

ST. LUKE

SLICC

INFANT CARE CENTER

PARENT HANDBOOK

St. Luke Infant Care Center
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Austin, Texas 78703
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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Saint Luke Infant Care Center (SLICC), an outreach ministry of St. Luke United Methodist Church.

This handbook is designed to inform parents of the Center's philosophy, policies, and practices. These policies and practices are intended to protect the health and safety of the children as well as ensure that the Center, which serves the community, can function efficiently.

Parents enrolled in the Center are responsible for the information contained in the handbook and should ask the Director to clarify any portion that is unclear. Policies may change and parents will be notified in writing of these policy changes, events, alerts, and news via e-mail, door postings, and/or notices in their child's mail folder. Parents are responsible for reading parent updates and staying aware of current policy information.

PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

St. Luke Infant Care Center has a long tradition of providing a safe, positive, and caring environment in which children can explore and learn through developmentally appropriate activities. Children have daily opportunities to participate in activities to promote growth in each area of development. Building children's self-esteem is an important part of our curriculum and involves the whole St. Luke community emphasizing respect and honor for children, teachers, and parents.

CURRICULUM STATEMENT

From the NAEYC Position Statement:

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) believes that a high quality early childhood program provides a safe and nurturing environment that promotes the physical, social, emotional and cognitive development of young children while responding to the needs of families. Although the quality of an early childhood program may be affected by many factors, a major determinant of program quality is the extent to which knowledge of child development is applied to program practices-the degree to which the program is developmentally appropriate. NAEYC believes that high quality, developmentally appropriate programs should be available to all children and their families.

The Center bases its curriculum on the position taken by NAEYC. The following information is based on the 1997 edition of *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs*.

Infants and Toddlers:

Infants and toddlers learn by experiencing the environment through their senses (seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and feeling). Non-mobile infants absorb and organize a great deal of information about the world around them. Adults carry non-mobile infants around the environment to show them interesting events and people. Mobile infants and toddlers increasingly use toys, language and other learning materials in their play. Adults play a vital socialization role with infants and toddlers. Warm, positive relationships with adults help infants and toddlers develop a sense of

trust in the world and a feeling of competence. These interactions are critical for the development of the children's healthy self-esteem. The trusted adult becomes the secure base from which the mobile infant or toddler explores the environment.

Important independence skills are being acquired during these years, including personal care such as feeding and dressing. The most appropriate teaching technique for this age group is to give ample opportunities for the children to use self-initiated repetition to practice newly acquired skills and to experience feelings of autonomy and success.

Two-year-olds are learning to produce language rapidly. They need simple books, puzzles, pictures, music and the opportunity to practice their blossoming language skills. They also require the time and space for active play such as jumping, running, and dancing. Toddlers are acquiring social skills, but in a group setting there should be several of the same toy because egocentric toddlers are not yet able to understand the concept of sharing.

ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

St. Luke Infant Care Center, an outreach ministry of St. Luke United Methodist Church (St. Luke UMC), was established in August 1981 to provide high-quality child care at a reasonable cost for infants and toddlers of University of Texas student families. No longer exclusively serving UT student families, any student family receives priority status on the waiting list. Returning families and St. Luke UMC families are also given priority status. The program is currently self-supporting but initially received grants from the Wesley Foundation. The Wesley Foundation of Austin is the United Methodist Church on the UT campus and provides funding to local churches for student ministries.

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) which sets the standards, under which the Center operates, licenses the Center. Those standards are available for review by staff, parents and others upon request, as are the most recent inspections. The Center operates under the guidance of the St. Luke UMC Administrative Board. This committee employs the Director who manages the Center and hires and supervises the staff. The St. Luke Infant Care Center Advisory Board, which meets monthly, is composed of two representatives from St. Luke UMC, the Director, two parent representatives from each classroom and two staff representatives.

Schedule of Operation

The Center operates on a three-semester schedule of September-December, January-May, and June-August. The Center is closed approximately two weeks for winter break and one week for spring break. Holidays that the Center is closed include Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the day after. The Center's daily hours are 7:30 AM – 5:30 PM. The Center also closes twice a year for Curriculum days – one in the fall semester on Columbus Day and one in the spring semester on MLK Day. If the Austin Independent School District is closed due to bad weather, the Center is also closed.

Enrollment

A file is maintained at the Center for each child. On the first day the child attends the Center, the file must contain these forms:

1. Enrollment information (DFPS regulation)
2. Health Statement & Current Immunization Record (DFPS regulation)
3. Child's Routine (Concerning Your Child)
4. Receipt for Parent's Guide to Childcare (DFPS regulation)
5. Discipline & Guidance Form (DFPS regulation)

This file must be updated by the parents on an ongoing basis to ensure that contact information and immunizations are current. When your child receives immunizations, request an immunization record that is stamped and signed by the physician specifying type, number of doses and dates given. Submit this record to the office after each set of immunizations.

Enrollment is determined each semester. Once a child is enrolled that child remains enrolled until the end of the semester of their 2nd birthday. Vacancies will be determined after considering classroom placement of all currently enrolled children. Vacancies will be filled from the waiting list giving priority to siblings of children who are currently or were previously enrolled and St. Luke United Methodist Church members. Non-priority families will be enrolled after all current priority families have been contacted.

An enrollment application and a \$25 nonrefundable fee are required for a child's name to be placed on the waiting list. When a vacancy occurs, the Director reviews the waiting list and an applicant is contacted. The contacted family must make a decision within one week and a \$75 nonrefundable registration fee is paid to reserve the space as well as a \$200 tuition deposit. This deposit is credited to your child's last month of attendance at the Center when 30 days written notice of withdrawal is given. New families will attend an orientation. Refunds for part month attendance at the end of your child's enrollment are not possible. During the orientation, the Director will more fully review the policies and procedures of the Center.

The Center reserves the right to assign children to classrooms according to the needs of the individual child and in consideration of the Center as a whole.

Release of Children

Children will only be released to parents, or legal guardians. Children will be released to others with written permission from parents or legal guardians and identification will be checked. If we do not have written permission to release a child, we will call parents or guardians to receive phone permission. If phone permission is not granted, we will not release the child. Children must be released to parents or legal guardians unless there is legal documentation in the child's file to the contrary.

Daily Routines

Parents or guardians must sign the child in and out daily (time-in/out and initial). This form is kept at the entrance of each classroom.

A Daily Log is maintained in each classroom. Each day parents will record under PARENT

COMMENT:

- Time of last meal, bottle, diaper, sleep
- General mood so far
- Any “out of the ordinary” happenings since we last saw your child.

Recording this information is required. This is the parent’s method of “checking in” and is also essential to the teachers as they plan for your child’s day.

Your child will be assigned a cubby or basket in which you can place her belongings. Everything must be labeled with her first name and last initial. Check the cubby EVERY DAY for soiled clothes and/or communications from the Center.

Call in if your child will not be at the Center. Please let us know if your child is ill, this will help us determine if there is a pattern of illness at the Center and post a health alert for other parents.

Special Needs Policy

St. Luke serves children with special needs provided parents, staff and appropriate special needs professionals agree it is in the best interest of the child. St. Luke prefers that special needs professionals work with staff for a time to provide support in the Center setting.

Termination of Enrollment

The Director reserves the right to terminate a family’s enrollment at her discretion if she believes the parent or parents are not cooperating with the policies and philosophy of the Center.

Tuition and Fees

Tuition is due on the first day of each month. Alternative payment arrangements can be made with the Director. Be sure to check with the Director for current tuition rates and enrollment policies.

The Center offers two co-oping options for parents. Parents who participate in the first level of this program work as the assistant in a classroom in order to receive a rebate on the following month’s tuition. The current rebate is \$40 off for each 4.5-hour shift worked. Co-oping parents are required to participate in 8 hours of training before they can co-op as well as have a name based and finger print background check done according to DFPS policy. Parents who participate in the second level will work as an extra helper in the classroom and will not count in the ratio. The current rebate for the second level of co-oping is \$20 off for each 4.5-hour shift worked. Co-oping parents at this level are required to participate in a 2 hour orientation as well as have a name based state background check. Co-oping opportunities are based on the need of the center as well as the availability of the parent.

Parents should arrive at closing time early enough to be out of the Center at 5:30 PM. If parents are late, they pay directly the staff person who has stayed late with their child at a rate of \$1.00 per minute. This policy applies to families leaving at 12:30 as well.

In order to maintain a budget based on a certain number of children enrolled, refunds cannot be given for sickness, vacation or other absences.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

OUTDOOR POLICY: NAEYC states that it is important for children to play outside daily. The toddlers will go outside at least twice daily, in the morning and the afternoon. The amount of time spent outside will be adjusted according to the weather. Parents are required to dress their child appropriately for the weather.

WATER PLAY POLICY: The Center provides opportunity for water play when the weather is warm enough. Written permission is required from parents to allow a child to participate. Infant water play takes place in high chairs on the front porch with trays of water for splashing and implements for pouring. Toddler water play takes place on the playground with sensory tables filled with water, child-sized buckets and pitchers for pouring and carrying water and with the sprinklers. **NO WADING POOLS ARE USED AT ANY TIME.** Toddler parents are required to provide appropriate shoes, waterproof diaper covers, towels, sunscreen and insect repellent, ear plugs if necessary and any other items their child may need to participate. These water play activities usually take place two or three times a week.

HEALTH POLICY: The health policy is based on Department of Family and Protective Services Minimum Standards, information from pediatricians and guidelines from the Center for Disease Control. It is written with the best interest of each child in mind, as well as the needs and well being of all the children in the Center. Remember that the staff are not physicians and are legally prohibited from making diagnoses. They may only report symptoms and cannot take it upon themselves to be flexible with these policies and regulations.

Your child will be excluded from attendance if:

1. His temperature registers 100.4 (99.4 under the arm) or above.
2. His temperature is 99.0 - 99.4 with any of the symptoms listed below.
3. She has any of the symptoms marked with an "*" regardless of fever.
 - *a. Diarrhea – two or more loose, watery bowel movements within one hour's time
 - b. Sore and reddened throat. Listen for a raspy cry
 - *c. Reddened eyes with discharge or crusted eyelids - possibly Pink Eye
 - d. Ear ache. Watch for rubbing or pulling at ear
 - e. Stomach ache. Doubled-over, very restless
 - *f. Nausea and/or vomiting
 - g. Listless and no appetite
 - h. Rash. May be blister-like as in coxsackie virus, or facial, abdominal or total body and may be small pinpoint, or large blotchy
 - i. Coughing, sneezing and runny nose
 - j. Swelling and pain along jaw line and in front of ears. May be mumps
4. Other problems that would require a child to stay at home so treatment may be started are:
 - a. Lice. Either head or body.

- b. Scabies. A mite living under the skin surface appearing as small red dots, usually between the fingers, causing intense itching.
- c. Ringworm. A fungus of the scalp or body causing a characteristic “ring” shape of reddened scaly skin.
- d. Pin Worms. An intestinal worm, which deposits eggs visible to the eye on the perineum or in the feces and causes rectal itching.
- e. Impetigo. Single or clusters of small blisters that will break, drain, and become crusted.

Even when these conditions are not clearly apparent, you can sense when your child is ill. Our Center is not licensed to care for sick children. If your child is so uncomfortable that she is occupying one staff member’s attention most of the time, the other staff member has responsibility for all of the other children. In consideration of the other children, your child should not be at the Center. In consideration of your child, whose weakened condition makes her susceptible to any germs present, she should be in a more restful environment.

The teacher has the responsibility of determining whether a child should remain at the Center. She may consult with the Director. The teacher/director will notify parents if a child exhibits symptoms that may be contagious. Once the decision is made, it is NOT negotiable. Please feel free to talk with the Director at a later time so that the guidelines under which we operate can be clarified. When the teacher determines that a child should leave the center, the parent will be contacted and asked to pick up the child within an hour. The child will be isolated from the other children until picked up. We ask that you make prior arrangements with someone to pick up your child when she is too ill to be at the Center and the parent cannot be reached. That name and telephone number is required on the Enrollment Information Form and should be someone that is in town.

Remember that the more common childhood diseases can be less prevalent if proper hygiene is practiced. Your child should be bathed regularly have hands washed regularly and parents should always wash their hands after diapering and before handling the child’s food and drink.

Parents have asked that teachers call them at work to inform them of conditions, even if the child is not ill enough to be sent home. These calls also help the teachers decide how to handle a situation. This is why complete information under PARENT COMMENTS on the daily log is so important.

Exclusion Criteria

The child should be symptom free for 24 hours, without symptom masking medication (such as Tylenol) before they return to the Center.

Emergencies at the Center

If an accident is minor, the staff will administer first aid and complete an accident report for the parent to sign at pick up time. If the injury is more than a small bump, the parent will be informed by phone.

In case of a serious accident, the staff will:

1. Determine the extent of the injury and administer first aid
2. If the injury needs medical attention but is not life threatening, contact the parents and the child’s

doctor to inform and receive instructions

3. If the injury is **LIFE THREATENING:**

- Call EMS/911
- Give location and name of the Center:
1611 West 14th Street
St. Luke Infant Care Center
- Station someone outside to direct EMS
- Call parents and child's doctor
- Go with the child in the ambulance
- Take the child's file – Permission for Emergency Medical Attention

In case of critical illness while your child is at the Center, your child's physician will be contacted for instructions. If the physician cannot be reached, EMS will take your child to the emergency room at Brackenridge Hospital. Parents will be contacted immediately. The Center carries accident insurance, which covers children, staff and parents on the premises including EMS services.

Medication

Staff may not administer medication without daily written permission from the parent. Each day, this written permission must include the name of the medication, the time(s) it is to be given and the amount to be given on the medication form in the sign-in book. Medication may not be administered *as needed*; a specific time must be indicated by the parent on the medication form. Medications must be in the original bottle (DFPS licensing requirement). Over-the-counter medication **MUST** be labeled with the child's name and **MUST** have written dosage permission with a doctor's signature. Staff will only administer medication according to written dosage information from a doctor. **Staff cannot administer medicine that arrives in a child's bottle or in anything other than the original container.**___

Medicine to be refrigerated (such as antibiotics in liquid form) is stored in the refrigerator in a box labeled MEDICINE and separate from food. Other medication is stored in a plastic box labeled MEDICINE on a shelf away from the children. Expired medication will be thrown away.

Parents are requested to ask their doctor if medication can be scheduled so that dosages can be given at home. The Center will only administer prescription medication if it is needed more than two times a day. **The Center will not accept primary responsibility for administering medicine.**

Immunizations

Children must receive all required immunizations prior to admission, unless exempted by an affidavit from the Texas Dept. of State Health Services completed by a medical professional. This affidavit must be renewed every year your child is in care. Health records signed by your physician should be on file by the end of the child's first week at the Center. Please consult your physician for a current schedule of required immunizations, and please inform your physician that your child is in a group environment.

Parents are responsible for keeping their child's record updated by providing the Director

written proof as immunization progress. When possible, schedule your doctor visits for immunizations late enough in the afternoon so that your child does not return to the Center that day. Many children will be very uncomfortable from the shots and some will develop a fever. They need your comfort at this time.

Cleanliness

A rigorous routine for cleanliness is maintained to minimize the spread of germs.

- Toys in all classrooms will be disinfected at least once per day using the 4-step sanitizing process
- High chairs and tables will be disinfected before each use
- Staff will wear latex gloves for every diaper change
- Disposable surface cover will be used for each diaper change
- The changing pad will be disinfected using the 4-step sanitizing process after each diaper change
- Used diapers will be disposed of in covered trash cans which are emptied twice daily
- Children and staff will wash their hands after each diaper change
- Children and staff will wash their hands prior to eating
- Staff will wash their hands and wear gloves when preparing and serving meals
- Individual moist paper towels will be used to wipe infant's hands before and after eating
- Dishes will be washed and disinfected after meals
- Floors will be swept and mopped daily
- A custodial service will thoroughly clean the center each weekend

MEALS AND NUTRITION

INFANTS: Parents will provide all formula or breast milk and/or prepared food according to the nutritional needs of their child. Hot water is available in the infant rooms to heat bottles. A microwave is also available in the infant room to heat food. **In accordance with DFPS policies the parent is responsible for maintaining a feeding and sleeping instruction schedule provided by the Center. It must be updated every 30 days until the child is eating table food.**

TODDLERS: The Center will provide morning and afternoon snack for all children eating table food as well as whole milk for morning snack and lunch. Parents are responsible for providing a healthy and well-balanced lunch as well as a milk substitute if a milk intolerance exists. Children who are in care for 7 or more hours each day must receive ½ of their daily nutritional requirements at school. Please consult the following chart in order to ensure your child is receiving the appropriate nutrition each day.

State Nutritional Requirement for children in care 7+ hrs daily	Provided by the Center through AM & PM snack	Provided by the Parent through provided lunch
2 servings of dairy	2+ servings	As desired
1.5 servings meat/meat alt.	0 servings	1.5 servings

2+ servings fruit/vegetables	1+ servings	1+ servings
2+ servings grains	1+ servings	1+ servings

A copy of the DFPS Minimum Standards is available in the Director's office for reference (or online at http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/child_care), which includes more information about daily nutritional requirements. The Center provides snack according to a four-week rotating menu. Parents will receive a copy of this menu at enrollment and when changes are made. The monthly calendar distributed by the Center will inform parents which week of the menu will be used. Any substitutions to this menu will be of comparable nutritional value and record of this substitution will remain available in the office for 3 months.

GUIDANCE

Goal of Guidance

The goal of guidance is to help the child in his growth toward self-discipline, while nurturing a healthy self-concept.

Attitudes

Adults need to have a sincere interest in children, a sympathetic understanding of their problems, honest enjoyment of their companionship and respect for them as human beings.

Adults' Role in Guidance

When working with young children and guiding their behavior it is important to keep it simple. The following example can be adjusted to use in most situations.

1. State what happened. "You bit your friend."
2. State what is acceptable. "You can bite the teether."
3. State what is unacceptable. "You cannot bite your friend, biting hurts."
4. State a solution. "You can help me hold some ice on your friend's arm."
5. Be firm but friendly when talking with the child who has bitten another child.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Visiting

Parents of currently enrolled children are welcome to visit the Center at anytime during their child's day without making prior arrangements. We ask that parents consider the classroom routine when choosing a visitation time. We think it is also important that the child's attitude toward his/her parent's coming and going throughout the day be considered.

Advisory Board

The Advisory Board (AB) is composed of two parent representatives from each room, two representatives from the St. Luke UMC and two staff representatives who meet monthly with the Director. Parent representatives provide the parent's perspectives and accept responsibilities for being in contact with the other families to solicit ideas, concerns and recommendations and/or relay to the Director specific individual concerns. Previous ABs have assisted in writing grant proposals, studied the feasibility of expansion and discussed issues ranging from the Health Policy to the logistics of toddler snacks. Every family is encouraged to consider serving on the AB. Parent representatives volunteer to serve. The Board serves in an advisory capacity only and it does not set policies.

Parent Get-Togethers

Picnics, fundraisers and other gatherings are planned to provide an opportunity for families to come together to socialize and sometimes focus on a topic of interest to all.

Clean/Repair Work Days

Each semester a workday is planned to thoroughly clean the children's classrooms and to complete major projects. Every family participates in some way. A list of projects is posted and if a family cannot be present on the workday, they can choose a project that can be completed before or after the workday or at home. If this is not an option they are asked to make a donation of \$50 to cover the cost of not being able to participate.

Parent Lending Library

In the Center there is an article file and library of books, pamphlets and magazines. These are available for checkout, please see the Director.

Conferences

Parents are encouraged to communicate with the staff on a daily basis. At any time that you feel a conference with the teachers and/or Director is needed a meeting can be arranged by making a request to the Director.

Complaint Procedures

Parents can set up a meeting with the Director at any time to discuss concerns, complaints, policies and procedures. They can also address their concerns with the Advisory Board.

Contacting Child Care Licensing

The Center is regulated by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Child Care Licensing. Parents may contact the local licensing office at any time by visiting www.dfps.state.tx.us.

To report the abuse or neglect of any child please contact the child abuse hotline at 1-800-252-5400 or 911 if the situation is an emergency. Reports can also be made through www.txabusehotline.org though it may take up to 24 hours to process reports of abuse and neglect made through the Internet.