

# Parent Handbook 2023 - 2024



Dear Parents,

It is our greatest joy to partner with families to provide excellence in early childhood Christian education. Our teachers and staff are devoted to nurturing your child and providing learning experiences that foster a love for learning. We are delighted that you have partnered with us for a new school year. We recognize the trust you have put in us to care for and instruct your precious child. The utmost care will be given to the health and safety of our Lamb School family. As we commit the year to the Lord, I am confident that we will have a wonderful season together and that your child will grow and flourish in many beautiful ways. Please let me know how we can serve your family and pray for you. Welcome to the Lamb School family!

Christine Achterkirch  
Director  
Lamb School

# At Lamb School, your child will learn in many ways...

## Children will grow **SPIRITUALLY**

- Understanding God's love for them and for the world
- Understanding God's great story revealed in the Bible, God's Holy Word
- Growing in their understanding of their need for a Savior and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ

## Children will grow **SOCIALLY**

- Feeling good about themselves, having confidence, and valuing their own abilities
- Learning how to treat others with respect, understanding, equality, individuality, kindness and consideration

## Children will grow **EMOTIONALLY**

- Accepting their own emotions
- Developing the positive emotions of affection, love, happiness, joyfulness and curiosity
- Understanding and appropriately reacting to all emotions
- Practicing self regulation

## Children will grow **COGNITIVELY**

- Acquiring experiences that involve many different types of materials and activities
- Acquiring learning and problem-solving skills
- Expanding logical thinking skills
- Exploring concepts and information in the immediate world
- Expanding creative and imaginative abilities through make-believe play, art and music
- Expanding language skills through listening and communicating
- Beginning to develop reading and writing skills

## Children will grow **PHYSICALLY**

- Exhibiting age-appropriate balance and coordination skills
- Participating in a range of outdoor and indoor physical activities for fine and gross motor skill development
- Building with various materials (blocks, boxes, etc.)
- Acquiring skills for writing, cutting, and eating
- Comfortably experimenting with clay, finger paint, sand and other media

# OUR PROGRAMS

## **6 month to 17 month Olds**

Our program for infants provides excellence in Christian care for babies in two brand new environments – one for children 6 – 11 months and one for 12 – 17 months. First and foremost, our aim is to provide a safe and nurturing environment for little ones to learn and grow. We know that child development is a dynamic and gradual process, and each child is unique, developing in his or her own way. Each day children will participate in a variety of activities that allow children to connect and communicate, move and grow as well as play and explore. In addition to providing a stimulating learning environment, we also place a great emphasis on building strong relationships between teachers and families. We encourage ongoing communication between home and school so that each child receives the best care possible!

## **18 months to 2 Year Olds**

This preschool program is designed for younger children who are experiencing their first separation from home. These classes focus on building loving and nurturing relationships and assisting children to build upon their natural curiosity. We incorporate our Bible curriculum into the whole day and engage children in thematic learning centers and planned activities to expand their vocabulary, to introduce new categories of learning and practice many of the life skills emerging at this age. Toddlers will enjoy a weekly music class as well as a weekly STEM class taught by specialized teaching staff.

## **Three Year Olds (Three by September 1)**

Our program for three-year-olds is a play-based program that utilizes elements of structured curriculum offering children the opportunity to use their senses to be creative, explore, communicate and experiment in the world around them. Their day is designed for them to be successful through learning centers in an age-appropriate setting. Their schedule incorporates language development, math concepts, practical living, science exploration, art, cooking, and large and small motor development.

The Three-Year-Old classes compliment a Bible-based curriculum with Handwriting Without Tears for pre-writing development, hands on math curriculum from Learning Without Tears and phonemic awareness activities also from Learning Without Tears. Three-year-olds participate in Music and Movement, Discovery Lab and chapel weekly. Outdoor time is a part of every day!

## **Four Year Olds (Pre-K)**

Our Pre-K classes also use the Lamb School Bible curriculum which is incorporated into thematic units throughout the day and week. Children will participate in teacher led large group activities, small group activities, and independent learning centers focused on math skills, creative exploration, fine motor development, receptive and expressive language acquisition and pre-writing skill development. Handwriting Without Tears, Learning Without Tears Phonics and Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum are used in this program to prepare students for the kindergarten year ahead. PreK students participate in Music and Movement, Discovery Lab and Chapel weekly. PreK students must be 4 by September 1.

## **Bridge (Five Year-Olds by September 1<sup>st</sup>)**

The Bridge Program is a gift of time for students who are five by September 1 but not quite ready for the rigors of a Kindergarten classroom. Bridge students also use the Lamb School Bible curriculum which is incorporated into thematic units throughout the day and week. Children participate in teacher led large group activities and instruction, small group and independent activities. Learning centers focus on math skills, creative exploration, fine motor development, receptive and expressive language acquisition and pre-writing development. The Bridge program utilizes Really Great Reading Launch Pad curriculum and Heggerty Phonemic Awareness curriculum to practice all the necessary skills to become confident decoders and readers in kindergarten. The Bridge experience equips students with foundational skills, a personal confidence and a love for learning.

## **Kindergarten (Five-Year-Old by September 1<sup>st</sup>)**

Kindergarten is a critical bridge between preschool and the elementary years. Utilizing research-based, outcome driven teaching techniques and curriculum along with implementation of best practice in child development theory, Lamb School offers a Kindergarten learning environment that is rigorous but joyful. We offer a challenging academic curriculum utilizing the following curriculum:

- Really Great Reading Countdown Curriculum
- FlyLeaf Reading and Phonological Awareness Curriculum
- Decodable Readers
- Primary Writing Success
- ACSI Math Curriculum
- ACSI Bible Curriculum
- Handwriting Without Tears
- Thematic Learning Centers/Dramatic Play
- Science
- Social Studies

We also provide opportunities for hands-on, developmental, play-based activities to build a firm foundation. We bring a commitment to developing a child's Christian worldview by integrating our Bible lessons into everything we teach and do. Kindergarteners attend Chapel once weekly. Other specialty classes include Music, Art, STEM and Spanish. Our goal is to nurture the whole child, providing a firm Christ-centered foundation for readiness and success in their elementary education.

*Registration for Bridge and Kindergarten requires a placement assessment. Please refer to our Bridge & Kindergarten brochure for more information about the admissions and placement process.*

## ENRICHMENT CLASSES

- **CHAPEL:** All students will attend chapel once a week to learn simple Bible stories, worship God through songs of praise and participate in activities that correspond with the classroom thematic units.
- **MUSIC AND MOTOR SKILLS:** Children 3 - Pre-K will attend Music and Movement class which incorporates movement activities, rhythm band instruments, finger plays and familiar songs and dances encourage children to develop memory skills. Music is fascinating to children and soothes emotions. It is creative as well as an excellent form of expression.
- **DISCOVERY LAB:** Children 3 - Kinder will visit the Discovery Lab once a week to investigate and integrate the subjects of Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math otherwise known as STEAM. Our Discovery Lab teacher will visit the Young Preschool classrooms with weekly STEM challenges suited to their interests and abilities.
- **SPANISH:** Children enrolled in our 5-day Pre-K, Bridge and Kinder classes will have a weekly Spanish lesson focusing on conversational skills and simple vocabulary. The class will use songs, games and fun activities to learn Spanish.
- **ART WITH HEART:** Children enrolled Bridge and Kindergarten will experience an art class where they will receive instruction in color, texture, pattern, space, value and form. Students will explore an array of art materials, techniques and vocabulary with opportunities to create and present their art.

# INDOOR AND OUTDOOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Lamb School strongly believes and supports 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 benefits, physical activity may also have beneficial influence 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 birth to 12 months may engage in outdoor play for an amount of time tolerated by the infant. Infants 13 months to 17 months - Toddler age children will participate a minimum of 20 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day for every three hours they are in care per CCL. A full-time student at Lamb School (a five hour day) will spend 40 minutes a day in moderate to vigorous play each day.

Preschool, Pre-Kindergarten and School-Aged children will participate a minimum of 20 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play for every three hours they are in care per CCL. A full time Lamb School student will spend 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.

Opportunities for active play may overlap with outdoor play when weather permits. Physical activity may take place in the classroom when it is not possible to play outside due to weather. Children will remain indoors for active play when there is rain or when temperatures drop below 45 degrees F. or over 95 degrees F. Times may be limited due to conditions outdoors and consideration for child safety as determined by the Director or Assistant Director daily.

Lamb School promotes all children's active play. Children will have ample opportunity to do moderate to vigorous activities such as running, climbing, dancing, skipping, and jumping to the extent of their ability.

All children will participate each day in:

- Two or more structures 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 skills.
- Three-five-year old's will participate in a Music and Movement class weekly
- Outdoor play time one or twice daily depending on their scheduled time in care.

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. Examples of appropriate footwear and clothing include:

- Gym shoes or sturdy shoe equivalent
- Clothing for the weather

# EXTENDED CARE PROGRAM

We are excited to offer an Extended Care program to our families. In the morning, **Early Bird** students may bring breakfast and will engage in activities until it is time to transition to their classrooms at 9 am. **Stay & Play** offers a schedule of enrichment activities for students taught by a Lamb School teacher. Students will enjoy an afternoon snack (brought from home), outdoor time, STEAM activities, Maker Station Art, music, thematic learning free play centers. You may register to pick up at 3 pm, 4 pm or 5 pm daily.

Lamb School dismisses at noon on Fridays. However, students may now enroll in **Fun Fridays** and enjoy afternoon activities until 3 pm. Students enrolled in Extended Care will have additional time of outdoor and moderate to vigorous physical activity to meet the requirements of CCR.

## **Extended Care Policies and Procedures:**

- Registration for Extended Care occurs at the time of enrollment before the school year begins.
- Tuition is billed and due at the time of monthly tuition at the beginning of each month.
- A 10 % discount will be applied for a second child (excluding drop-in reservations).
- Supplies are included in tuition for Early Birds, Stay and Play & Fun Fridays.
- Students staying for Stay & Play must pack an afternoon snack. \$1 will be charged in ProCare if a child needs to be supplied with an afternoon snack or water bottle.
- Students staying for Fun Fridays will pack a lunch.
- Drop-in care is available as needed and pending space available with registration 24 hours in advance by calling the school office. The drop-in fee will apply.
- Students in before-school care will be escorted to their classrooms and likewise, students enrolled in after-care will be escorted to the appropriate classroom and signed in.
- Parents will sign the student into care in the morning and at pick up using the ProCare App.
- Students follow all school day rules while in extended care.
- Teacher to student ratios as determined by Child Care Regulations
- Breakfast items may be brought for morning care.
- No microwave will be available for heating food items.
- Pick up will be at the assigned classroom door.
- Pick up beyond the contracted time will accrue late charges - \$1 per minute past 3 pm 4 pm, 5 pm. Once you pick up your child and sign them out of care, the ProCare App will automatically assign the late fee to your account. If children are not signed out through the parent app, the office phone will be the official time stamp. Charges will be applied to the family's account and must be paid at the end of the month.
- School accounts must be paid in full and up to date to utilize drop-in care.



# WHAT TO BRING TO SCHOOL

## **Infants**

- An extra change of clothing (or two) in a plastic bag.
- Food for the day including bottles and any other food your child will eat. Instructions are provided to classroom teachers on a Feeding Instruction Form which is updated monthly or as needed. Bottles must be made in advance and will be refrigerated until use.
- Your student's journal for communication between home and school.
- If your child takes a pacifier there must be nothing attached. Please label with name.

## **18 months, 2 Year Olds and Three-Year Olds**

- An extra change of clothing in a plastic bag (several changes if the child is potty training, please)
- A snack, lunch, and water bottle. The snack should be packed separately from the lunch in a baggie and all food items should be easy to eat finger foods that do not present a choking hazard.
- A nap mat that must roll up and fit in the student's cubby
- A Special love item for rest (small stuffed toy, blanket, pacifier, etc.)

## **PreK, Bridge and Kindergarten**

- An extra change of clothing in a plastic bag labeled with child's name.
- A snack, lunch and water bottle. The snack should be packed separately from the lunch in a baggie and all food items should be easy to eat finger goods that do not present a choking hazard. Students staying for Stay & Play or Fun Friday should pack an afternoon snack (clearly marked).

Please label all items that come to school with the child's name. Items for snack and lunch cannot be heated or cooled at school. In addition, by providing your child's food for the day, Lamb School does not assume responsibility for the nutritional value of a child's meals and snacks. We recommend providing your child with healthy foods from all the food groups. Myplate.gov is a great resource!

# OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Policies and/or procedures of the Lamb School may be updated at any time and parents will be notified in writing of any changes. Copies of the current school year's handbook is available in the school office and online at our website.

## OPERATING SCHEDULE:

Lamb School operates September through May and is open for classes five days a week. The school day is from 9 am to 2 pm Monday through Thursday and 9 am – 12 noon on Fridays. Our Extended Care Program is offered from 8 am – 9 am before the start of school Monday – Friday and after school from 2 pm – 5 pm Monday – Thursday and 12 pm – 3 pm on Fridays.

Our school is located at 13000 Jones Road Houston, TX. Our office phone is **281-890-4879**.

The Lamb School Director is always available to meet with you to answer any questions or concerns you have regarding the policies or procedures in this handbook. Parents may direct questions or concerns regarding the policies and procedures of the school to the director by calling 281-890-4879 or emailing [cachterkirch@themet.church](mailto:cachterkirch@themet.church)

Parents may visit Lamb School at any time during our hours of operation to observe their child, the school's program activities, the building, the premises, and the equipment without having prior approval per Minimum Standards.

## CALENDAR

We follow a modified Cy-Fair Independent School District calendar with regards to school holidays observed. We will follow mandates from the Health and Human Services/Child Care Licensing regarding disruptions and closures which will be swiftly communicated to parents.

A Yearly School Calendar is posted on our website, pinned in our newsletter and is posted in the school office. This will also be available to you at the beginning of the school year. Dates are subject to change. Monthly highlight calendars will be posted in the office and attached in our bi-monthly newsletter. These may be downloaded and printed for your reference. Refer to regular Newsletter for communication of changes to our event times or dates.

## MINIMUM STANDARDS OF TEXAS

Lamb School is licensed and regulated by the Texas Department of Health and Human Services. Parents may review a copy of the Minimum Standards for Licensed Centers and a copy of the school's most recent licensing inspection report. This information is in the school office. The phone number for the local office of the Texas Department of Health and Human Services is 713-940-3009, the Child Abuse Hotline number is 1-800-252-5400.

Website for Health and Human Services: <https://hhs.texas.gov/>  
[https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Care/Information\\_for\\_Providers/cclforms.asp](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Information_for_Providers/cclforms.asp)

## REGISTRATION

Lamb School opens registration in February for the upcoming school year. Registration is online through our website. All children currently enrolled will be required to re-register. An annual registration fee of \$125 is due at the time of registration. In the event a child withdraws from the program and chooses to return within the same school year, a readmission fee of \$50 will be collected to reinstate them in the program.

Please note that all enrollment forms are to be completed in full and returned to the school office. Staff will be available to receive the packets during normal school office hours. Due to the important information in the enrollment packet, your child will not be allowed to attend school until the packet has been filled out completely and received by the Lamb School office. Each child will need to have been seen by a doctor within the last six months. If a student is registered once the school year begins and enrollment papers have been submitted, 2 full days are required before the student may attend class. This gives our office staff and teaching staff time to prepare adequately for his or her arrival!

The Registration fee is required at the time of registration and is non-refundable. If you are waitlisted for a particular class, your registration fee is held. If you choose not to remain on the Waitlist, your Registration Fee is reimbursed.

The Activity Fee is collected upon turning in your Enrollment paperwork and is non-refundable. These fees also cover your child's participation in activities and special events.

A Graduation Fee (\$22) will be posted to accounts in ProCare in January for PreK, Bridge and Kindergarten students. This covers the cap, tassel, medals and stahls.

Accounts must be paid in full by the end of the current school year in order to attend the upcoming year.

Enrollment shall be granted without discrimination regarding sex, race, color, creed, or political belief. Enrollment shall be open to any child, provided we can meet the needs of that child.

## SPECIAL CARE NEEDS:

A child with special care needs is a child who:

- Has a chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional condition or a disability and who also requires assistance beyond that required by a child generally to perform tasks that are within the typical chronological range of development, including the movement of large and small muscles, learning, talking. Communicating, comprehension, emotional regulation, self-help, social skills, emotional well-being, seeing, hearing, and breathing OR
- a limitation due to an injury, illness or allergy.

Lamb School teachers and staff will provide a child with special care needs the accommodations recommended by a

- health care professional
- a qualified professional affiliated with the local school district
- a qualified professional affiliated with an early childhood intervention program

Lamb School teachers and staff will make every effort to incorporate a plan provided from an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) from a school district or an Individualized Family Service Plan (ISFP) from ECI. Plans from outside professionals provide valuable information to Lamb School teachers and staff to care for each individual child in the most effective way possible.

A statement of any special needs must include description of:

- Any limitations or restrictions on the child's activities
- Reasonable accommodations or modifications required to assist the child at school.
- Any adaptive equipment provided for the child, including instructions for how to use the equipment.
- Symptoms or indications of potential complications related to a physical, cognitive, or mental condition that may warrant prevention or intervention while the child is in car.
- Any medications prescribed for continuous, long-term use.

When a child has recommended accommodations from a health care professional or qualified professional affiliated with a local school district or early childhood intervention program teachers will work to work to plan classroom activities for individual children's' needs based upon those recommendations. All activities will integrate children with and without special care needs. Adaptive equipment that is recommended and provided to the center will be utilized. Equipment, teaching methods and procedures in each classroom will be adapted as needed to care for children with special needs so that they can thrive in a natural learning environment.

Parents may request that services from a qualified service provider be provided to their student (early intervention services or special education services) be received at our operation. Parents will sign a form providing the name of the individual.

## WITHDRAWAL

A withdrawal notice kept on file in the office must be signed and dated on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to the month your child will be withdrawn. If notice is not given on or before the 15<sup>th</sup>, tuition for that next month must be paid in full.

## SUSPENSION/EXPULSION POLICY

Lamb School provides a safe, peaceful, Christian atmosphere and we reserve the right to dismiss a child who is disruptive to this environment. Please refer to our discipline policy regarding our commitment to support children's growth and ensure each child's success in our program. While we take many steps to support every child in our learning environments, the Director retains the right to dis-enroll a child when that is in the best interest of the child or other children at the school.

## TUITION INFORMATION AND POLICIES

The Lamb School is a non-profit ministry of The MET church. Tuition is vital to our existence as this is our only source of revenue.

\*Tuition and Extended Care Tuition is determined according to the schedule contracted for your child and continues whenever a child is absent. The cost of education is divided across 9 months equally, regardless of some months having more days of school than others. There is no credit for scheduled school closings and holidays, illness, or school closings due to inclement weather or

unforeseen circumstances. You will be invoiced for outstanding balances should you not return to school without notice.

Lamb School is closed the same holidays as Cy-Fair School District. The tuition for the schedule you have chosen will remain the same during holiday weeks. Tuition for each program is divided into 9 monthly equal payments and are not amended to account for number of days or holidays.

**Tuition is due on the first of each month.** You will receive an invoice of your child's account at the beginning of each month. Extended Care tuition is due at the same time and payable together. A \$15 late fee will be assessed for payment received after the 7<sup>th</sup> day of each month. If tuition is not received by the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month, your child will be unable to attend the program until tuition is paid in full or other arrangements have been made in the office.

Tuition may be paid in person at the office with personal check, cashier's check or money order. Tuition may also be paid with Automatic Withdrawal. The ProCare App for parents makes setting up and paying through Automatic Withdrawal easy. We encourage our parents to utilize this convenient tool.

ACH will pull tuition automatically on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of each month.

Incidentals will be added to your account during the month and will be included in your invoice for the following month. May incidentals must be paid in full by the last day of school.

Requests for schedule changes should be submitted to the office. Those requests asking to reduce the schedule must give a two week notice. Those asking to increase the schedule will be granted on a space-available basis.

There is a \$25 fee assessed on all returned checks.

Timely pick up of your student is very important. We have a grace period built in for pick up. After 2:05, 3:05, 4:05 or 5:05 a late fee of \$1 per minute will be assessed. Once you have signed your child out of care on the ProCare App, the software automatically assesses any late fees and posts them to your account.

Parents having more than one child enrolled at Lamb School will be allowed a 10% discount on the younger child's monthly tuition.

## SAFETY AND SECURITY

Exterior building doors as well as hallway doors at Lamb School are securely locked throughout the day. Entrance doors are only open during drop-off and pick-up and then supervised by staff members. Likewise, our classroom corridors are locked throughout the day with keypad access to classroom areas.

According to Child Care Regulations, we rehearse fire, lock-down and bad weather drills regularly so that our students are familiar with protocols and can execute them without fear.

## ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

It is important that the parent set the tone for a child's school day. For your child to benefit from the scheduled activities planned, we encourage you to arrive on time each day. When a child arrives late, it can make his/her transition into the classroom somewhat difficult and cause a disruption to the rest of the class.

The school day starts at 9 am and ends at 2 pm. The school doors will open no earlier than 8:50 am. and will remain attended until 9:05 am. At which time they will be locked. If you arrive after this time, please use the doorbell for assistance to enter the building.

Dismissal on Fridays is 12 pm.

The Jones Road parking lot is available for Lamb School parents. Parking is also located in the back next to the Toddler Playground. Building E is accessible with covered walking from either parking area.

## MORNING CURBSIDE DROP OFF

Curbside drop-off is available in the mornings M-F beginning at 8:50 at our main entrance. If you arrive at school late, please park and walk your child into school, checking them into the classroom. Curbside drop-off is not available to our students in Infant Rooms. Safety is our greatest concern, and we appreciate parents adhering to the following procedures:

- Drive slowly in our parking lots.
- Pull up in our Drop-Off Zone following directions of staff members.
- Stay in your vehicle.
- Children's car seats must be on the passenger side with their belongings together and easily accessible at their feet.
- Staff will unbuckle the child and gather their belongings.
- If you are dropping off two children and one is buckled on the driver's side, please turn off your vehicle, unbuckle your child on the non-curb side and walk them to the sidewalk to the staff member who will walk both children into the building.
- Staff will walk children to their classroom and sign them in with their classroom teacher.
- Use the ProCare App to sign your child into care using the QR Code provided by the staff member.

Please note: if you are getting out of your car to unload your children and their belongings, we ask that you park in the lot and walk your children to the building so that the drop-off zone safely moves along without delay. People moving around the flow of traffic presents a safety concern.

## **Picking up your child at the close of the day is as important as prompt arrival in the morning.**

Please remember you will incur a late pick-up fee after the grace period. Sign-out happens at your child's classroom door. Use the ProCare App for check-out.

If someone other than the biological parent is picking up a child at the end of the school day, the person's name must be included in the Authorization Pick-Up Log located in the school office. This pick-up person will be required to present their driver's license to verify their identity. The state requires the school to keep this information on file for a minimum of 24 hours. Until the office staff gets to know these individuals, please ask them to check-in at the school office to show identification and receive a pass to present to the classroom teacher for release of the child.

Please remember to always drive slowly in the parking lot and use extreme caution in our drop-off zone! NO CELL PHONE USE DURING DROP-OFF.

### COURT ORDERS EFFECTING ENROLLED CHILDREN

In cases where an enrolled child is the subject of a court order, Lamb School 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.

### INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event of inclement weather and/or hazardous road conditions, Lamb School closures will be based on Cy-Fair's decision to close. Please watch the local news stations for announcements of school closings, as well as [met.church/lambschool](http://met.church/lambschool) and [facebook.com/METLambSchool](https://facebook.com/METLambSchool). We will also communicate closures through the ProCare Parent App and through school email. Lamb School does NOT make up days due to inclement weather.

### CLOTHING

Clothing should be marked with the child's name. Clothing should be comfortable, easy to maneuver for restroom time or diapering, durable and weather appropriate. Closed-toed shoes are equally important. Incidents of injured toes are far less with closed-toed shoes. Due to safety policies, Heely's (shoes with wheels in the soles) are not permitted.

Always send children with an extra change of clothes in their backpack. Some activities may be messy in nature (painting, cooking, gluing, etc.)

Children in the process of being toilet trained should have more than one change of clothing including underwear/pants and socks. Please mark all items with your child's name.

### TOYS

Lamb School has equipped each room with age-appropriate activities and learning materials. Please do not allow your child to bring toys from home. They could be lost or damaged and are not easily shared. Teachers may ask students to bring special items from home from time to time.

### TOILET TRAINING

We will assist you in toilet training your child once you have developed a plan at home. Please make the teaching staff aware of your desire to toilet train in order to provide an easy transition for your child. While students in a three year old class are not required to be potty trained, at this age families are expected to be working toward this goal of independence alongside classroom teachers.

### HEALTH AND SAFETY/MEDICATIONS

Personal health and hygiene are an important part of our curriculum; therefore, sick children cannot be admitted to school. Any child who becomes sick during the day will be separated from the classroom setting. We will notify you to pick up your child. Your child must be picked up within 30 minutes of notification. We will require you to pick up your child with any of the following:

- Fever of 100 degrees or higher

- Pink eye
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Chicken pox
- Lice (nits or louse)
- Any other contagious illness.

Please note that your child will be sent home with any of the following symptoms related to COVID-19:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea
- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature equal to or greater than 100 degrees F.
- Known close contact with a person who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19

It may be necessary for you to present a doctor's release for your previously ill child before re-admittance to the school. You will be notified in writing when a communicable illness has been reported in your child's classroom. Children must be symptom free without medication before returning to school.

The health and safety of all students is important to us! We will assess each child when signing into care for signs of illness and throughout the school day. All children will be involved in physical activities indoors and outdoors as an important part of the curriculum. If a child is well enough to come to school, they will be expected to participate in all activities.

Please report any diagnoses of a communicable disease to the office so that we may communicate to families in the same classroom.

Lamb School only dispenses medications in emergency situations and for children with allergy medications attached with doctor's instructions on a FARE form or Asthma Plan. All medications must be in the original packaging, not expired and dispensed according to physician's instructions or packaging instructions. Parents will be notified if a medication was dispensed at school. Please note that sunscreen and bug repellent will not be applied at school. Vitamins and homeopathic medications are not dispensed by Lamb School staff during the school day.

Lamb School will adhere to CDC and local health department guidance for COVID-19 related exclusions from care and for timeline related to return to school or work.

### ENHANCED CLEANING AND DISINFECTING PROTOCOLS

Cleaning and disinfecting is important for a safe learning environment and to keep germs at bay. We will follow CDC guidance and a regular schedule for cleaning and disinfecting will be followed



- Surfaces and items regularly used and touched will be routinely cleaned, sanitized and disinfected (toys, games, doorknobs, chairs, tables, light switches, cubbies, playground structures, sink handles etc)
- Restrooms will be cleaned and disinfected regularly throughout the day
- EPA-registered products will be used according to label directions
- All cleaning materials will be kept out of reach of children

### HEALTHY HAND HYGIENE:

All children and staff will engage in hand hygiene at the following times:

- Arrival at the facility and after breaks
- Before and after preparing food or drinks
- Before and after eating or handling food or feeding children
- Before and after administering medication or medical ointment
- Before and after diapering
- Before and after assisting a child use the restroom
- After coming into contact with bodily fluid
- After handling animals or animal waste
- After playing outdoors or in the sand
- After handling garbage

Hands are washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Hand sanitizer is available for staff and children 2 years of age and older. Children must be supervised to prevent ingestion. Children will be assisted with washing their hands thoroughly and regularly. Pictorial directions will be posted in every classroom.

### INJURIES

Should a child experience an injury while at school, the teacher will immediately advise the administrative staff. The administrative staff will determine the severity of the injury. If the injury is minor (i.e. scrapes, bumps, bruises, splinters etc.), first aid will be administered. An accident report describing the nature of the injury and the first aid procedure used will be documented. A copy of the accident report will be sent home with the child, and a second copy will be kept on file. Additionally, verbal notification to the parent will be given when the child is picked up at the close of the day. Lamb School will also give a courtesy call to parents to let them know of any injury or incident when it occurs unless it is very minor.

In the event of a more serious injury, the staff will administer first aid (teachers and directors are certified in Pediatric CPR and first aid procedures), dial 911 for assistance if necessary, and contact the parents. If the parents cannot be reached, we will contact the physician indicated on the medical card and transport the child to the hospital of the parent's choice indicated on the Medical Emergency Forms filled out at the time of enrollment. A member of staff will remain with the child until a parent arrives.

### BITING

Biting is a common issue in early child development. The best way to deal with biting is consistency between providers and parents. Biting occurs for multiple reasons and proper communication will help determine why a child is biting. The teachers and director will work with

parents if biting becomes a problem and will make every effort to solve the issue as soon as possible. From time to time it may be necessary for a child to take a break from school until the problem is resolved.

## IMMUNIZATIONS

The following chart outlines the required immunizations and number of doses of vaccines that your child must receive to follow the Minimum Standards issued by the Texas Department of Protective & Regulatory Services and the Texas State Health Department.

Should your child receive additional boosters during the school year, please provide an updated copy of your child's immunization record to the office for your child's record. This is a requirement of the Department of Health and Human Services. If your child is unable to receive the necessary immunizations, we must have a written statement from your physician stating the reason for the delay. Otherwise, your child will not be allowed to attend classes until the immunizations are current. It is the responsibility of the parent to keep up with immunizations so that we may properly update your child's record at school. Any child who has an immunization record that is not in compliance with the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services and the Texas State Health Department will not be able to attend school so please make every effort to provide updates swiftly.

Lamb School does not discriminate against families who have claimed an exemption for immunizations due to religious beliefs or convictions and does enroll, from time to time, students who are not immunized. Any child on a "catch up" schedule for medical reasons, must provide a document stating such from a professional health care provider.

Lamb School does not require employees to have specific vaccinations but does encourage a yearly flu shot.

## IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

< 2 months	No vaccines required
By 3 months	One dose each of polio, DTaP/DT/DTP, Hib, hepatitis B
By 5 months	Two doses each of polio, DTaP/DT/DTP, Hib, and hepatitis B
By 7 months	Three doses of DTaP/DT/DTP Two doses each of polio, Hib, and hepatitis B
By 16 months	Three doses of DTaP/DT/DTP Two doses each of polio and hepatitis B One dose of MMR, and Hib
By 19 months	Four doses of DTaP/DT/DTP Three doses each of polio and hepatitis B One dose each of MMR, , varicella, and Hib on or after first birthday
By 25 months	Four doses of DTaP/DT/DTP. Three doses each of polio and hepatitis B.

	One dose each of MMR, Hib, varicella, and hepatitis A received on or after 1st birthday.
By 43 months	Four doses of DTaP/DT/DTP. Three doses each of polio and hepatitis Bd. Two doses of hepatitis A One dose each of MMR, Hib, and varicella, received on or after 1st birthday.

## VISION AND HEARING

LAMB SCHOOL is operated in accordance with the Texas Department of Health and Human Services, which requires vision and hearing screenings for any child enrolled in a Four-Year-Old or Bridge program. The Special Senses and Communication Disorder Act of 1983 require that all children at the age of four have hearing and vision screening performed by a trained examiner. This screening must have been completed within the calendar year following enrollment in the Four-Year-Old and Bridge program. For your convenience, we will arrange for an examiner to come to the school to administer the hearing and vision screening. Examiners are not employees of LAMB SCHOOL. It is your responsibility to have this screening performed, whether at the school or by a different examiner. You are responsible for all examination fees incurred for the vision and hearing screening.

If you elect to have the screening performed elsewhere, you must provide a photocopy of the actual test for the visual and hearing acuity to keep in your child's permanent record. Verbal notification will not be accepted.

## CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY RECALLS

Lamb School receives email notifications from the CPSC whenever infant/child products and sports and recreation products are recalled. If we have an item that has been recalled, we immediately remove it from use. As a parent you may view a list of current recalls and notices on the DPSC website at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov). You may also sign up to receive email notification from the CPSC by going to <https://www.cpsclist.aspx>. Lamb School will notify parents via email and public posting of items recalled.

## PARENT COMMUNICATION AND NOTIFICATIONS

Lamb School partners with parents using the **ProCare Parent App**. When you enroll your child at Lamb School, you receive an email about ProCare and an invitation to download and engage with the ProCare Parent App. It is critical that you follow these instructions as this will be the primary way in which you sign your child in and out of care, receive important notices about your child's day and communicate with your classroom teacher.

**A Parent Board** is located in the office and will communicate information about any special activities or events.

A yearly **school calendar** will be posted in newsletters and on our website. A **monthly calendar** informing parents of scheduled activities and events will also appear in the newsletter and available for downloading and printing at home.

A **Weekly Activity Plan & Schedule** is posted outside the classroom door each week. This will be summarized in a teacher email to parents each week.

A **Take Home Envelope** will come home weekly with your child's work and be returned to school.

Lamb School will publish a **bi-monthly newsletter** with important dates and information. This communication is the primary way in which you will receive school news, announcements and information. Please look for our newsletter so that you are up to date with all things Lamb School! Primary parents and caregivers are automatically subscribed. If you desire other family members or caregivers to receive this communication, please let the office know to add them by providing their email address.

**The monitor** by our office entrance will also display important notices.

You will find information at our **Facebook** page and on our website, [themet.church/lambschool](http://themet.church/lambschool).

Parents of **Infants** will receive daily report in the form of a monthly themed journal documenting times the child was fed, times and amount of food consumed, times of diaper changes, the infant's general mood and a brief summary of the activities the child participated in. The parents of **18 month - Two-year-old** students will receive a **Daily Report** to inform them of their child's daily routine as well as the child's eating and diapering/potty schedule.

**Three-Year-Old - Kinder** You should expect weekly correspondence from your child's teacher regarding activities in the classroom and learning objectives each week. While in depth conversations regarding your child are not appropriate at the classroom door, your child's teacher will be happy to schedule a time to meet in person or talk on the phone to answer any questions you may have or discuss possible concerns.

## THE PROCARE APP FOR PARENTS

The Procure App for parents connects parents to Lamb School. Through the App, parents will sign their children in and out of care, receive communications and daily reports from classroom teachers as well as see your family's account.

### QR Scan Process via the Mobile App For Sign In and Sign Out

1. From your mobile device, open the Procure mobile app, then click the QR Code icon in the top right corner.
2. Once the camera opens, scan the QR code posted in your center/school (printed & posted on a computer monitor, on the parent kiosk, etc.).
3. Once the code is scanned, select the child(ren) to be signed in/out. Once selected, click SIGN-IN.
4. Answer the questionnaire, if applicable, then click SUBMIT.
5. Enter your signature, if enabled, then click DONE. A confirmation message will display when sign-in is successful.

If a parent or authorized pickup is not utilizing the mobile app for sign-in/out, they will simply open their camera from their mobile device and scan the QR code. They will be prompted to open a specific URL to continue sign-in.

## PROGRESS REPORTS AND CONFERENCES

An ongoing progress report is conducted on each Three-year-old - Kindergarten student throughout the year. These reports are observation reports and are used as a tool to help the parents see the developmental progress of their child. Parent/Teacher conferences are held in the spring. Parents are encouraged to sign up with their child's teacher for a conference.

## DISCIPLINE

Lamb School strives to be consistent with discipline and guidance of the children. We emphasize understanding the individual needs and development of each child. Often, discipline for inappropriate behavior can be handled with positive reinforcement, redirection, and problem solving. We feel that it is important for children to learn to be responsible for the consequences of their actions. Our focus is directed toward teaching children acceptable behavior. In the event your child should become very upset after a discipline situation, he or she will be allowed to regroup and regain control before we address the situation again. Should your child be verbally or physically abusive in a persistent manner, you will be contacted for assistance.

Lamb School will not subject any child to unreasonable or cruel treatment, humiliation, abusive language or punishment. In the event we should have repeated behavior concerns that affect the safety of a child or the learning environment of the classroom, (i.e. biting, hitting, inappropriate actions, refusal to follow class or school rules), Lamb School will follow the steps listed below of remediation:

- Recorded observation by teacher
- Recorded observation by administrator
- Phone call from teacher
- Phone call from director

If a concern exists after these steps have been taken, the parents will be called by the director to formulate a plan of action with the teacher. Should these steps fail again, dismissal may occur. All staff and parents will follow these guidelines for discipline for their own children while on our premises.

## SNACKS & LUNCHES

Parents will provide a daily snack for their child which will be eaten mid-morning in the classrooms. A lunch should also be provided. Lunch should consist of *healthy* finger-foods that your child enjoys and a beverage in the form of a drink box or water bottle. If a student is staying for Extended Care, an afternoon snack will also be provided from home. Lamb School will provide a morning or afternoon snack or water bottle if one is forgotten and your account will be charged \$1.00. The office will call if a lunch is forgotten so that one can be brought. If we cannot get a hold of you to bring a lunch, one will be provided and your account will be charged \$5. This is usually Macaroni and cheese. Lamb School is not responsible for ensuring the nutritional value of your child's food or for meeting your child's daily food needs. Please consider the nutritional needs of your growing child. Please refer to the website: **[www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)** for suggestions about choosing foods from the five food groups that are building blocks for a healthy diet.

Parents have the right to breastfeed comfortably in our facility or provide breast milk that has been pumped for their child while in care. Children are encouraged but never forced to eat their food.

Teachers will have children pack uneaten food for parents to know what their child has consumed at school.

#### Infant Feeding Policies:

- Infants birth through 6 months will be held during feeding.
- Children older than 6 months who are unable to sit unassisted will be held for feedings
- Bottles shall never be propped or supported.
- Caregiver will hold the bottle and engage with the child during feedings
- Bottles and training cups will be labeled with first name and last initial
- Children will not walk around with a bottle or training cup
- Surfaces will be sanitized before and after each use
- Food prep will never be done in diaper changing surface
- Children will be fed according to parent instructions and the child's natural schedule
- Parents will review and update their child's feeding instructions every 30 days until the baby is able to eat table food.

#### FOOD ALLERGIES:

Lamb School takes food allergies very seriously. If a child has an allergy to a known food, the Admin Team must be informed, and a F.A.R. E. plan must be completed by the child's physician and on file in the office. Emergency medications associated with a food related allergic reaction may be kept at school with an associated F.A.R.E. plan. Parents will be notified when medication is necessary. Children with allergies will need to provide all food for events and parties.

Some food allergies may require classroom management to provide a healthy and safe environment for all children. We ask for your support in these circumstances.

#### REST TIME:

Children will be provided a time of rest after lunch each day. Families are to provide a nap mat labeled with their child's name. This item should fit inside the student's cubby and be laundered regularly. Children are encouraged but never forced to sleep. Children may bring 1 small stuffed animal for naptime.

SAFE SLEEP POLICY FOR INFANT CARE ROOMS (746.501(9) per minimum standards. All staff, substitute staff, and volunteers at Lamb School will follow these safe sleep recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Consumer Product Safety Commission for infants to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome/Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS/SUIDS)

- Always put infants to sleep on their backs unless you provide Form 3019, Infant Sleep Exception/Health Care Professional Recommendation signed by the infant's health care professional (746.2427)
- Place infants on a firm mattress, with a tight-fitting sheet, in a crib that meets the CPSC federal requirements for full-size cribs and for non-full-size cribs (746.2409)
- For infants who are younger than 12 months of age, cribs should be bare except for a tight-fitting sheet and a mattress cover or protector. Items that should not be placed in a

crib include soft or loose bedding, such as blankets, quilts, or comforters; pillows; stuffed toys/animals; soft objects; bumper pads; liners; or sleep positioning devices (746.2415b and 747.2315b). Also, infants must not have their heads, faces or cribs covered at any time by items such as blankets, linens or clothing (746.2429)

- Do not use sleep positioning devices such as wedges or infant positioners. The AAP has found no evidence that these devices are safe. Their use may increase the risk of suffocation (746.2415b)
- Ensure that sleeping areas are ventilated and at a temperature that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult (746.3407(10) .
- If an infant needs extra warmth, use sleep clothing such as sleepers or footed pajamas as an alternative to blankets (746.2415(b).
- Place only one infant in a crib to sleep (746.2405).
- Infants may use a pacifier during sleep. But the pacifier must not be attached to a stuffed animal (746.2415 (b) or the infant's clothing by a string, cord or other attaching mechanism that might be a suffocation or strangulation risk (746.2401 (6) ).
- If the infant falls asleep in a restrictive device other than a crib (such as a bouncy chair or swing or arrives to care asleep in a car seat), move the infant to a crib immediately, unless you provide Form 3019, Infant Sleep Exception/Health Care Professional Recommendation, signed by the infant's health care professional (746.2426).
- Our childcare program is smoke-free. Smoking is not allowed in Texas Child Care operations (this includes e-cigarettes and any type of vaporizers (746.3703(d).
- Actively observe sleeping infants by sight and sound (746.2403).
- If an infant is able to roll back and forth from front to back, place the infant on the infant's back for sleep and allow the infant to assume a preferred sleep position (746.2427).
- Awake infants will have supervised "tummy time" several times a daily. This will help them strengthen their muscles and develop normally (746.2427).
- Do not swaddle an infant for sleep or rest unless you provide Form 3019, Infant Sleep Exception/Health Care Professional Recommendation, signed by the infant's health care professional (746.2428)

## BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are always a special time for the children. The school does not allow student birthday parties in the classroom. However, if a parent would like to provide a special snack to share with classmates, please do so. Children having summer birthdays are encouraged to choose an *un-birthday* day to celebrate during the school year. Please make these snacks as simple as possible. We find that cookies, brownies, or doughnut holes are well received by the children. Items must be store bought.

## SCHOOL PARTIES

Parties for holidays are celebrated throughout the school year. These fun events are made even better when our parent volunteers participate in the preparation.

## PARENT VOLUNTEERS

One of the key factors in the success of any preschool program is the involvement of interested, caring parents. We encourage our parents to volunteer their time as helpers at holiday parties, school wide events, and as "helping hands" when our teachers need extra help cutting/gluing/assembling special projects, making playdoh, cutting lamination, etc.

LAMB SCHOOL has a Parent Volunteer Committee that plans and implements special activities and events throughout the school year, such as Rodeo Week and special holiday parties. Several coffees will be scheduled with the Lamb School Program Assistant as these events draw close. We would love for you to join us!

On the first day of school, parents will have the opportunity to learn about ways to get involved at Lamb School and sign up to serve in a variety of capacities.

Parents who routinely volunteer on our campus will have to submit an application and have a background check and undergo required training per Child Care Regulations.

## PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT AT LAMB SCHOOL

Parents with children enrolled at Lamb School are required to maintain the integrity of The MET Church and Lamb School.

Parents and guardians should dress in a way not to be offensive to other families.

Parents and guardians must agree to abide by our discipline policies while on our premises. All custody issues should be resolved at home and not at school.

## PARENT RIGHTS

**The parent or guardian of a child at a licensed childcare facility in the state of Texas has the right to:**

- Enter and examine the child-care facility during its hours of operation and without advance notice;
- File a complaint against the childcare facility;
- Review the childcare facility's publicly accessible records;
- Review the child-care facility's written records concerning the parent's or guardian's child;
- Receive inspection reports and information about how to access the childcare facility's online compliance history;
- Have the facility comply with a court order that prevents another parent or guardian from visiting or removing the child;
- Be given the contact information for the childcare facility's local Child Care Regulation office;
- Obtain a copy of the facility's policies and procedures handbook;
- Review the facility's staff training records and any in-house training curriculum; and
- Exercise these rights without receiving retaliatory action by the facility.



**Lamb School does not use cameras or video recordings. In centers that do, the following rights apply:**

- Inspect any video recordings of an alleged incident of abuse or neglect involving their child provided that:
- Video recordings of the alleged incident are available;
- The parent or guardian does not retain any part of the video depicting a child that is not their own; and
- The parent or guardian of any other child in the video receives prior notice from the facility;

**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

Safety is our primary concern. Your child will participate in regular drills for fire evacuation, sheltering for a storm and locking down of the school in the case of a community threat or intruder. Teachers and administrators are well trained and practiced in responding to emergency situations.

In the event medical care is required due to illness or injury, Lamb School Admin Team will call 911 for emergency medical treatment and transportation to the hospital indicated by parents on the enrollment form or to the nearest hospital. Parents will be notified immediately.

**Fire:**

- Buildings will be evacuated immediately using posted evacuation routes. Teachers lead children, with attendance rosters, to the designated safe area where they are supervised at all times.
- The Director exits with laptop (provides access to ProCare Family information and communication) and supervises the exit of classes, taking counts from teachers that have exited with their classes.
- The Assistant Director remains in the building until everyone is evacuated. Hallways are swept by Admin Team members ensuring everyone is out safely.
- Teachers check attendance roster and conduct a visual attendance by name reporting to Director.
- The Lamb School Registrar exits building with Emergency Contact Information and authorizations for emergency medical care.
- The Director will meet with fire officials and follow their directions.
- Parents will be notified as soon as is safe with instructions for reunification and pick up of students

**Severe Weather:**

- If possible, the Director will be responsible for listening to weather bulletins so that preparations can be made in advance. Flashlights are available in each GoPak in classrooms.
- Teachers will lead children to safe zones (interior spaces away from windows) with GoPaks and attendance rosters awaiting announcements from the office through the intercom system.
- Students practice evacuation to safety rooms for cover and duck practice quarterly.

**Chemical Fumes:**

- In the event of an emergency with toxic fumes, the air conditioning will be turned off, a blanket will be placed under the door and children will be given wet paper towels to breathe into. Instructions will be given to teachers through the intercom system.

In the event we must exit the building and relocate students, children will be relocated first to the Training Center **located at 13010 Jones Road**. If the block needs to be evacuated, children will be transported in staff vehicles to the The HUB located at **12903 Jones Road** (across the street). Staff will assemble with children in the first-floor meeting room grouped by class. Members of the Admin Team will communicate by cell phone with local authorities such as fire, law enforcement, emergency medical, health department and licensing. The Admin Team will also have access to family emergency contact information both through our school software and by evacuating with our emergency contact information file box.

## THE MET INFORMATION

**The MET** Administrative offices are open Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Our telephone number is **281.890.1900**. If you should have any questions, prayer requests, or need information regarding our weekly schedule, please feel free to call. Please join us for worship or for any programming for your children or family. We would love to support you in your faith journey.

## LAMB SCHOOL IS A GANG FREE ZONE

According to Texas Penal Code 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 a harsher penalty.

## CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Lamb School staff are **REQUIRED** by Texas State Law and licensing requirements to report any instance when there is reason to suspect the occurrence of physical, sexual, or emotional child abuse, child neglect, or exploitation. Our staff receives annual training on recognizing and preventing abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse. The preschool has made a commitment to help increase awareness and prevention techniques to employees and families. Lamb School will also coordinate with community organizations on strategies to prevent abuse and neglect.

Required Staff Training: Lamb School Staff are trained annually in prevention, recognition and reporting of Child Maltreatment.

Lamb School Staff is also required to report to parents any

### **Methods for increasing awareness and warning signs of abuse and neglect:**

There are four major types of child maltreatment: physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse.

**Physical Abuse** is physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child. The physical injury (ranging from minor bruises to severe fractures or death) can result from punching, beating, shaking, kicking, biting, throwing, stabbing, hitting, burning, choking, or otherwise harming a child. Such injury is considered abuse regardless of whether the caretaker intended to hurt the child.

**Suspect Physical Abuse When You See:**

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

**Neglect** is failure to provide for a child's basic needs necessary to sustain the life or health of the child, excluding failure caused primarily by financial inability unless relief services have been offered and refused.

**Suspect Neglect When You See:**

- Obvious malnourishment
- Lack of personal cleanliness
- Torn or dirty clothing
- Stealing or begging for food
- Child unattended for long periods of time
- Need for glasses, dental care, or other medical attention
- Frequent tardiness or absence from school

**Sexual Abuse** includes fondling a child's genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure, and exploitation through prostitution or producing pornographic materials.

**Suspect Sexual Abuse When You See:**

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

**Emotional Abuse** is mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in a child's growth, development, or psychological functioning. It includes extreme forms of punishment such as confining a child in a dark closet, habitual scapegoating, belittling, and rejecting treatment for a child.

**Suspect Emotional Abuse When You See:**

- Over compliance

- Low self-esteem
- Severe depression, anxiety, or aggression
- Difficulty making friends or doing things with other children
- Lagging in physical, emotional, and intellectual development
- Caregiver who belittles the child, withholds love, and seems unconcerned about the child's problems

### **Methods increasing awareness:**

Child abuse is a community issue. Every person can help make sure the children of Texas have a brighter future. And preventing child abuse is up to all of us. Child abuse prevention means stopping child abuse and neglect before it happens. The best strategies to prevent child abuse and neglect are to:

- Support families and provide parents with the skills and resources they need.
- Support providers who are serving families by providing tools and resources.
- Create communities that have supportive services in place and shared goal of safety and stability for families.

\*\*\*Taken from [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us)

### **Strategies for Coordination between the operation and community:**

Here are some things you can do:

- **Get to know your neighbors.** Problems seem less overwhelming when support is nearby.
- **Help a family under stress.** Offer to babysit, help with chores and errands, or suggest resources in the community that can help.
- **Reach out to children in your community.** A smile or a word of encouragement can mean a lot, whether it comes from a parent or a passing stranger.
- **Be an active community member.** Lend a hand at local schools, community or faith-based organizations, children's hospitals, social services agencies, or other places where families and children are supported.
- **Keep your neighborhood safe.** Start a Neighborhood Watch or plan a local "National Night Out" community event. You will get to know your neighbors while helping to keep your neighborhood and children safe.
- **Learn how to recognize and report signs of child abuse and neglect.** Reporting your concerns may protect a child and get help for a family who needs it.
- Taken from [www.welfare.gov](http://www.welfare.gov)

### **Resources and Actions:**

Child Abuse and Neglect [www.childwelfare.gov/can/index.cfm](http://www.childwelfare.gov/can/index.cfm)

Identifying Child Abuse and Neglect [www.childwelfare.gov/can/identifying/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/can/identifying/) Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect [www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/)

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect [www.childwelfare.gov/responding/reporting.cfm](http://www.childwelfare.gov/responding/reporting.cfm)

