communicable diseases possibly resulting from the biting incident.

Updated and revised September 2024 (Policies are reviewed annually and updated if necessary.)

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**27.6 DISPENSING MEDICATION** *Minimum Standards 746.501(4)*

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will only dispense over the counter and/or prescription medication that is in original, labeled containers, and is accompanied by a doctor's note with explicit dosage and administration instructions. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will only give medication to the child for whom the doctor's note is written and for whom the medication container is labeled. One doctor's note per course of treatment is required. If a child, for example, is to be given a course of antibiotics for 10 days, the doctor's note must identify the dates that the medication is to be given. **St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will only dispense prescription medication that is prescribed three or more times in a day. Medication prescribed once or twice a day must be given by the parents/guardians at home.**

Parents/guardians are required to complete a Medication Form for the medication to be dispensed. Medication Forms can be found in your child's classroom. Medication Forms, doctor's notes and medication are to be turned into the Classroom Teacher or School Director.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will dispense over the counter, fever reducing/pain medication (ex. Children's Tylenol, Children's Motrin) on an as needed basis, with a doctor's note detailing the recommended reasons for administration and appropriate dosage. Parents/guardians are required to supply an unopened bottle of the fever reducing/pain medication clearly labeled with their child's name. (One note and bottle of fever reducing/pain medication is required per child.) Prior to administering fever reducing/pain medication, staff will contact a parent/guardian or person listed on emergency contact form, if a parent/guardian cannot be reached, to inform them of our need to administer the medication. Staff will also inform the parent/guardian or emergency contact person if it is necessary for the child to be picked up due to illness. Refer to the policy listed above regarding picking up ill children.

Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that all prescription medication is properly labeled by a pharmacist and replaced prior to the expiration date.

**27.7 FIRE/EMERGENCY DRILLS** *Minimum Standards 746.501(5)(23)*

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden conducts monthly fire and emergency/evacuation drills. Parents/guardians, staff and children will not be made aware of drill dates or times, as this is the most effective way to assess the effectiveness of fire and emergency/evacuation plans.

During a fire/emergency drill or real fire/emergency situation, parents/guardians may not sign children into or out of the program. Parents/guardians must wait until the drill is complete and children have returned to the building to sign their child into the program. Parents/guardians may feel free to wait with the child's class in the designated safe zone outside of the building until the drill is complete.

In the event of a real fire/emergency situation, the director or designate will inform each classroom teacher that the school will be closing. At this time, any parents/guardians waiting to sign their child in will have to leave the premises with their child. All other parents/guardians or emergency contact persons will be notified by telephone of the situation. As with the sick child pick up policy, children must be picked up within 1 hour of the telephone call.



Parents/guardians wishing to sign their child out of the program during a fire/emergency drill or real fire/emergency situation are expected to have patience with the staff as they are trying to maintain order during an often hectic and dangerous situation. If the school is in the midst of a fire/emergency drill, parents/guardians will be required to wait until the drill is completed and the staff and children are returned to the building to sign their child out of the program. If the school is having a real fire/emergency situation, parents/guardians will be asked to wait until the director or designee has accounted for all staff and children and gives the staff permission to release children. Once again, it is important for parents/guardians and staff to work together, remain calm, and cooperate with the fire/emergency personnel and center administration during these important and critical situations.

Parents/guardians may review the complete St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden Emergency Preparedness Plan posted in every classroom and on the Family Communication Board.

### **27.8 ALTERNATE SAFE LOCATION *Minimum Standards 746.501(23)***

Should the administration of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden or any emergency services personnel determine the building which houses the child care agency to be too dangerous to be occupied, the staff and children will be taken to an alternate location detailed in the St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden Emergency Preparedness Plan. Once the children are assembled here, the staff will begin contacting parents/guardians or emergency contact persons for pick up. As stated before, children must be picked up within 1 hour of the telephone call.

### **27.9 INCIDENT/ILLNESS REPORTS**

Should your child be involved in an incident/illness during the course of the school day, a staff member will complete an Incident/Illness Report. The Incident/Accident Report will be provided to the parents/guardians by the classroom teacher.

Parents/guardians or persons designated to act "in lieu of parents/guardians are required to sign any incident/illness reports from the day at pick-up. The classroom teacher will be able to briefly discuss the matter with you at pick-up. However, should you feel it necessary to have an in-depth discussion or meeting, it is most appropriate to schedule the meeting for a later date because the teacher is responsible for supervising the remaining children in the classroom. A telephone conference may be scheduled for later in the day or for the next day at nap/rest time if the parent/guardian is unable to meet at the center during the course of the day.

Should a person other than the parent/guardian or one designated to act "in lieu of parents/guardians pick-up the child, a parent/guardian or person designated to act "in lieu of parents/guardians must sign the Incident/Illness Report. However, the parent/guardian is required to sign the form the next time they are at the center for drop off or pick up.

### **27.10 FIREARMS AND WEAPONS**

At no time is any person permitted to carry any type of Firearm, Ammunitions and/or Weapon on agency property for any reason. Violation of this policy will result in immediate dismissal from the program.



**27.11 INFANT SLEEP SAFETY** *Minimum Standards 746.501(9)*

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden follows the Infant Sleep Safety Guidelines as listed in the Child Care Minimum Standards and as outlined by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. All infants will be placed on their backs to sleep. To avoid suffocation, nothing is allowed in the crib but the infant, including blankets and stuffed animals. Sleep positioning devices are prohibited unless instructed by the child's health care professional. An "Infant Sleep Exception" form must be completed by the health care professional. All cribs at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden meet the CPSC safety guidelines. Crib compliance documents are on file in the front office. Pacifiers are allowed, however straps that are attached to the child's clothing and pacifiers with stuffed animals attached are prohibited.

**27.12 HEARING AND VISION SCREENING** *Minimum Standards 746.501(12)*

Hearing and Vision Screening for possible vision and hearing problems is required by the Special Senses and Communication Disorders Act, Texas Health & Safety Code, Chapter 36, for children who are 4-years old. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will schedule annual screenings at our school. Parents/guardians may also bring in screening proof from their local pediatrician.

**27.13 WATER ACTIVITIES** *Minimum Standards 746.501(15)*

Parents/guardians will be notified in advance of other water play activities. Splash/Sprinkler Play is offered during the summer months. Parents/guardians are asked to send a swim suit, swim diaper (if applicable), water shoes and a towel on their child's assigned splash day. Children wearing regular diapers will not be allowed to participate in Splash Day.

**27.14 ANIMALS** *Minimum Standards 746.501(17)*

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden does not allow any animals inside the center that are able to be handled or touched. We only allow fish. Fish tanks are cleaned regularly and maintained.

**27.15 INSECT REPELLANT AND SUNSCREEN** *Minimum Standards 746.501(18)*

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will apply sunscreen and/or bug repellent as needed. Sunscreen and bug repellent must be provided by the parent/guardian, must be in the original container, and must not have expired. Permission on the admission form must be completed and signed by the parent/guardian before these items can be applied.

**27.16 HEALTH STATEMENTS** *Minimum Standards 746.611*

A health statement is required for your child to attend our center.

A health statement is:

- A written statement from a health-care professional who has examined your child within the past year, indicating the child is able to take part in the child-care program is required. This statement is due within one week after the date of admission.
- A signed affidavit from the parent/guardian stating that medical diagnosis and treatment conflict with the tenets and practices of a recognized religious organization of which the parent/guardian is an adherent or a member.
- A signed statement from the parent/guardian giving the name and address of a health-care professional who has examined the child within the past year stating that the child is able to

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participate in our program. This must be followed by a signed statement from a health-care professional within 12 months of the date of admission.

**27.17 HEALTH CHECKS** *Minimum Standards 746.501(26)*

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden staff will do a visual check of the children upon arrival each morning. If a staff member notices anything unusual, they are required to point this out to the parents/guardians at that time. If your child has an accident overnight, please notify staff members.

**27.18 VACCINE-PREVENTABLE DISEASES/SHOT RECORDS** *Minimum Standards 746.501(27)*

All St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden employees are encouraged to receive an annual flu shot and are required to be current on their Pertussis vaccine to help protect children from illnesses.

Before enrollment at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden you are to provide an updated shot record for your child. Throughout enrollment as your child receives shots it is your responsibility to make sure we have an updated shot record on file.

**27.19 GANG-FREE ZONE** *Minimum Standards 746.501(b)(2)*

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a licensed child care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to a harsher penalty.

**27.20 OUTDOOR PLAY**

Outdoor play is a regular part of the daily routine. Children should be prepared to play outside some part of every day. Please do not request that your child stay indoors. Per the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, children too sick to go outside should not be at school. Children may only wear tennis shoes.

Birth-12 months: outdoor play for an amount of time as tolerated by the Infant.

13 months and up: a minimum of 60 minutes a day.

Outside Times vary among the classrooms. Each classroom has an outside schedule to follow.

We follow the Child Care Weather Watch Chart to determine if we will go outside or not. If we do not go outside we will provide gross motor activities in the classroom like exercises, music and movement, etc.

Heat Index

Less than 90	30 minutes
90-95	15 minutes in the sun, then up to 15 minutes of shade play
95-100	5 minutes in sun, then up to 25 minutes of shade play
Over 100	shade play only, limited to 10 minutes

Wind Chill

Over 55	30 minutes
50-55	15 minutes
45-50	5 minutes
Under 45	no outside time

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### **27.21 SCREEN TIME** *Minimum Standards 746.2205 (b); 745.2207*

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden does not allow using TV/video or computer time for children under the age of two years of age. For those over the age of two years old are only allowed to use screen time if it is written in the activity plan for the day.

The screen time activities must be related to the planned activity, be age-appropriate, and they are not to exceed 15-30 minutes. Examples of screen time that we would use are and not limited to the following: FrogStreet videos, Dr. Jean, Jack Hartmann, Bible Stories, etc.

During holidays we may watch a movie, however, it will be stretched out throughout the week to limit the screen time. Examples are “The Star” or “Polar Express” during Christmas time.

Resources about screen time can be found on our Family Resources board located in our hallway and/or table that is located by our entrance door.

### **STAFF EMPLOYMENT BY CLIENT’S POLICY**

### **Policy No. 28**

The staff of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden are allowed to be employed by any client (current or former). Parents/guardians who employ St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden staff are to remember that all things pertaining to our center is confidential.

Employees of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden that are participating in social networking relationships with clients of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden are to maintain professionalism. This includes, but is not limited to, accepting, or requesting friend requests on media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat or Instagram.

### **CAMERAS AND PHOTOGRAHPS**

### **Policy No. 29**

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden has closed circuit cameras in all classrooms. Due to privacy laws recorded camera footage is for St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden reviewing only. Parents/guardians or guardians may only request to view previous footage from the School Director in circumstances if it is an alleged incident of abuse or neglect involving their child if the video recording is still available. The parent/guardian does not retain any part of the video depicting a child that is not their own and the parents/guardians of the other children in the video have to receive prior notice from the center. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will cooperate with local law enforcement. Available camera footage will be released to local authorities with a court order. The privacy of the children is very important to us. For this reason, the cameras are not available over the internet.

### **29.1 PHOTOGRAPHS**

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



## 29.2 VIDEOS

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden participates in many different programs that benefit our center. At times, these programs ask us to video tape our teachers during instruction in the classrooms. These videos are for assessment purposes only and are not used in any other manner.

## 29.3 ZOOM

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden uses Zoom from time to time to conduct conferences with parents/guardians, ECI (Early Childhood Intervention), Texas Rising Star, and Texas School Ready. You may choose to permit or decline us to use Zoom with your child on the permission to photograph form that is in the enrollment packet.

## ACCOMODATIONS FOR FAMILIES

### Policy No. 30

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden feels that it is very important to support families and children, including differing home language, abilities, and/or cultural backgrounds. We will work together with you, Early Childhood Intervention specialists, the DeWitt-Lavaca Special Education Coop, and any other services that will help your child with their development.

- Lesson planning will be strategized with the specialists to make sure that we are working with your child on reaching their goals.
- We provide a designated space for therapy and meetings with your therapists.
- Our family information bulletin board located in our hallway and the information table by the entrance to our center provides information on different services offered. The literature and family resources are in English and Spanish.
- We will accommodate to the best of our ability for differing abilities that are needed.

## 30.1 SUPPORTING INCLUSIVE SERVICES TO CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL CARE NEEDS

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden is proud of our history of working with the individual needs of our children and will work with the parent/guardians whose children may need additional support or have special care needs. When applicable, we will make referrals to outside support services including but limited to, early intervention, speech, occupations, and physical therapy and other types of services, and participate in IEP (Individual Education Plan) or ISFP (Individualized Family Service Plan) meetings when appropriate to best meet the needs of the child.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will make appropriate accommodations for a child with special care needs as recommended by the child's healthcare provider and/or qualified professionals affiliated with the school district or an early childhood intervention program.

Accommodation may include, but is not limited to adapting equipment, procedures, and methods to meet the child's needs in the classroom setting. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will allow outside resources/therapists into the program to work with any child as needed, provided those services are communicated in advance, the provider of the services has the appropriate clearances to be in the building, the behavioral/therapeutic plan is shared with the administration and the resource/therapist works cooperatively with

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden employees to meet the needs of the child. The presence of the resource/therapist must mitigate any and all safety risks the child presents to themselves and to others and must be collaborative and complimentary to the program. Should the resource/therapist be disruptive to the program or not have authority or ability to mitigate, through



appropriate therapeutic methods, the child's dangerous behaviors, the child may be excluded from the program.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will utilize any recommended adaptive equipment that has been provided by the parent/guardian or resources/therapists.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden does not provide separate classrooms for children with special care needs. Research has shown that children with disabilities benefit from learning alongside their peers in an inclusive environment. Inclusive classrooms promote lifelong skills such as empathy and compassion as well as increase social-emotional development for all children.