Children Universe

Dream Big, Laugh Often & Reach for the Stars

Family Handbook

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Children's Universe Preschools of Lake Conroe

September 2025

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- Policies are reviewed and updated annually

Welcome!

At Children's Universe Preschools of Lake Conroe and Magnolia, we are committed to provide for the overall well-being of the children within our care in terms of safety, health, early childhood development and education, all within a loving, nurturing environment.

We are family-owned preschools with two locations – one in Conroe, Texas and Magnolia, Texas. We provide care to children 6 weeks to 12 years of age. Our philosophy for early childhood education is teacher-directed instruction, accompanied by a stimulating environment for children to learn, play and explore.

Research shows that a strong preschool program will have a positive effect on your child's future academic performance.

Our Director, Assistant Director, Curriculum Coordinator, and teachers are well-trained in early childhood education, health, and safety; and they have a sincere passion to enrich the lives of children. You will find that our preschools have a very friendly and inviting atmosphere where parent communication and participation are welcomed

Sincerely,

Jim & Kathy Smith Owners

Our Philosophy

Our early childhood education is teacher-directed instruction, accompanied by a stimulating environment for children to learn, play and explore.

Our Mission

Children's Universe provides a secure, nurturing, and educational environment for young children; a place for children to bloom into responsible, considerate, and contributing members of society.

Children's Universe wants all children to have the opportunity to grow physically, emotionally, socially, and intellectually by playing, exploring, and learning with others in a fun, safe and healthy environment.

As a family-owned and operated organization, Children's Universe welcomes positive family involvement and encourages a family-teacher approach where the needs of every child come first to obtain a successful early childhood education.

Our Curriculum Goals

- Our curriculum aligns with the Texas Infant, Toddler, and Three-Year-Old Early Learning Guidelines and the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. Pre-k instructions is aligned with TEKS readiness standards.
- We implement a developmentally appropriate, research-based curriculum for all age groups;
    - Infants: CLI Engage/Texas Infant Early Learning Guidelines
    - Toddlers: CLI Engage/Texas Toddler Early Learning Guidelines
    - Two's: CLI Engage/Texas Toddler Early Learning Guidelines
    - Preschool 1 & 2: CLI Engage/ Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines
    - School age: TEKS
- Provides planned activities, which encourage and stimulate the emotional, social, cognitive, and physical development of each child.
- Provides a safe, secure, nurturing environment that encourages children to actively explore the world around them.
- Provides opportunities for exploration in a wide variety of activities such as music, art, and problem solving.
- Provides indoor and outdoor experiences for the development and coordination of large and small muscles.

A written Scope and Sequence outlines objectives across domains (social-emotional, language-literacy, approaches to learning, cognition, and physical development). Teachers

create weekly lesson plans from the curriculum, adapt to individual needs, post plans in classrooms, and share highlights with families

Purpose of this Handbook

This handbook was developed to answer many of the commonly asked questions that children and families may have during the school year. The handbook contains information about child privileges and responsibilities. Therefore, families and children are responsible for knowing its contents. Please take the time to become familiar with the handbook and keep it accessible for your use. It can be a valuable reference during the school year and a means to avoid confusion and misunderstandings when questions arise.

The school reserves the right to interpret the content of the handbook, including the rules and regulations governing the conduct of students and parents. This handbook is not a contract, nor is it intended to be construed as such. Our School reserves the right to modify and/or amend the content of this handbook at any time during the year as we deem appropriate.

If you have any questions about the handbook or any of its policies, please contact the Director or member of management.

We place special emphasis at Children's Universe for our families, children and employees as individuals and recognize that no manual can cover all situations.

Equal Opportunity

This School does not discriminate based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, citizenship, handicap or disability or any other legally protected status regarding admissions or in the administration of its educational policies and administered programs.

This School makes its programs and services accessible to individuals with disabilities. The school welcomes requests for accommodation. The school will attempt to provide reasonable accommodations to qualified students with mental or physical disabilities, to the extent that such a request does not cause a fundamental alteration to the school's programs/curriculum and to the extent that it does not create an undue hardship for the school.

The first step in requesting an accommodation is to provide the Director or member of management with documentation of the condition from a qualified professional, such as a physician, psychiatrist, or psychologist. Upon receipt of such documentation and recommendations, we will communicate with the family in an interactive process to obtain additional information or discuss the circumstances related to the request.

Communications

Family-School Involvement

We welcome family input and encourage you to visit your child's classroom and speak with your child's teacher. We have an open-door policy at our School and families are encouraged to get involved in their child's classroom.

If you would like to request a conference, please call during School hours to set up a convenient time. Conferences can be requested at any time and may include the teachers, administration, or both. However, we will host conferences twice a year, once in the mid fall and again in the spring. The results will be provided to the parents and can be reviewed with the teacher or via phone.

Daily, please check our lobby area by the check in/out station and be sure to read any correspondence. Also, be sure to check your child's cubby box and/or classroom folder daily for messages, daily reports, and artwork. Notices and messages sent by you should be written and submitted to the teacher or front desk staff.

Infants through two-year old's will have a daily report completed by the classroom teacher(s) to relate the day's events specific to your child. The Three's, Fours, and School-Age children will receive a "Weekly Communication Form" highlighting your child's experiences. There are daily opportunities to get involved in your child's day, so feel free to come and have lunch with your child in our Café. Many additional activities will be provided to encourage interaction between families, teachers, and children such as carnivals, holiday parties and field trips.

Another way to participate in the education of your child is through donations. Please check with your child's teacher for the items of need for special activities. Some general items used in the classroom are magazines, newspapers, greeting cards, dress up clothes, hats, paper, books, wrapping paper, ribbons, and many other household items.

We welcome any questions and suggestions. If there are family situations that affect your child, please discuss them with your child's teacher or the Director. Remember that any information regarding a personal issue is kept confidential and we are glad to help whenever possible.

Role of Families or Other Caregivers: Our General Expectations for You

The relationship between families and School staff is vital to the success of a child's experience. A partnership must be formed the first day, with open communication and understanding that the development and growth of the child is our top priority.

Families can assist and help ensure a smooth transition by doing the following:

- Sign children in & out at the front desk & then escort them to their designated class.
- Supervise your children always while escorting them inside the school and in the parking area.
- Drive safely through the parking area.
- Have all forms completed promptly.
- Update forms, as needed, when changes occur. This can be done in person or by email at conroe@childrensuniversepreschools.com
- Keep staff informed of special needs or changes that might affect your child's behavior.
- Notify the School if your child is ill.
- Notify the School if your child will be absent
- Provide two changes of clothes marked with your child's name. *This request is for all ages. Our School is not responsible for the lost clothing. Please change clothing seasonally to accommodate the changes in weather and the growth of your child.*
- Children should be dressed properly for the weather and play.
- Do not allow children to bring in toys. (This rule does not include special transition toys such as a blanket or other security items to which your child is significantly attached.)
- Participate in the School's special activities.
- Ask questions, make suggestions, or address concerns as they arise.

Problem Solving or Grievances

Differences between individuals in our community should be addressed directly whenever possible. The nature of your concern or issue will determine the person at the school that you need to contact first, as explained below:

Billing Questions: Contact the **Director or member of management.**

Checking on Your Child's Day: Call 936-447-2852 and you will be transferred to your child's class.

Concerns with Your Child's Classroom or Teacher: Talk directly with the teacher. Our preference is for teachers and families to keep an open line of communication and work together to solve issues. If you have already done this and you still feel there is an issue, see the Director or a member of management.

Concerns with the Center: Talk directly to the Director or send us an email at conroe@childrensuniversepreschools.com

Harassment, Bullying or Hazing: Please contact the **Director or member of management** immediately if you believe you or your child is a victim or harassment, bullying or hazing or any other misconduct.

Ideas and Suggestions: We are always open to your input. Each spring, we administer an anonymous family survey (paper, available in families' home languages, covering curriculum, communication, health/nutrition/ environment, family engagement, and overall satisfaction. The leadership team will review results and share a summary and action plan with families within 30 days. Families may also submit suggestions anytime via email, or the lobby suggestion box. We acknowledge receipts within two business days and aim to resolve or update within 10 business days. Our goal is to team up with our families to make Children's Universe the best preschool it can be.

If your concern cannot be resolved by the parties involved, the matter should be taken directly to the **Director or member of management.**

If we do not know of your concern or problem, we cannot help resolving it. So, please contact us immediately if you have any concerns or issues.

Web Page

The school's official website is ChildrensUniversePreschools.com, we also have a Facebook that we encourage the parents to check-out @ Children's Universe Preschools of Lake Conroe. A third way to communicate with Pro Care.

Classroom Experience

Class Assignments

Classes are formed primarily by age. The child's age by November 1st of the current school year will ordinarily determine class placement, but developmental level will also be considered. On the Pre-School side (threes through fives), we promote in accordance with the traditional school calendar.

The following is a brief description of each of our programs…

Developmental Checklist and Intervention Support

At Children's Universe of Lake Conroe, we use the CLI Infant/Toddler Developmental Checklist to support each child's development and guide our instructional planning.

Purpose

- Monitor progress in cognitive, language, social-emotional, and physical development.

- Inform classroom instruction and identify areas needing support.

Assessment Schedule

- Assessments are conducted twice a year for each child.

Family Communication

- Results are shared during parent conferences (October, and February).
- Parents are informed of any concerns and offered resources if needed.
- Ongoing communication is encouraged to support development at home.

Intervention

We can provide a list of therapists, for referrals, that come to our location.

Confidentiality

- All assessment information is kept confidential and only shared with authorized individuals.

This process helps us provide personalized, developmentally appropriate care and education for every child.

Infants (6 weeks to 12 months)

Taking care of infants is both demanding and rewarding. Each infant has individual needs. In a warm, loving atmosphere, our staff provides for these needs as well as giving special attention to developmental milestones. Music and story time are everyday activities in the infant room. Health and safety are our top priorities. To help maintain the cleanliness of the room, our infant room is "shoeless" and street shoes are not worn in the room. Each baby has their own crib and toys are sanitized as needed throughout the day as well as every evening. Parents receive daily reports on feedings, diapering and napping. For parents that choose to breast feed, we provide a freezer to store your breast milk for your child. We will also provide a rocking chair in our infant room for parents who wish to come in and breastfeed. Our goal is for you to return to work with a piece of mind that your child is in good hands.

*** If enrolling an infant please see our Operational Policy on Infant Safe Sleep. This can be found on our website under the resource tab. Parents will need to read this, sign it, and return with paperwork.**

Toddlers (12 months to 23 months)

Toddlers are learning many exciting and new things, experimenting, and meeting new challenges as fast as they come. They are learning new social skills and with that come new

levels of emotions. The Children's Universe toddler program is developed to provide hands-on activities which allow children to explore, inquire, and discover solutions first-hand. Daily activity plans focus on building language, creativity, fine and gross motor skills, and social interaction. Such as sign language, Spanish, music, and art

Pre-School (2 to 3 Years Old)

Pre-school children love to learn new information and master new tasks. Our program is designed to facilitate this learning through many self-directed experiences. Throughout the day children have opportunities to explore the learning stations within their classrooms. Children benefit greatly from having clearly defined interest areas that are arranged to promote independence, foster decision-making, and encourage hands-on learning. Each learning station enhances the child's core components of development: socio-emotional, language, cognitive, and physical. The curriculum enhances the learning stations through a thematic approach. As well as Spanish, art, music and or STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and music) programs.

Children have many opportunities to see how reading and writing are useful before they are instructed in letter names, sounds and word identification. An abundance of these experiences provides children opportunities to develop language and literacy skills.

Physical developmental needs are met daily with opportunities to use large muscles, including running, jumping, and balancing. Small muscle skills will be strengthened through play activities such as puzzles, painting, and cutting.

We have designed our pre-school program to be part of a nurturing and loving environment where your child is our number one priority. When children receive warm, responsive care, they feel safe and secure

Pre-Kindergarten (5 Year Old's)

The concept that children learn best through play is reflected in the setup of each classroom with learning stations designed to foster choice and independence. This environment encourages experimentation and provides comfort in freedom of choice. The atmosphere encourages independence and the building of self-esteem. We have developed our Pre-Kindergarten program using the criteria from the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) to make sure our students are well prepared for kindergarten. Literacy focuses on a balanced approach between phonics and whole language. Math skills are developed through hands-on experience and experimentation with manipulative. We also incorporate Spanish, art, music, and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and music) programs.

Before and After School (5 to 12 Year Old's)

We provide before and after school care for children for all of Montgomery ISD and a few Conroe ISD schools. This list may change based on demand for individual schools. They have an afternoon snack, homework time, organized sports, games, art, and other fun activities in the afternoons.

Should your child not be able to attend public school for any reason including, but not limited to behavior, Illness, etc. then they may not attend our center. Once they may return to public school that is when they may return to Children's Universe.

Indoor and Outdoor Physical Activity

We strongly believe and support the need for physical activity each day.

When children participate in physical activity every day, multiple health benefits accrue. Regular physical activity builds healthy bones and muscles, improves muscular strength and endurance, reduces the risk for developing chronic disease risk factors, improves self-esteem, and reduces stress and anxiety. Beyond these known health effects, physical activity may also have beneficial influences on academic performance. In addition, cognitive skills and motor skills appear to develop through a dynamic interaction. Research has shown that physical movement can affect the brain's physiology.

Infants will be given opportunities for physical activity, including supervised tummy time.

Toddler age children will participate a minimum of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.

Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten children will participate a minimum of 90 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.

School age children who are in attendance for a full day will participate a minimum of 90 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day. School age children who are only in attendance after-school will participate a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.

Opportunities for active play may overlap with outdoor play when weather permits. The criteria in which we will use to determine when extreme weather conditions pose a significant health risk that prohibits or limits outdoor play are when the heat index is above 101 and wind chill factors are below 35 degrees.

We will promote all children's active play every day. Children will have ample opportunity to do moderate to vigorous activities, such as running, climbing, dancing, skipping, and jumping, to the extent of their abilities.

All children will participate each day in:

* Two occasions of active play outdoors when weather permits.

* Two or more structured or teacher-led activities or games that promote movement over the course of the day.

* Continuous opportunities to develop and practice age-appropriate gross motor and movement skills.

Physical activity may take place in the classroom or on the playground, when weather permits.

When participating in physical activity, children's clothing should protect them from sun exposure and permit easy movement (not too loose and not too tight) that enables full participation in active play. Footwear should provide support for running and climbing. Hats may be worn to protect children from sun exposure.

Examples of appropriate clothing/footwear include:

• Gym shoes or sturdy shoe equivalent

• Clothing for the weather, such as a lightweight, breathable jacket without any hood and neck strings.

Examples of inappropriate clothing/footwear include:

• Footwear that can come off while running or that provide insufficient support for climbing.

• Clothing that can catch on playground equipment, such as those with drawstrings or loops.

When weather conditions prohibit outdoor play, physical activities will occur in the classroom during the scheduled outside time. Classroom teachers have activities planned for "rainy days."

Extracurricular Activities

We feel it is important for every child to have the opportunity to explore outside interests. As part of our well-rounded program, we offer a variety of extracurricular activities. These activities include Soccer Shots, Dance, and Champs Express. There is an additional fee for these programs.

Admission and Related Processes

Enrollment Process

Families are encouraged to have their children with them the first time they visit the school. It is important that the child and the parent feel comfortable with our staff and the facility.

To reserve space in our program you must submit a completed application as well as the non-refundable registration fee. Amounts of all fees are found on the fee schedule.

Procedures for Supporting Inclusive Services

Our program's policy and process in supporting families and children who may need additional accommodations, to include home language, differing abilities, and cultural backgrounds. Parents have the right to be informed of all procedural safeguards and rights of appeal in a language easily understood by the public and in the parent's primary language. Please notify the Director if you or your child requires accommodations and we will ensure that we do our part in making sure your needs are met.

Below are ways that our program will partner with families

- If specific therapies are needed during the day while the child is in our care, we will provide space to accommodate sessions.
- Participation in all comprehensive care meetings; if needed
- Complete supporting documentation from authorized medical professional for any accommodations related to child's physical or developmental needs.
- Provide materials and resources in parent's/child's primary language.

Standards of Care

We are licensed by the Child Care Regulations-Texas Health and Human Services and meet or exceed all licensing requirements. Our license, as well as the Director's License, is always displayed in the front lobby. A copy of the minimum standards is available at our school for parents to review. A copy of our latest inspection report from licensing is always posted and available for parents to review. You can also view these reports online at childcare.hhs.texas.gov/Public/childcaresearch

To contact the local Childcare Licensing Office visit: 608 North Loop 336 E, Conroe, Texas 77301 or call 936-539-1161 ask for child care licensing.

Texas Abuse and Neglect Hotline: 1-800-252-5400

Baby-Sitting

Children's Universe expects parents and employees to avoid activities that create a conflict of interest to the company. If you decide to arrange off-premises care with a staff member, the staff member undertakes such service on his/her behalf- not as a staff member of Children's Universe. Children's Universe offers no assurance of the fitness of its staff members for performing these services, and none should be implied or inferred under any circumstances.

Children's Universe employees are prohibited from transporting children who do not belong to them, to and from the center, unless the parent places them on the Authorized list to pick up/drop off.

Procurement Fee for Hiring Our Teachers

Hiring our teachers is highly discouraged, because it presents a conflict of interest for the teacher. If a parent does hire a teacher for a position that competes with Children's Universe during enrollment or for a period of 12 months after withdrawal from the school, then parents shall have 30 days to notify the center and pay the center a $500 placement fee, since you were introduced to the teacher through our school. Understand that this fee is common and in line with what many nanny agencies charge for placement.

Age Ranges of Children Accepted

We accept children ages 6 weeks through 12 years of age. All children must be observed by the school prior to admission to assure that our program can effectively meet their needs.

First Day

On your child's first day of School the following forms must be completed, signed, and reviewed by the administrative staff:

- Enrollment Application
- Immunization Records
- Health Statement
- Tuition Express
- School Transportation Form (if applicable)
- Infant Information Form (if applicable)
- Acknowledgement of Receipt of Family Handbook
- Child Assessment
- Hearing and Vision (4 and 5-year old's)
- Federal Food Forms
- Photo Video Release

- Cellular Phone/Email Information
- Operational Policy on Infant Safe Sleep (if applicable)
- Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency care plan (if applicable)
- Provider's Guide to Parent's Rights
- Parent Orientation Checklist

No child may continue enrollment in School for more than 30 days without a current immunization records and/or health statement. Please let the administrative staff know of any allergies or special dietary requirements prior to your child's first day.

If the information in these forms' changes during the child's enrollment, families are responsible for notifying the school in writing of the changes. This includes but is not limited to phone numbers, emergency contacts, work locations, or child's physician.

*Whenever center policies or procedures are changed or updated, you will receive a written copy for your records.

Admission and Re-Enrollment

Admission and, as applicable, re-enrollment is dependent on the following:

1. All deposits, registration and other required forms must be submitted, completed, and evaluated.
2. All financial obligations must have been met in a timely manner.

Occasionally, formal acceptance may be given on a probationary basis. In such case, the Director reserves the right to revoke acceptance or to dismiss a child at any time.

The **Director or member of management** reserves the right to place children in a classroom, to determine the teachers for a classroom and to determine whether a particular child continues to meet the school's requirements.

Financial Policies

Registration Fees

- **New Families:** This fee is $125 for a single child or $175 for a family of 2+.
- **Returning Families after 6 months:** Is $100 per family.

Tuition and Other Fees

Tuition includes educational programs, lunch, morning snack and afternoon snack.

Family discount includes a 10% discount for the oldest sibling.

Program options are Infants, Toddlers, Pre-School, and School-Age.

Families are responsible for any special diet required for their child with no adjustment to tuition given (refer to Meals and Snacks).

Registration fees are payable upon enrolling and are non-refundable. These fees serve to insure your child's placement in addition to covering the cost of processing the application for admission, supplies and educational materials. If space is not available at the time of registration, your child will be placed on our waiting list. We will contact you when space becomes available.

Tuition is drafted weekly, you may pay bi-weekly or monthly in advance, remember there is no deduction for absence, holidays, and days the school is closed for inclement weather. **Tuition is due Monday for the current week. If the tuition and fees are not paid in full by close of business Monday, on Tuesday at 10:30am a late fee of $15 will be assessed and the child will be subject to dismissal.** Monthly tuition is calculated by determining the number of Mondays in the month and multiplying by the weekly rate.

When a payment is delinquent for one week, the space can no longer be reserved for your child. Your child will not be permitted to attend School on Monday if the previous week is not paid in full.

Families will be notified of any changes in tuition within two weeks of the change. We reserve the right to change tuition and/or program fees due to unforeseen increases in expenses. Any additional services such as late pick-up, field trips, etc. must be paid the same day the services are rendered.

No portion of your weekly paid tuition will be refunded or canceled in the event of absence, withdrawal, or dismissal from School. **Should it become necessary to withdrawal your child for any reason, a two-week written notice must be given to the administration.** If the notice ends on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, tuition for the entire week is due. We reserve the right to dismiss any student at the discretion of the School's Director or Owner.

If your child is enrolled full time Monday through Friday, including School Age, you may take one week of vacation per calendar year after the child has been enrolled for six months. The week vacation must be taken as 5 consecutive days (Monday through Friday). Vacations cannot be carried over the next year.

Vacation Policy

Each child enrolled at Children's Universe will receive one free week per year for vacation purposes. The following rules apply:

- The child must have been enrolled at Children's Universe for at least six months to be eligible for the free week of vacation.
- You have notified the front desk prior to the absence by filling out a "Vacation Notice" form and giving it to a manager at least one week before the vacation will be taken.
- If your child is absent all five days in a single week (Monday through Friday). Discounts are not given on a per day basis.
- Accounts must be current and paid in full.

If our School must be closed due to unexpected circumstances, such as inclement weather, then full payment of tuition is required. We reserve the right to close any additional days needed and full tuition payment is expected.

Before and After-School Care Fees

Before- and After-School Care is available for all children attending local, public elementary schools. We provide transportation using Children's Universe School Buses which are equipped with seat belts. Drivers are required to carry a cell phone to be used for emergencies. Fees for this program vary according to the school calendar. Please check with the front desk staff for additional fees regarding school holidays, early-release days, and seasonal breaks.

NSF Charges

If your check or draft is returned for any reason, an NSF (Non-Sufficient Funds) charge will be applied to your account. This will be due in addition to any late charges prior to the beginning of the next week. Returned tuition must be covered by a cashier's check, money order or cash. NSF Fee is $30 per transaction.

Late Fees

If you will be arriving late to the school for pick up, please call, and notify the administration. There is a charge of $1 per minute, per child for the first 15 minutes then $5 per minute, per child after 6:45 p.m. This will be added to your tuition and drafted. If children are left at the school for thirty minutes after closing and no attempt to contact the school has been made, legal authorities will be contacted.

Withdrawal

A two-week written notice that is signed and dated must be turned in to the office. The family must ensure that any School property in the possession of the child or child's family is returned and any outstanding financial obligations are met.

Dismissals

We use positive guidance rooted in program objectives (self-regulation, social problem solving, communication), including redirection, choice making, modeling, and calm down spaces with adult support. If concerns persist, we convene a family-team meeting within five school days to co-create a written support plan with goals, classroom strategies, and home-school steps. Teachers will document strategies in children's responses and provide brief written updates at least weekly until goals are met. Additional check-ins occur upon request.

However, this School reserves the right to ask families to make alternative arrangements for care if it is determined that a child's needs cannot be met or the child has not adjusted to group care provided by the school. In the event behavior becomes disruptive to the program or poses an unsafe situation for the child or other children in the school, alternative arrangements will be required.

A dismissal will only be considered after careful consideration of the safety of the children, the staff, and the center.

If you, the parent, are uncooperative in completing and returning forms, fail to pay your tuition on time, fail to follow any state or county regulations, or fail to follow any Children's Universe Policy or Procedure, it may be necessary to dismiss your child from our School.

Attendance

Hours of Operation

The school is open from 6:00 am to 6:30 pm, Monday through Friday, twelve months a year. We are closed a minimum of 12 days a year in observance of the following holidays:

- New Year's Eve
- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day (Parent/Teacher Conferences)
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- President's Day (Parent/Teacher Conferences)
- Good Friday

(If the holiday falls on the weekend, the school will be closed either the Friday before or the Monday after. Check with the front desk for those specific holidays.)
Please refer to any notices posted 2 weeks in advance of an upcoming or school closure!

Inclement Weather Closing

We will make all efforts to stay open during inclement weather. If Montgomery ISD is open, our school will be open. If MISD is closed we are closed. Look for more information on our and Facebook page and Pro Care:

- Facebook: Children's Universe Preschools of Lake Conroe

If there are no indications in any of these places that we are closed, then we will be open. Please note that we may have a late opening. If MISD is closed for an extended period we will assess the reason and try and reopen as soon as possible.

Arrival

If your child will not be attending for the day, we ask that you call the office by 10 am. To attend for the day, we require all children to arrive by 9:30 am unless a doctor's note is provided. Morning activities usually begin around this time and this will help your child to be a fully participating group member. The school must be contacted if your child will be arriving after their classroom morning group time. All children must be escorted into a classroom by an adult. Upon arrival into the classroom, we ask that you wash your hands as

well as your child's hands. This will help us minimize the spread of illness. Your child's arrival must be acknowledged by the classroom teacher before you can leave your child. Please note that if your child arrives after breakfast time, we will not be able to provide this service.
Ten consecutive school days of non-attendance without prior notice may result in administrative review and possible disenrollment. Patterns of unexplained absences will prompt a family conference to support consistent attendance. Absences due to documented illnesses, quarantine, or family emergencies are excused with timely communication.

Departure

To pick up a child from our School, an adult or the designated person must come into the building, sign the child out, let the teacher be aware of your presence and escort the child out of the building. The family or guardian must supervise their children always after leaving the classroom, both inside the building and in the parking area.

Checking In and Out

Parents must sign their children in and out each day using the computer in the front lobby. This is very important, because state regulations require that we know who is always in the building. If you are not able to check your child in or out, please let a manager know immediately.

Parents are welcome to visit at any time and may participate in all center activities and field trips. Please be sure to escort your child into the center and to their classroom, making sure that you leave them in the direct care of a faculty member. If you have more than one child at our center and a baby in the infant room, we ask that you take your older child to their classroom first. It can be unsafe for our infants and toddlers to have older children in their rooms.

The paperwork you fill out upon enrollment regarding your child lists family members or friends who you authorize to pick up your child. When friends or family come to pick up, we will ask them to present a picture ID and compare the name to the name in the child's file. We will then release your child to them. Please make sure that only those people whom you are comfortable with having this privilege are on that list. The front desk is always monitored and a staff member should admit visitors. This helps to maintain the security of our facility.

Custody Issues

Please let the school know if there are custody orders concerning your children. We do not have the right to withhold a child from any parent having custody or joint custody. To deny a parent from picking up their child, there must be a current, signed court order stating that they should not have access to the child and we must have a copy of the order in the child's file. The center cannot become involved in custody disputes; we cannot mediate or keep track of which parent can pick up on which days. We would be forced to dis-enroll a child if the school must become involved in such disputes.

Health and Safety

General Safety Statement

All the policies, rules and regulations presented in this handbook are designed to make the time your child spends at our School safe and rewarding. We have taken several steps to promote the safety and protection of your child while in our care. They are as follows:

- The entrances where the children are, stay locked and are only accessible by keypad code entry or key.
- Frequent observations of the classrooms are performed by the administration.
- All common areas of the school can be viewed via closed-circuit internet camera system.

Classroom Safety

Our School is in an area which is free from conditions which are deemed hazardous to the physical and moral welfare of the children. Our School provides equipment and furnishings that are child-sized, sturdy, safe and in good repair. Individual teachers are responsible for the set-up of their classroom. It is part of their daily routine to wash and sanitize toys and furniture and to watch for and eliminate any hazards present in the classroom. Teachers are provided with guidelines as to what equipment and toys should exist in each classroom.

Playground Safety

A safe, age-appropriate outdoor environment is provided for our children. The following rules are enforced for indoor and outdoor play areas:

- When a class has outdoor time, all children must stay with their class.
- Teachers will always supervise the children on the playground.
- In case of an accident, one teacher may bring a child in for first aid.
- At no time will the class be left on the playground without appropriate supervision.

- The administration and the teachers will inspect the playground daily and report any unsafe conditions immediately.

We go outside two times per day weather permitting. Once in the AM and again in the PM. Should the weather not permit us to go outside we have activities such as sock zone and the gym where our students can get large muscle play.

Sick Policies

Our goal is to provide a place where your child can learn, develop, and have fun in a safe and healthy environment. The school is not equipped with the staff or facilities to care for sick children for an extended length of time. We depend on you to assume care for your sick child. The following guidelines for excluding children help us to keep many communicable illnesses out of our facility and thereby maintain regular attendance from most of the children and staff.

A child will be excluded from the classroom and comforted in the "Sick Room" by a member or our administration while the family members are contacted to pick up within the hour in the event of:

- For children 6 weeks to 12 years of age fever of 100.4 or higher (underarm reading)
- Uncontrolled Diarrhea
- Skin rashes that are not diagnosed by a physician's note
- Vomiting episodes of more than two a day
- Nose drainage that is thick and green or excessive for the comfort of the child
- Eye drainage of any type accompanied by red eyes or mucus crusted around the eyes
- Pink eye or symptoms like those of pink eye
- Chicken pox or measles sores are suspected
- Respiratory problems including uneven breathing or severe coughing with wheezing or croup
- Sore throat, especially if swollen glands are suspected
- Strep throat symptoms are suspected
- Head lice are found
- Appearance or behavior is unusual and the teachers agree that the child is not feeling well enough to participate with the rest of the class including lack of appetite, confused of irritable
- Unusual color is noticed in the child such as jaundiced eyed or skin, pale in the face, stool or urine is an unusual color

All these conditions (except fever) will require 24-hour treatment or a doctor's note for the child to resume their normal attendance schedule. Children must be completely fever-free for 24 hours without the aid of medication before returning to School.

If your child becomes ill at Center, we will contact you and isolate your child from other children in the Sick Room until she/he is picked up from School. If your child is absent, please contact us and let us know the reason. We will need this information to prevent the spread of contagious disease in the facility.

Infectious Diseases

If a child or staff member is diagnosed with an infectious or communicable disease, you will be notified by a letter that goes home. The letter will contain the name of the disease, the date it was diagnosed, and any symptoms that would alert you to the presence of the disease. It is your responsibility to report to the school any infectious or communicable disease for which your child is diagnosed.

The school should be notified by the family if a child or sibling has contracted a communicable disease such as measles, pink eye, strep throat, head lice, hepatitis, meningitis, mononucleosis, or any other communicable diseases. The student with the communicable disease must be cleared by a doctor or nurse before returning to School.

Medication Policy

If your child is to have medicine at any other time besides 11 am or 3 pm, families must arrange to come by the school and administer the medicine themselves or make other arrangements with the school.

- Special circumstances requiring the administration of additional medications must be discussed with the school.
- We will not administer any medication after its expiration date or for non-medicated reasons, such as to induce sleep.
- We will not accept a Medication Authorization Form that states the medication to be given "as needed." The doctor must indicate the exact conditions under which the medication should be given.
- Only ONE medication can be listed on each Medication Authorization Form.
- If your child receives an antibiotic from his/her doctor that specifies 2 times per day dosage, those doses should be administered both before and after School. If the antibiotic should be given 3 times per day, we will gladly include it in our afternoon medications. Please note that antibiotics must be given at home for 24 hours prior to your child returning to School.

- Prescription medication must be in its original container bearing the pharmacist's label.
- All medications must be dropped off and picked up at the front desk, each day. These medications will be stored in a secure area inaccessible to the children.
- Medication may not be transported to the classroom by families. **NO MEDICATION MAY BE PLACED IN THE CHILD'S BAG OR TAKEN INTO THE CLASSROOM FOR ANY REASON.**
- All medication must be taken home daily to ensure proper family control.
- Exceptions to this rule are life-saving medications such as breathing treatments or EPI pens.
- Children are not allowed to bring any type of medication to the school to administer themselves.

Thank you for adhering to this policy to ensure the health and safety of all children.

Emergency Medical Care

Each child, upon enrollment, must have emergency care information on file. It is the family's responsibility to keep this information current. In the case of a medical emergency, you will be notified immediately.

If warranted, emergency medical personnel will be contacted to provide transportations to the nearest hospital specified on the Enrollment Information form. A member of the school administration will accompany the child.

The emergency medical procedure for Children's Universe is:

- **Administer First Aid/CPR**
- **Contact parents (if a severe emergency Center will contact 911)**
- **Contact emergency contacts**
- **Have emergency medical team transport child to:**

Conroe Regional Medical Center
504 Medical Center Boulevard
Conroe, Texas 77304

Immunizations

The school must have on file the Immunization Records for each child with specific dates recorded. These forms are obtained from a private physician or the local Health Department. The immunizations must include:

- A signature or rubber stamp
- Child's first and last name
- Child's birth date

- The vaccine type and number of doses
- The month, day, and year the child received each vaccination

We encourage our staff to obtain any vaccinations they feel necessary to protect themselves from contracting an illness during their duties in our operation. However, currently we do not have a policy that requires our employees to obtain immunizations for vaccine preventable diseases.

Vision and Hearing Screening

In compliance with Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Children's Universe requires children to have a screening or professional examination for possible vision and hearing problems. Children who are enrolled for the first time (4 years of age or older), must be screened within the first 120 days of enrollment. All children already enrolled at our school (who are 4 years of age by September 1), will need to provide documentation of screening.

Accident Reports

Staff members may apply basic first aid at the school for minor injuries such as cuts, abrasions, bruises, and insect bites. If any of these occur and first aid is administered, a "Boo-Boo Report" will be completed. This report will state the nature of the injury, the cause, and the treatment. It will be signed by the teacher who completed the report and the family. The school will then log the incident in the child's file. If an accident is caused by or involves another child, that child's name cannot be given out and will not appear on the report. Families will be notified immediately if a child receives any injury other than a minor one.

Reporting Abuse and Neglect

Employees are required to have annual child abuse and neglect training yearly. This training will include methods for increasing their knowledge as well as parent's awareness of issues regarding and preventing child abuse and neglect; Including warning signs that a child may be the victim of abuse or neglect, factors indicating a child may be at risk and strategies for coordination between the center and appropriate community organizations such as Children Safe Harbor.

We as a center will host different opportunities for the community outreach programs to come in and educate the children, staff, and parents about this topic. The Texas Abuse and Neglect Hotline is 1-800-252-5400 anyone suspecting abuse or neglect should call this number. Texas Law requires caregivers to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the

Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services or law enforcement. Failure to report suspected abuse or neglect is a crime.

We take our responsibilities to report suspected child abuse, neglect, and abandonment seriously and will cooperate with governmental authorities about their investigations. If you have any questions regarding the school mandatory reporting obligations, please consult the Owner.

Emergency Procedures

If an emergency develops such as severe weather, fire, physical problems with the building, or power failure, the children's safety is our first concern. Evacuation route diagrams are posted throughout the facility and a detail copy of our emergency preparedness plan can be reviewed at the front desk.

The school is equipped with a fire alarm system, carbon monoxide detector, fire extinguishers, and a weather alert radio.

Fire drills are performed monthly. Sheltering/Severe Weather and Lockdown drills are practiced four times a year. In the event of a natural disaster such as a hurricane, snow storm, etc., the families will be notified as soon as possible to pick up their child. If the family cannot be reached, the emergency contact will be called (this person should be local to the school). Should we have to relocated we will take the children, using or buses, to our Magnolia location which is at 32915 FM 2978 Road, Magnolia, Texas 77354. Their phone number is 281-252-3742.

Sunscreen/Insect Repellent

You may bring in sunscreen or insect repellent for your child. It will need to be labeled with your child's first and last name and an authorization form will need to be filled out before we can apply it. If you have more than one child each student will need their own since these are stored in the child's classrooms.

Child Conduct

Basic Expectations

Our discipline policy at Children's Universe is built around our understanding of child development. Our goal is to allow each child to find and develop their own personal self-management skills. As teachers and staff, we offer children choices so they feel powerful

in their ability to gain self-control. We use positive behavior management techniques such as positive phrasing and "I" statements as ways to further develop self-discipline. In situations where children are having a difficult time managing negative emotions, they may be removed from the over-stimulating environment to a quiet area where a teacher or member of the administrative staff can work one-on-one to resolve the situation. Families will always be informed if a situation such as this has occurred by a "Sad News" report. If a child continues to have a difficult time, a team meeting with the family may be requested. This meeting will consist of the team developing a plan of action to best meet the needs of the child and family.

Discipline

Praise, positive reinforcement, and redirection are effective methods for the behavior management of children. When children receive positive, non-violent, and understanding interactions from adults and others, they develop good self-concepts, problem-solving abilities, and self-discipline. Based on this belief of how children learn and develop values, this facility will practice the following discipline and behavior management policy taken from the Children's Universe Parent Handbook and the NAEYC Code of Ethics.
At Children's Universe, we use a method of 'redirection' to guide children toward appropriate behavior. If a child is engaged in behavior that is not conductive to a safe and happy learning environment, the teacher will "redirect" the child toward appropriate behavior.

"Above all, we shall not harm children. We shall not participate in practices that are disrespectful, degrading, dangerous, exploitative, intimidating, emotionally damaging, or physically harmful to children." (NAEYC Code of Ethics – Principle-1.1)

Child behavior

Children will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including immediate dismissal for:

- Abuse or damage of school property
- Bullying-Harassment/Hazing
- Committing a serious breach of conduct inside or outside of the school
- Disrespect
- Disruption of School functions
- Fighting
- Lewd or obscene behavior
- Possession or sale of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or drug related items
- Possession or use of a weapon, among other things
- Profanity or vulgarity

- Sexual or other misconduct
- Stealing
- Threatening behavior
- Verbal or physical assault
- Inappropriate use of the Internet
- Willful disobedience

Biting

The school understands that occasional displays of aggression, like biting, are typical in young children and are part of normal early childhood development. Repeated incidents of biting will not be tolerated. Our objective is to ensure that our School maintains the highest level of safety within our environment and our staff members respond appropriately to aggressive behaviors. The school does have a biting policy outline if you would like a copy provided to you, please request one from the front office. Our School reserves the right to handle each child case by case.

Harassment, Bullying or Hazing

Our School is dedicated to fostering an environment that promotes kindness, acceptance, and embraces differences among individuals. Therefore, we will not tolerate any type of harassment, bullying or hazing.
Harassment includes, but is not limited to, slurs, jokes, and other verbal, graphic, or offensive conduct relating to race, color, sex, national origin, citizenship, or disability. Bullying includes, but is not limited to, physical or verbal aggression (hitting, kicking, taunting, name-calling, teasing, threatening, ridiculing, etc.), relational aggression (harming or threatening to harm relationships or acceptance, friendship, or group inclusion), and emotional aggression (teasing, threatening, intimidating others). The school also prohibits cyber-bullying (creating websites, instant messaging, e-mails, text messaging, using camera phones or other forms of technology to engage in harassment or bullying).

Any of these types of offensive conduct can create an uncomfortable learning environment.

All concerns relating to harassment, bullying, or hazing should be reported immediately to the **Director or member or management.** When the School administration becomes aware of harassment, bullying or hazing, the situation will be promptly investigated. Any child found to have violated this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, which could include immediate dismissal from School. No retaliation or adverse action will be taken against any person who makes a good faith report of harassment, bullying or hazing.

Consequences

In addition to determining the appropriate disciplinary action pursuant to the School's Discipline Procedures, the School reserves the right to impose additional or different requirements as appropriate for the circumstances in its sole discretion.

Threats/Weapons

The school has a zero-tolerance policy regarding threats and weapons. The possession of dangerous weapons, such as guns and knives, or the display of any item that may be perceived as threatening, whether on or off School property, may be cause for immediate dismissal. Similarly, threats will be addressed as a serious issue. The school will determine the appropriate consequences depending on the circumstances.

Behavior Probation

Children who are placed on a behavior probation may be required, at the school's discretion, to have their family sign a probationary agreement with the school as a condition of continued enrollment. Failure to comply with the stipulations in the disciplinary probation agreement may result in dismissal.

Family Cooperation

A positive and constructive working relationship between the school and its families is essential to the fulfillment of the school's educational purpose. Thus, the School reserves the right not to extend the privilege of enrollment or re-enrollment to a child if the school reasonably concludes that the actions of the child's family make a positive and constructive relationship impossible or otherwise seriously interferes with the school's accomplishment of its educational purpose. Moreover, the School reserves the right to expel a child at any time if, in the judgment of the **Director or member of management,** conduct of anyone directly associated with the child, including but not limited to the child's family, in or out of the school, is not in keeping with the school's accepted standards or principles. There will be no refund of tuition where such enforced withdrawal occurs and any unpaid balance is payable in full according to the terms of the child's enrollment contract.

Other General Policies and Procedures

Computer and Systems Usage Policy

Children under the age of 2 will not be permitted ANY screen time. Children 2 and up will be limited to 1 hour per day. All persons using the school's computers, the computer systems, or personal computers on School property or over the school's systems are required to abide by this policy. Failure to do so will result in appropriate disciplinary action determined by the School's Director. All computers should be used in a responsible, ethnical, and legal manner. Violations of the following guidelines may result in the revocation of access privileges and possible disciplinary actions, up to and including dismissal.

- **Purpose:** The purpose of providing access to the Internet and the School's computer systems is to support research and provide unique educational opportunities. The use of such resources should be limited to those activities that support the school's educational objectives
- **Privilege:** The use of the school's system is a privilege and not a right. Inappropriate or illegal use of the school's systems or of the Internet will result in loss of the privilege and disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
- **Internet Access:** The school's community – children, staff, and administrators – have the privilege of accessing the Internet. The internet allows users to browse databases of information. Files may only be downloaded to a portable storage device. Files are not to be downloaded to the school's local or network hard drives.
- **Filtering System:** The school uses a filtering system to block inappropriate content from all users of our network. No filtering system is foolproof; therefore, we expect users to act responsibly in their searches and to immediately disengage from any materials that are inappropriate. The child must report the situation to the teacher or administrator in charge of the activity. Although the School does filter content, some inappropriate content may still get through via the Internet. Obtaining material that is explicitly labeled as not intended for minors will be considered a violation of the school's rules. Furthermore, making public or passing on any material that is pornographic, violent in nature or is in any way harassing is unacceptable and will be dealt with immediately by the appropriate administrator. Users should assume that ALL activity is not private and is being monitored for content and appropriateness.
- **Internet Safety:** Children should never give out personal information (address, telephone number, name of School, address of School, date of birth, social security number, credit card number, etc.) over the Internet. Also, children should not meet

with someone that they have contacted on-line without prior family approval. Safety is the responsibility of the family and child. The school is not liable in any way for irresponsible acts on the part of the child.

- **Pirated/Personal Software:** The term "pirated software" refers to the use and transfer of stolen software. Commercial software is copyrighted, and each purchaser must abide by the licensing agreement published with the software. There is no justification for the use of illegally obtained software. The school will not in any way be held responsible for any software brought to School by a student.
- **Network Access:** Accessing the accounts and files of others is prohibited. Attempting to impair the network, to bypass restrictions set by the network administrator, or to create links to the school's web page is prohibited. Obtaining another's password or rights to another's directory or E-mail on the network is a violation of School rules as well as a form of theft. Using someone else's password or posting a message using another's log-in name is a form of dishonesty and will be treated as a violation.
- **School's Right to Inspect:** The school reserves the right to inspect user directories for inappropriate files, to remove them if found, and to take other
- appropriate action if deemed necessary, including notification of families. Do not assume that any messages or materials on your computer or the school's systems are private.
- **E-mail, Chat Rooms, Instant Messaging, and Social Networking Sites:** E-mail is one of the various systems that transmit some form of electronic representation of a page of message from one location to another. It should be clear that E-mail mail cannot be used to harass or threaten others. The school reserves the right to randomly check E-mail. E-mail messages must not include personal attacks and should follow the normal rules of appropriate public language. They should not contain any language or content that would be inconsistent with the mission and philosophy of the school or inappropriate in an educational institution. Children should be aware that deleted E-mails can be undeleted.
- Participation in "chat rooms" instant messaging, posting messages, blogs, or browsing social networking sites (such as Facebook or any other similar sites) using School equipment is prohibited. In addition, any person who believes that they have been harassed or threatened by any of these methods of communication should immediately report the concern in accordance with the School's No Harassment/No Bullying/No Hazing policy. Children should also be aware that teachers and administrators may periodically check such sites and may determine that off-School-property behavior violates the Disciplinary Procedures by making disparaging or negative comments about the school, administration, or faculty

members in a manner that is disruptive to the school's educational mission or activities.

- **Computer Care:** Members of the School community will not abuse, tamper with, or willfully damage any computer equipment, use the computer for other than appropriate work, or bring food or drink into any computer area. Any intentional acts of vandalism will result in discipline and children will be held responsible for replacement or repairs.
- **Reporting Requirements/Discipline:** Any child who accesses inappropriate material on the Internet or receives harassing, threatening, or inappropriate materials via E-mail or on the Internet must immediately report the concern to the teacher who is supervising the activity or to the Owner do that the situation can be investigated and addressed appropriately. Children who violate any aspect of this Computer/Network Policy will be subject to appropriate discipline, loss of computer or Internet privileges, and possibly dismissal.

Confidentiality

Information pertaining to the children enrolled at the school and the staff employed at the school is considered confidential. To set up play dates or send party invitations, etc., families often ask for the phone numbers and/or addresses of other children in the school. We will happily pass notes or messages from you, but we cannot release confidential contact information.

Diapering

Children are checked at scheduled intervals throughout the day and changed at the first sign of wetness or soiling. No child is knowingly left in wet or soiled clothing. For children who wear diapers or toilet training pants, each family must provide an ample supply for each day/week. We do not supply these items and families will be notified if a child is running low on supplies.

Field Trips

Classes may plan field trips during the year to acquaint children with community resources and to provide educational experiences that will enhance classroom-learning activities. **A signed participation and release form is mandatory for field trips. A child will be unable to attend a field trip unless a signed field trip form is received from a designated family member or guardian.** An information sheet and participation and release form will be sent home for each field trip the child is scheduled to attend. Families are encouraged to contact their child's teacher to see additional chaperones are needed.

Children scheduled to go on a field trip will wear a Children's Universe t-shirt

Classes will use the school's bus for trips unless another means of transportation is authorized by the **Director or member of management.**

- Children that are not attending the field trip may not come to School till the kids have arrived back here from their field trip.
- If there is a financial cost associated with the trip, that financial obligation will be billed to the family account.

Animals

We will notify parents in writing in the event that animals are or will be present at the school.

Water Activities

The center will use sand/water tables and sprinklers periodically. If water is a part of a fieldtrip activity, we will only use an aquatic playground (splash pad).

Oral Health

Children receive age-appropriate oral health education at least twice a year (e.g. toothbrushing demonstrations, limiting sugary drinks). With parent consent and as permitted by regulations, preschoolers may participate in supervised toothbrushing after lunch using individually labeled supplies and sanitary storage. If on-site brushing is not permitted, we provide monthly oral health resources to families.

Lost and Found

All items turned in to the Lost and Found will be held for 30 days. If not claimed, they will be discarded or donated to a charitable organization.

Meals and/or Snacks

We participate in the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP); families receive CACFP notices and enrollment forms upon enrollment and each year after. Our school will provide a nutritious breakfast and lunch every day along with a snack in the morning and afternoon. Meals and snacks served at our School comply with the Meal Patterns for Children in Child Care Standards which are based on the recommended nutrient intake judged by the National Research Council to be adequate for maintaining good nutrition. Food and liquids that are 110 degrees F are kept out of reach for the safety of the children. In the event of a party where food is being brought in to be shared among the students it must be commercially prepared in a kitchen that is inspected by the local health officials. We follow a four-week rotating menu. Menus are posted in the kids Café and shared with the families.

We are a **nut-free School.** Absolutely no peanut products may be brought into our School. This includes food products that are cooked with or near nut oil.

- **Infants**

  A written feeding plan for children under twelve months of age must be completed and submitted by the families. This plan should be updated regularly as new foods are added or other dietary changes are made.

  All baby bottles (including the cap) must be clearly labeled with the child's name and current date. Formula or expressed milk must be brought in appropriate amounts for feeding. Any milk warmed must be used within an hour or it will be discarded. Accommodations will be made for mothers who are breast-feeding. Breast-feeding resources are available to parents upon request.

  Dry cereal and unopened food may be left at the school until consumed. The jars must be labeled with your child's first name and last name, unless using ours. We are unable to accept any food jars which have already been opened. Please bring in foods that have been tried at least two times at home to protect against food allergies.

  We will provide all sippy cups unless your child requires a certain type, which at that time the parent would need to provide one cup per usage.

- **Preschool**

  Meals and snacks are provided by the school and are according to the schedule posted in the Café. Mealtime is a part of the learning process. Children are served in the Kids Café and are encouraged to display proper table etiquette. They are also encouraged to taste all the food that is served but are not forced to eat anything. At no time is food withheld as punishment.

- **School-Age**

  Children are enrolled in our Before- and After-School program will be served breakfast and an afternoon snack. We provide healthy snacks that are approved by the Texas Department of Agriculture and are available as they arrive from school. Lunch is also provided if the school-age child is present during lunch time (summer and school holidays, etc.).

- **Home Lunch Practices**

  If your child brings a lunch from home and it needs to remain cold, we ask that you place an icepack inside the lunch kit. Also, if your child brings something that needs to remain warm, we ask that you place the food in an insulated container to

keep it warm. On any day that we provide meals and a child brings a lunch from home, if we see that the child does not have a well balance meal we have milk, fruit, and vegetables available for them. Resources are available at the office for information regarding the following…

1. Strategies to educate children and parents on nutrition
2. Information about foods that may cause allergic reactions
3. Sample menus of healthy lunches

- **Allergies and Special Diets**

A weekly menu is posted in the Kids Café including all food that will be served for snacks and meals. Any special diets for food allergies, not available by the school, must be provided by the family and accompanied with a food allergy and anaphylaxis emergency care plan signed by the physician. No tuition discount is given for food brought in by families. No food shall be brought in for your child or the class without prior approval from the administration. All staff are educated on food allergies and they precaution to children are protected.

Naptime

All younger children are required to have a quiet time following lunch and are encouraged to sleep during this time. Children who are five years of age and older are not expected to nap (unless required under state regulations) but are provided with quiet time. Children who fall asleep will be allowed to sleep until the end of the rest period, as designated by the daily schedule. A full-size crib sheet is required to cover their mat and to provide a home like environment. Children may bring a small item to comfort them and help them rest. The item, including pillows, must be small enough to fit into their school bag.

Personal Belongings

Upon enrollment in our program, you should bring the following for your child:

- At least two complete changes of clothing appropriate for the weather with each item labeled with the child's name or initials, including socks and underwear.
- A supply of disposable diapers for children who are not yet toilet-trained.
- You may bring a lightweight blanket or soft toy for rest time that is labeled with the child's full name.
- Any prepared food for infants or toddlers who are not yet able to eat items listed on the weekly menu.

- All children will be outside during the day, weather permitting. Please make sure your child has adequate clothing for outside play. (This includes closed-toe shoes only. No open-toe shoes – flip flops or sandals – will be allowed at School.)
- If your child is too sick to go outside, a physician's note explaining the reason should accompany the child before the exclusion is accepted.

Photo and Facebook Release Policy

Upon enrollment, you will receive a copy of our Photo/Facebook Release Policy to read and sign. Many pictures will be taken in your child's class and throughout the school during the time that your child is our School. Other families and teachers may take snapshots of parties and special events within the program. If for any reason you do not want your child photographed, please let the Director know as soon as possible. Also, be sure you make the classroom teachers aware of your wishes.

Safeguarding Valuables

Children should not bring excessive amounts of money (over $5.00 is considered excessive) or other valuables to the school. Valuables such as expensive clothing, blankets, toys, electronics, jewelry (necklaces, bracelets, earrings, etc.) should not be brought or worn to School. The school will not be responsible for lost, stolen or damaged valuables.

Special Events

Arrangements should be made with the Director or a member with management regarding a birthday or holiday party. If you are bringing a cake or special snacks to the class, they will be served in addition to snack/meals required by the general nutrition policy, and they must be purchased from the store and have an ingredient label. No home-made food will be accepted for School party's due to possible food allergies present in the classroom. If any children in your child's classroom have an egg allergy, cake cannot be served. **NO PEANUT PRODUCTS PLEASE.**

Holiday parties will take place in the classroom throughout the year. Generally, a note is posted to notify families of an upcoming party and many times families are asked to volunteer to bring food or drink. If at any time you object to a party for religious or other reasons, please notify your child's teacher as soon as possible so we can decide to otherwise care for your child during that time. We will assume that all children can participate unless notified to the contrary.

YES to…

- Planning a party at our School and coordinating with the classroom teacher
- Commercially purchased food may be brought in, but remember, the food:

- Must have commercially made
- Must have an ingredient label
- Must NOT contain nuts
- Must NOT be processed near nut oil
- Must NOT contain raw eggs

Telephones

Children can use the office phone for an emergency. Cell phones may only be used with the permission of administration.

Toilet Training

When you believe that your child is ready to begin toilet training, please discuss this with your child's teacher. We will assist by encouraging your child to visit the toilet between diaper changes. With the first signs of success, we will recommend that you send your child to school in training pants. Because toilet training can result in many soiled clothing items at school, please be sure your child comes to school with several (two or three) changes of clothing. Be sure extra clothes are appropriate to the present season and are labeled with your child's full name. All soiled clothing will be sent home the same day for laundering. We introduce potty training in our two's class.

Toys

The school provides many toys for the children's learning centers. Therefore, we request that toys not be brought from home. Please note this does not include special transition objects such as blankets or other security items to which your child is significant attached.

Transportation

Transportation is provided to and from the school only with parental permission. The Children's Universe transportation forms must be signed once a year. Field trip forms must be signed before each trip.

If we take your child to school in the morning, then we will pick up your child at dismissal time unless otherwise notified. If we do not take your child to school, then we assume that she/he is absent and we will not expect to pick up your child unless it is agreed upon in advance that you will provide morning transportation and we will provide afternoon transportation.

You must notify us by 2:30 pm each time your child does not need transportation from school when we normally provide this service to you. If we are not notified that your child does not need transportation from school to Children's Universe in the afternoon before the bus leaves our facility, a $10 fee will be charged.

If your child will be riding the A.M. bus, please have your child at Children's Universe by these following times:

- **Elementary: 7:15 a.m.**

Schools serviced by Children's Universe: Montgomery Elementary, Creekside Elementary, Madeley Ranch Elementary, Stewart Creek Elementary, Keenan Elementary School, Lone Star Elementary, and Gordan Reed Elementary.

Children's Universe is a Gang Free Zone

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

Pest Control

Childcare centers are required to post the use of pesticides prior to treating. Our school is treated monthly. Extenuating circumstances may require unplanned treatments. To confirm treatment dates or methods, please speak to the front desk.

Final Statement

We at Children's Universe want to provide you with the highest quality care for your child. We believe that nurturing children in a loving, wholesome environment is a community need that we do best, because we commit ourselves to providing superior child care and early education services.

Pandemic Addendum

Will be in place as needed

Arrival Procedures

Upon arrival at Children's Universe, A health check will be completed on the child before entering the building. If either present with a temperature above normal or signs of a possible illness, the child will be excluded from care. Children will be dropped off at the front door and escorted to class by a member of management or designated staff.

Departure Procedures

Upon departure of Children's Universe as the parent or adult picking up arrives, your child will be escorted from their classroom to the adult waiting at the front door.

Illness Exclusion

Children, items, and parent's will not be admitted into care if they have the following symptoms:
Cough
Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
Chills
Repeated shaking with chills
Muscle pain
Headache
Sore throat
Loss of taste or smell
Diarrhea that cannot be contained in a diaper
Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees
When children are ill, they must not return to the facility until they are symptom free without
medication for **72 hours.**

If positive for Covid-19 or in contact with someone who is, or has traveled into a known "at risk" area a two-week quarantine may be required if recommended by the CDC.

Pandemic Tuition Policy

Should the center need to close for Pandemic reasons, full tuition will be due for the first two weeks of closure. If the center is closed longer than two weeks, 50% of tuition will be due. Parents may give a 30-day notice to withdraw from the program if they feel it is in the best interest of their family. 50% of the tuition will be due during the 30-day notice period. A full registration fee will be required to reenroll in the program after the pandemic.

Absent Credit

If your child attends at least one day, you must pay for the full week. You may request Covid-19 exemption, which would be 1/2 tuition rate credit of two-weeks maximum with a positive Covid-19 result from your health provider. This is a one-time only credit and future absences will be charged at the full-time rate. **Parents must request an absent credit in writing by email. Absent credits are not automatically given when the child is absent.**

Disclosure Statements

I understand that outside of care; to control my child's exposure in the community, I will comply with all state, county, or local stay-at-home orders. I will immediately notify Children's Universe management if I become aware of any person with whom my child or I have had contact exhibits any of the symptoms listed above, is advised to self-isolate, quarantine, or has tested positive, or is presumed positive for COVID-19 or any other infectious illness. Further, I will immediately notify Children's Universe management if anyone from my place of employment is presumed positive or tests positive for COVID-19 or any other infectious illness whether I have had direct contact with that person.

Hygiene Stations

Parents and employees will use the hygiene stations located outside the front door prior to entering the facility.

Out of the Country Travel

Parent will notify Children's Universe management anytime they have traveled outside of the United States. Children's Universe has a right to exclude the child from care if they or a member of the household has traveled to a country that has been identified by the CDC as an "at risk" country.

Material Sharing

Children will be given individual boxes of materials and are discouraged from sharing materials when possible.

Food Service

Children will be served individual plates of food. Family Style meal service is discouraged until further notice.

Disposable Items

The center will use disposable items such as cups, spoons and plates when serving meals to reduce risk and cross contamination.

Acknowledgement and Receipt of Family Handbook

The registration of a child is considered an acceptance, on his/her part and on the part of his/her families or guardians, of the terms and conditions of the Family Handbook and all our school's rules and regulations, including the school's judgement on disciplinary sanctions or dismissal of a child.

The rules and regulations contained in this Handbook are not meant to be comprehensive. Rather, they presuppose the good will and judgement of a child in all circumstances in which he/she may find himself/herself and are subject to the school's ultimate discretion, judgement, and interpretation.

Children and families or guardians are asked to familiarize themselves with all the information contained in this Family Handbook and to sign this form.

We have read, understood, and agree to abide by and honor all statements and provisions set forth in the Family Handbook or as they may be changed from time to time by the school.

_____	_____	_____
Child	Age	Date

_____	_____	_____
Family Member/Guardian	Relationship	Date

(School File Copy)

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(Family Copy)

Acknowledgement and Receipt – Discipline and Behavior Management Policy

Praise, positive reinforcement, and redirection are effective methods for the behavior management of children. When children receive positive, non-violent, and understanding interactions from adults and others, they develop good self-concepts, problem-solving abilities, and self-discipline. Based on this belief of how children learn and develop values, this facility will practice the following discipline and behavior management policy taken from the Children's Universe Parent Handbook and the NAEYC Code of Ethics.

At Children's Universe, we use a method of 'redirection' to guide children toward appropriate behavior. If a child is engaged in behavior that is not conductive to a safe and happy learning environment, the teacher will "redirect" the child toward appropriate behavior.

"Above all. We shall not harm children. We shall not participate in practices that are disrespectful, degrading, dangerous, exploitative, intimidating, emotionally damaging, or physically harmful to children" (NAEYC Code of Ethics – Principle 1.1)

I, understanding undersigned parent or guardian of _____(print child's full name), do hereby state that I have read and received a copy of the facility's Discipline and Behavior Management Policy and that the facility's director (or other designated staff member) has discussed the facility's Discipline and Behavior Management Policy with me.

Date of child's enrollment: _____

Signature of Parent or Guardian: _____

Signature of Director (or designated staff member): _____

Distribution: One copy to parent or guardian, signed copy to be kept with child's facility records.

(School File Copy)

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