

MOODY
EARLY CHILDHOOD
CENTER
PARENT HANDBOOK

2018-2019



Table of Contents

- Mission/Program Philosophy 4
 - Mission statement 4
- Handbook 4
- Accreditations 4
- Administration and staffing 4
 - Executive Director 4
 - Staff hiring 5
 - Teacher-student ratios 5
- Curriculum 5
 - Infant 5
 - Toddler 5
 - Afterschool Program 6
- Classroom Goals 6
 - Infant 6
 - Toddler 6
 - PreK3 7
 - Observations and Assignments 8
- Logistical information 8
 - Hours of operation 8
 - Tuition 8
 - Late payment fee 9
 - Scholarships 9
 - Childcare Subsidies 9
 - Why timely pick-up matters 9
 - Late pick up fees 10
 - Holding fee 10
 - Additional expenses 10
 - School closures 10
 - Calendar 10
 - Withdrawal policy 10
- Enrollment and admission 11
 - Enrollment requirements 11
 - Forms 11
- For enrolled families 11

| | |
|---|----|
| Why attendance matters | 11 |
| Attendance | 11 |
| Communication..... | 12 |
| Court Orders..... | 12 |
| Labeling | 12 |
| Accidents | 12 |
| Breastfeeding | 12 |
| Your child’s first day | 13 |
| Adjustment to Moody Early Childhood Center | 13 |
| Saying goodbye..... | 13 |
| Parent participation | 14 |
| Open door policy..... | 14 |
| How to get involved..... | 14 |
| Communication..... | 14 |
| Parent Code of Conduct | 15 |
| Swearing/Cursing..... | 15 |
| Smoking | 15 |
| Interactions..... | 15 |
| Daily schedule..... | 15 |
| Arrival/Drop off procedure | 16 |
| Pick-up/check-out procedure | 16 |
| Napping/Rest time | 16 |
| Food | 17 |
| Mealtime philosophy | 17 |
| Allergies..... | 18 |
| Setting limits | 18 |
| Behavior policy | 18 |
| Discipline and Guidance | 18 |
| Celebrations | 19 |
| Birthdays and holidays..... | 19 |
| Staying healthy..... | 19 |
| Sick child policy | 19 |
| Illness at school..... | 20 |
| Medication policy | 20 |
| Immunizations and hearing/vision screenings | 21 |

| | |
|--|----|
| HIV/AIDS and blood-borne pathogens awareness | 21 |
| Tuberculosis policy | 22 |
| Additional policies | 22 |
| Field trips, water activities, and transportation | 22 |
| Child abuse reporting | 22 |
| Anti-harassment | 22 |
| Nondiscrimination policy..... | 22 |
| Grievance and licensure check policy and procedure | 22 |
| Gang-free zone..... | 23 |
| Emergency preparedness plan..... | 23 |
| Confidentiality | 23 |

Mission/Program Philosophy

Mission statement

Moody Early Childhood Center (MECC) is a fun, safe, creative learning center for Galveston children from newborn through age 3. We want to give every child a strong foundation to do his or her best in school and in life. We provide a fully integrated learning environment that allows every Galveston child the opportunity to soar!

At the Moody Center we will:

- Be a fun, safe, creative learning center for Galveston children from newborn through age 3
- Prepare children academically, emotionally and socially for kindergarten
- Have a highly qualified staff experienced in, and committed to, the very best early childhood education
- Welcome families and community partners into the life of the center
- Give every child a strong foundation to do his or her best in school and in life

Handbook

Welcome to Moody Early Childhood Center (MECC). Thank you for selecting MECC as your child's Early Childhood Center. We have created this "Parent Handbook" to introduce you to the Philosophy and Culture of our school. Most of the answers to your questions can be found in the handbook. If your question isn't answered in the handbook, don't hesitate to call a Moody Early Childhood Center Family Advocate. Our handbook is reviewed yearly by the Moody Early Childhood Center Board of Directors and any changes made to our policy will be shared with parents immediately. Our policies and procedures are in accordance with the minimum standards posted by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Texas Rising Star, and NAEYC. You can access a copy of the minimum standards by contacting Department of Family and Protective Services Child Care Licensing Department at 512.834.3195 or at their website: www.dfps.state.tx.us.

Accreditations

Moody Early Childhood Center is licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and is working toward additional state and national accreditation. We strive to ensure that our program meets and/or exceeds all requirements.

Administration and staffing

Executive Director

Karin Miller, Executive Director/Executive Director for Moody Early Childhood Center, is an education veteran with years of classroom and administrative experience.

Inspired by her own kindergarten teacher, Ms. Miller began her career as a pre-school and kindergarten teacher. After years in the classroom she moved into program management.

She was an early childhood specialist and federal programs coordinator for Brazosport Independent School District. There she managed district coordinators for all federal programs and established curriculum and staff development for early childhood, pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and adult education programs.

Karin has extensive experience in school administration, policies and procedures through her years as assistant superintendents for special programs at Cleveland Independent School District and support services at Texas City ISD.

Karin holds a Master of Science degree in educational management from the University of Houston Clear Lake and a Bachelor of Science degree in curriculum and instruction from Texas A&M University. She has continued her education with several special training programs, certifications and professional affiliations.

Staff hiring

When hiring teachers and administrators for our programs, we value diverse education and life experiences. We look for staff members who have a passion for working with young children and their families. All staff meet or exceed the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services requirements. The foundation of our teaching team is built upon staff members who:

- Are knowledgeable about developmentally appropriate practices for early childhood learners.
- Are prepared to share their life experiences, talents and interests.
- Enjoy the outdoors and have a personal connection to the natural world.
- Professional, creative and passionate individuals experienced in fostering the whole child and developing a child-driven curriculum.

Teacher-student ratios

We believe in the importance of maintaining high standards regarding staff to student ratios. We also believe that the process of developing meaningful relationships with children is best achieved in small groups. Therefore, we maintain a staff ratio as follows:

- 0-11 months 1 adult : 4 children
- 12-17 months 1 adult : 5 children
- 18-23 months 1 adult : 6 children
- 24-35 months 1 adult : 6 children
- 3 years+ 1 adult : 10 children

Curriculum

At Moody Early Childhood Center, we are deliberate in choosing activities and educational settings that give all our children the opportunity to soar. We have chosen Frog Street Curriculum ® for every age group.

Infant

Designed around the latest scientific early brain development research, Frog Street Infant curriculum is designed to build strong foundations for little ones ages 0-18 months. This child-centered program includes activities that:

- Equip caregivers to nurture the little ones in their care.
- Optimize key windows of opportunity for growth and development.
- Are designed with intention and purpose and organized around developmental learning domains.
- Feature Dr. Becky Bailey's Conscious Discipline® strategies to enhance social and emotional development.

Toddler

Our Toddler program is designed around the latest scientific early brain development research. This program focuses on enhancing the simple joy of childhood. Caregivers help children build self-

confidence and foster curiosity through exploration. Our teachers provide a warm nurturing environment, safe for each child to discover the world around them.

Frog Street Toddler, created by Dr. Pam Schiller, incorporates Dr. Becky Bailey's Conscious Discipline® and includes activity choices specifically created for children ages 18-36 months. Activity choices:

- Are organized around five developmental domains.
- Offer differentiated instruction options to meet the needs of all learners.
- Can be infused into daily routines, such as diaper changing, transitions, and outdoor play.
- Are designed with intention and purpose to move children forward in their development.

Afterschool Program

MECC offers a program that is engaging for both our teachers and the children participating in the extended day program. We integrate extension activities from the Frog Street curriculum, which is a comprehensive, research-based program that integrates instruction across developmental domains and early learning disciplines, with targeted STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) activities to encourage creativity and hands-on learning.

The cornerstones of the program:

- Extensive integration of theme, disciplines, and domains
- Social and Emotional development including Dr. Becky Bailey's Conscious Discipline ®
- Differentiated instruction
- Joyful approach to learning

Classroom Goals

Moody Early Childhood Center has classroom goals to ensure quality care for the children. Striving to meet the goals that we set is important to us. Each age group will build upon the previous goals.

Infant

- To ensure the safety of all of our children during all routines and activities and to be alert and attentive at all times. We constantly make certain that all play areas are safe, secure and we provide a healthy environment.
- To provide an attractive environment for the children with age-appropriate activities that stimulates the use of the five senses.
- Provide physical activities that support large and small muscle development while supporting social and emotional growth through positive guidance and interactions.

Toddler

Moody Early Childhood Center has designed an environment to meet the overall needs of toddlers enrolled in our program. With the use of age-appropriate activities and interactions, the following goals should be met before the child enters PreK3.

- Shows pride in new accomplishments.
- Feels safe away from parents

- Demonstrates initiative and independence.
- Can influence others.
- Helps clean-up.
- Displays an interest in communication.
- Can sit well in a chair
- Uses a crayon and/or paintbrush
- Attempts self-care, such as putting on own clothing and washing hands

PreK3

The PreK3 learning environment at Moody Early Childhood Center is designed to develop children using age-appropriate experiences. Because each child has his or her own individual needs, expectations may vary; each child is challenged but not hurried. Ideally, the following goals help to establish a baseline of goals that should be met by the time a child enters kindergarten.

- Will try new activities
- Has self-confidence
- Desire to learn
- Listens attentively
- Demonstrates self-control
- Focuses on tasks
- Tries to problem solve independently
- Participates in clean-up
- Takes care of own toileting needs
- Stands up for own rights
- Resolves conflicts peacefully
- Courteous and polite
- Has age-appropriate vocabulary
- Recites jingles and rhymes
- Displays good balance
- Builds with blocks
- Throws/catches ball
- Demonstrates knowledge of colors, letters, shapes, numbers
- Recognizes own name (written)
- Knows birthday, telephone number, street address
- Knows age

Observations and Assignments

Per TDFPS, children are assigned to classrooms by age. When it is time for your child to move to the next classroom, Moody Early Childhood Center will notify you and develop a transition plan for the child. Teachers will discuss the decision to move your child's classroom prior to any transition. In all instances, when a child transfers to another educational setting we will work to ensure a smooth transition.

We value your child's experiences. When your child starts at Moody Early Childhood Center, observations will occur throughout their time here. This will help us provide the best care academically and socially for your child.

Logistical information

Hours of operation

The Moody Early Childhood Center is open from 7:00am until 6:30pm, Monday through Friday, year-round except for observed holidays and professional development days.

Infant and Toddlers will enter from the Avenue L entrance and may arrive at 7:00. Academics begin at 9:00 a.m. No student will be allowed to enter after 9:00 a.m. without a doctor's note.

PreK3 students will enter through Avenue K and may arrive as early as 7:00 a.m. Breakfast will be served from 7:00-7:20 a.m. in the cafeteria. Students arriving after 7:20 will not be served breakfast, and all food must be finished or disposed of by 7:30. Breakfast is not permitted in the classrooms. After 7:30 a.m., parents must enter through the doors on the corner of 21st Street and K to get a tardy slip before the student may go to their classrooms. Classes begin promptly at 7:30 a.m. and are released at 3:30 p.m.

Children participating in the MECC extended day program remain on campus after 3:30 p.m. and can stay until MECC closes at 6:30 p.m. Parents picking up extended day students must enter through the Ave L entrance.

Tuition

Tuition is based on a 12-month calendar. Parents are encouraged to pay the full tuition prior to the first day of school but may choose to pay in monthly or weekly installments. Monthly payments will be due by the first day of the month for the following month. Weekly payments are due Monday morning of each week. Parents have the convenience of using our 'Pay Online' option using the link included found in your electronic invoice. Tuition is based on enrollment **not** attendance.

- Illness: Refunds or credits will not be issued for illnesses
- Vacations: (For students in the Infant & Toddler program only), refunds or credits will not be issued for vacations that are less than 2 weeks in duration. For vacations for 2 weeks or more...
 - Parent/guardian must give a note to the Executive Director or Deputy Executive Director at least 2 weeks prior to a vacation
 - Tuition may be reduced to half price for the time the child is on vacation.
- Holidays: Refunds or credits will not be given for holiday closings
- Inclement weather closings: Refunds or credits will not be given for inclement weather closings

Moody Early Childhood Center accepts credit or debit cards, money orders, and cashier's checks. We no longer can take cash under any circumstance.

Non-payment of tuition is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program. Timely payments are essential for continued enrollment at Moody Early Childhood Center; however, if you anticipate difficulty with paying on time, please discuss the matter with the Business Office or your Family Advocate immediately. If alternative arrangements for payment are approved, you will be notified by the Business Office.

Late payment fee

Weekly Tuition: Payments are due by the close of the business day on Monday. Payments not received by the close of day will incur a late fee of \$20 that will be added to the tuition payment. An additional \$20 will be added each additional week the outstanding balance is not paid in full.

Monthly Tuition: Payments are due by closing on the first business day of each month. Payments not received by the close of day will incur a late fee of \$20 that will be added to the tuition payment. An additional \$20 will be added each additional week the outstanding balance is not paid in full.

Repeated late payments may be grounds for withdrawal. Parents who are more than 1 week late on payment will be counseled on their options. Students will not be able to return if they are 2 weeks behind, will be withdrawn from the program, and we will begin to fill their spot with another family (see withdrawal procedure below).

Scholarships

Moody Early Childhood Center offers Scholarships to qualified families when funds are available. The prospective family will need to fully complete an application including documentation they have applied to WorkSource, their class schedule, and/or one month of recent income statements. A tuition amount will be set if funds are available.

Scholarship Eligibility Requirements:

Each month, the Moody Early Childhood Center Scholarship Committee will meet to review the family's economic status, attendance, child(ren) growth and development, as well as WorkSource documentation, parent's meeting dates with their Family Advocate, and Family Engagement activities. During the scholarship review process, tuition may incur an increase, decrease, or stabilize.

Childcare Subsidies

Moody Early Childhood Center accepts child care subsidies. Families that receive subsidies must have the TWC Case Manager call the Business Office to authorize care before the child(ren) can start care. Families that receive subsidies must also meet with a Moody Early Childhood Center Family Advocate before the child(ren) may start care. If a Co-Pay is authorized by TWC, parents are required to fulfill their obligation with TWC and pay their co-pay by Monday the beginning of the week or we will have to report non-payments to TWC. Parents of a subsidized child(ren) must complete all required paperwork on time to continue enrollment at Moody Early Childhood Center. In the event a family is ineligible to pay the co-pay designated by TWC, parents must contact TWC to report their ineligibility to pay.

Why timely pick-up matters

Transitions are particularly difficult for children during early childhood. Arriving on time helps to ensure that your child will be able to transition in and out of the classroom with ease and reinforces the successes of the day. Please be considerate and pick your child up in a timely manner. If you would like to stay and chat with other parents after the school day is over, please do so outside of the classroom space. This helps us ensure that all the students still waiting to be picked up are safe and accounted for. If you would like to speak with your child's teacher, please make an appointment.

Late pick up fees

PreK3: Classes end at 3:30 p.m. and it is imperative that students are picked up in a timely manner. Families more than 15 minutes late must pick up the student in the office. If children are late more than 2 times, parents will be counseled. Further late pickup may result in children being withdrawn from the program.

Infant, Toddler and Extended Day: Parents picking up children after 6:30pm are considered late. Families will be charged late fees, \$2.00 for every minute, after closing time. Any expenses accrued will be added on and collected with the following tuition payment.

Holding fee

Infant & Toddler: Moody Early Childhood Center provides a “future date of enrollment” option for families. A fee of \$75 will be required to hold a slot for your child to attend. Spots can be held for up to two (2) months. Priority will be given to siblings of children currently enrolled in Moody Early Childhood Center. When all spaces are full, children are placed on the waiting list. As spaces come available, and there are no presently enrolled children ready to move up, the next child on the waiting list (based on the date of application) who fits enrollment criteria will be notified. At that time parents can either accept the open slot by paying the full tuition or decline the slot in which case the spot will go to the next child of the appropriate age on the waiting list. Due to these factors and the number of names on the waiting list, the MECC cannot guarantee or predict a start-date at the time of application.

To be placed on the waiting list. A registration form must be completed and submitted to the Child Care Center Office. A \$75.00 **non-refundable** holding fee is required. When the child is accepted for enrollment, the \$75.00 registration fee will be applied to the first week’s tuition.

Additional expenses

All parents should anticipate occasional, small expenses throughout the year; these may include, but are not limited to field trips, photos, and special projects.

School closures

As much as possible, Moody Early Childhood Center will follow the Galveston Independent School District for inclement weather closings. However, as your children’s safety and learning experience is paramount to us, on occasion inclement weather may cause the limitation or cancellation of school hours independent of the public-school system. In case of closure, we will always do our best to notify you as far in advance as possible. Delays and cancellations will be posted via a bulletin to Tadpoles and sent to parents by email. If the school should need to close early due to weather you will be notified by phone.

Calendar

School closures and holidays are provided in a calendar to families, in the appendix of this handbook, are posted on the website at www.MoodyChildhoodCenter.org, and included in Tadpoles.

Withdrawal policy

If you choose to withdraw your child from Moody Early Childhood Center, you must fill out a 30-Day Notice of Withdrawal form (available upon request). This form must be signed by the Executive Director and submitted at least 30 days in advance of your child’s intended date of withdrawal. You will pay for your child’s final month. If you paid the full tuition up front you will be reimbursed the remaining months minus a 10% processing fee and the last month’s tuition.

Enrollment and admission

Enrollment requirements

Children are admitted to Moody Early Childhood Center regardless of sex, race, color, religion, political affiliation, national origin, or opinions. Parent must participate in an intake session with facility director and complete all admission forms before child may begin attending MECC. Enrollees must meet immunization and health requirements set by minimum standards.

In order to enroll in the **Infant and Toddler** program at MECC, your child must:

- Be at least six weeks old and does not turn 3 years old before September 1st
- Be current on all immunizations
- Must submit all required documentation and complete the appropriate paperwork

In order to enroll in the **PreK3** program at MECC, your child must:

- Be 3 years old on or before September 1st
- Be current on all immunizations
- Must submit all required documentation and complete the appropriate paperwork

If your child is older than 3, our Family Advocates can help find the appropriate program for your child.

Forms

Parents are asked to submit and regularly update all forms provided to them in the welcome packet.

For enrolled families

Why attendance matters

As with arriving on time, attending consistently establishes an important routine for your child. Good attendance is a habit that children need to form. If they don't do so early, attendance suffers later. Plus, we want to maximize the fun learning experiences of every child. Interactive and instructional play time begins at 7:30 a.m. for our PreK3 students and at 9:00 a.m. every day for our Infants and Toddlers. To ensure all students have ample time to learn and explore during the day, we need the students to be here on time and ready to learn.

Attendance

Infant and Toddler: Regular attendance is an important element of your child's success here at the Moody Early Childhood Center. Academics begin at 9:00 a.m. and children must arrive before 9:00 a.m. to attend school. After 9:00 a.m., they must have a doctor's note to attend. Please speak with your child's teacher and the Executive Director if an extended absence is anticipated.

PreK3: Regular attendance is an important element of your child's success here at the Moody Early Childhood Center. Academics begin at 7:30 a.m., therefore, children arriving after 7:30 will be marked tardy and parents must pick up a tardy slip in the office before taking their child to class. Children arriving to class without a tardy slip will be sent back to the office.

After 5 absences, families will be required to meet with the Moody Early Childhood Center's Attendance Team to discuss an improvement plan to ensure consistent attendance. 10 missed days may result in your child being withdrawn from the school. Excessive tardies may also be cause for dismissal from our program.

Communication

We use Tadpoles, a safe and secure software to create daily reports and share information with parents by text and email. We can share daily reports, photos, videos, notes and reminders instantly to parents' emails throughout the day. We'll let our parents know what we're working on in school so that they can extend the education at home. We'll send emails out to our parents or notify all parents by text message of school closings or other urgent messages.

Read more about Tadpoles here. <http://www.tadpoles.com>

You can also download the Tadpoles Parent app for iPhone, iPad or Android

ANDROID LINK: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.tadpoles.parent&hl=en>

IPHONE AND IPAD LINK: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/tadpoles-parent/id428376881?mt=8>

Court Orders

In cases where the child is the subject of a Court Order (i.e.: Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protective Order) Moody Early Childhood Center must be provided with a Certified Copy of the most recent order and all amendments. All Court Orders on file with Moody Early Childhood Center will be strictly followed.

In the absence of a court order on file with Moody Early Childhood Center, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. Moody Early Childhood Center cannot, without a Court Order, limit the access of one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, and a conflict arises, Moody Early Childhood Center staff will contact the local police.

For the safety of the child, please provide Moody Early Childhood Center with all amended and updated Court Orders. Once presented with a Court Order, Moody Early Childhood Center is obligated to follow the order for the entire period it is in effect. Employees of Moody Early Childhood Center cannot, at the request of anyone, except the issuing judge, allow a Court Order to be violated. Moody Early Childhood Center will report any violations of these Orders to the court.

Labeling

Please label all clothing and other belongings with your child's name. Accidents happen and it's easy for clothes to get mixed up.

Accidents

Children at these ages are prone to occasionally have accidents. Please keep an extra change of clothes, including socks, underwear, and shoes in your child's bag or backpack every day.

If your child does have an accident we will send the soiled clothes home in a labeled plastic bag at the end of the day.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding moms are welcome at all times on campus! They are provided with a comfortable and padded rocker for their use. Every opportunity will be made to give our moms the level of privacy that she feels comfortable.

For moms having difficulty or challenges with breastfeeding, please talk with your Family Advocate for additional support and help.

Parents have the right to breastfeed or provide breast milk for their child while in care.

Your child's first day

Please bring the following to school on or before your child's first day:

- All required enrollment packet forms
- Backpack
- Extra set of clothing (including socks, underwear and shoes)
- **Infant and Toddlers:** bottles, milk/formula, and diapers if appropriate

Adjustment to Moody Early Childhood Center

Starting school is a big step for most kids. Some children are excited to participate, and they easily acclimate to class. Other children are nervous at first but quickly 'warm up' as they get engaged in activities. Still others may have a longer adjustment period as they gradually become comfortable with a new environment and expectations. Occasionally a child who is eager at first may have difficulty later upon realizing the change is a permanent one. There is no right way for a child to "adjust" to school. Our expectations are open-ended, and we understand your child will acclimate in their own unique way, and we will provide support and encouragement to help each child adapt to our program.

As a parent/guardian, you have unique insight as to how your child reacts to new settings. There are many ways to prepare your child for class, such as talking about it one week before school starts. "Next week you'll be going to the Moody Early Childhood Center! Won't that be fun?!" As your child asks questions, answer them honestly. "You're going to meet friends, sing songs, make art, go on adventures and learn new things — you will have lots of fun!" Try to address the upcoming change in as natural a way as possible and acknowledge your child's feelings about it.

When you drop your child off, assure him or her that you will be excited to hear all about the day when it is time to be picked up. You might even give your child a challenge: "While you are in class today, pick your favorite thing to tell me about — I can't wait to hear about your day!" If your child is experiencing a very difficult transition, please share your concerns with the teacher so that she can help provide a smooth and happy experience.

Saying goodbye

Figuring out the best way to support your child at drop-off can be anxiety-inducing process for parents as well as children. It is important to recognize that if a child does not know when the parent is leaving, there can be constant stress waiting for that moment and he/she may never fully settle. If you or your child is concerned about saying goodbye, we are more than happy to work with you to make a plan ahead of time. The most important thing is to tell your child exactly what will happen and then follow through decisively. Planning and practicing a routine the night before can be comforting for everyone involved. Let them learn how to let go and find their rhythm, make friends, and discover their favorite school-time activities while also communicating your confidence that they will do fine. It can be difficult to walk away on that first day of school, but in so doing you will assure your child that it is alright for them to do the same, adjust, and join in with their peers. A quick, direct exit from the classroom will provide secure boundaries for your child and signal to them that you are confident they are going to be happy and safe. If your child is upset when you leave, just relax and know that children usually calm down and are participating before a parent reaches the parking lot. Please feel free to call at any time to check on your child.

Parent participation

Open door policy

Families may begin to schedule visits after the first month of school. All visitors will need to check in to obtain a visitor's ID badge before entering classrooms. While visiting Moody Early Childhood Center we ask that parents observe and encourage their child to adhere to school rules and routines. If you wish to visit for an extended period, please arrange a time with your child's teacher to avoid scheduling conflicts or multiple visitors. To assure as smooth a transition as possible, we ask that you refrain from visiting during the first month of school. This is a special time, both for your child and the staff. Also, if your child is having a difficult time with adjustment, we may ask for you to refrain from visiting your child's classroom beyond the first month until they have successfully made the adjustment. Our Family Advocates will be happy to meet with you and your child to make a smooth transition. We do ask that if you plan on bringing friends or other family members you specify that in advance. Please, also remember that drop-off and pick-up times are very busy periods in terms for the facility. These periods are not the best times to discuss your child's progress or growth especially if he or she is standing with you. Therefore, conferences may be held at any time throughout the year, at either the request of the parent or the teacher. Parent meetings will be held at various times throughout the year. These include both social and educational events.

How to get involved

We always appreciate parents who can help with cooking projects, join us for a walk, read a story, or share something special about themselves with the class. Please discuss these possibilities with your child's teacher. For the safety of our children, all adults volunteering and interacting with other students at Moody Early Childhood Center (including parents!), must undergo a background check and must always wear a visitor's ID badge.

Volunteer opportunities include:

- Family Engagement activities
- Photography
- Reading to students
- Marketing assistance
- Musical presentations
- Work Parties
- Cultural Celebrations
- Chaperoning
- Birthday Celebrations

Communication

An open line of communication enriches the educational experience of our students and is an essential element for building partnerships. Your input is important to us. We are always happy to schedule time to discuss any academic, social, emotional, or developmental questions either by phone, e-mail or in person. Please keep the lines of communication open with us and let us know of any significant events in your child's life. Visitors, work trips, moving, new babies, divorce, illness or death can affect children in class. When we are informed about these changes we are better equipped to offer support and encouragement to your child.

To keep you informed (and well supplied with pictures of your child!), we use the Tadpoles system to communicate ASAP with parents. We encourage you to sign up and use it regularly.

Parent Code of Conduct

Moody Early Childhood Center requires the parents of enrolled children to behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect at all times. One of the goals of Moody Early Childhood Center is to provide the most appropriate environment in which a child can grow, learn and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of the employees of Moody Early Childhood Center but is the responsibility of each and every parent or adult who enters the center. Parents who violate the Parent Code of Conduct will not be permitted on agency property thereafter. Please refer to the Policy on Parent's Right to Immediate Access for additional information regarding disenrollment of the child when a parent is prohibited from accessing agency property.

Swearing/Cursing

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

Threats of any kind will not be tolerated. All threats will be reported to the appropriate authorities and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. While apologies for such behavior are appreciated, Moody Early Childhood Center will not assume the risk. Parents must be responsible for their behavior at all time.

Smoking

For the health of all Moody Early Childhood Center employees, children, and associates, smoking is prohibited anywhere on agency property. Parents are prohibited from smoking in the building, on the grounds, and in the parking lot of Moody Early Childhood Center. Parents who are smoking in their cars must dispose of the cigarette prior to entering the parking lot.

Interactions

While it is understood that parents will not always agree with the employees of Moody Early Childhood Center or the parents of the other children, it is expected that all disagreements be handled in a calm and respectful manner. Confrontational interactions are not an appropriate means by which to communicate a point and are strictly prohibited.

Daily schedule

Though Moody Early Childhood Center opens at 7:00am, our core curriculum hours for the infant and toddler program are 9:00am to 4:00pm, and are 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. for our PreK3 students. A copy of the week's schedule and activities will be made available on Tadpoles. After 4:00, Enrichment activities will be provided for infant and toddlers and after 3:30 for PreK3 students attending the extended day program.

Arrival/Drop off procedure

Infant and Toddlers: To access MECC, please use the Avenue L entrance. All children must be signed-in by the parent or guardian each day when they first arrive. There is a log book in each classroom. All children should be escorted into the building by a parent or guardian. Children should arrive at school with clean clothes (not pajamas), diapers, hair, face & hands, including fingernails cut, and ready for the day. A small animal to soothe students during naptime can stay in cubbies for students 18 months and up. We ask that children wear rubber-soled tennis shoes. Sandals, flip-flop, jellies, crocs are not allowed as this type of shoe is a safety hazard. Necklaces and bracelets are not allowed because they can become a choking hazard.

PreK3: To access MECC, please use the Avenue K drop off drive. Parents must stay in their cars and advance through the lines until they are motioned to a drop off station number. Students will be greeted at the car and escorted into the school by staff. Students will enter and go into the cafeteria for breakfast from 7:00-7:30 a.m. Students are considered tardy after 7:30 and need be escorted into the office on the corner of 21st Street and Ave K by a parent or guardian to pick up a tardy slip. Children should arrive at school in their uniform, with clean hair, face & hands, including fingernails cut, and ready for the day. Students will not be able to enter the classrooms after 7:30 a.m. with breakfast from home.

Toys from home are not allowed. We ask that children wear rubber-soled tennis shoes. Sandals, flip-flop, jellies, crocs are not allowed as this type of shoe is a safety hazard. Necklaces and bracelets are not allowed, as they are a distraction, and they may get lost or broken while at school.

Pick-up/check-out procedure

No child will be allowed to leave Moody Early Childhood Center without being accompanied by those designated as primary caregivers on his/her enrollment form as an Authorized Person or after that, in writing, by using our Authorization for Release of a Child form. Giving a note or verbal permission to your child's teacher is unacceptable.

Infant and Toddlers: If you are picking up your child early, please let the office know if you will be bringing your child back after your appointment. When you pick up your child, you must sign them out using the classroom log book.

PreK3: If you must pick up your child before 3:30 p.m., you need go to the office on the corner of 21st Street and Ave K to sign your child out. Students will not be allowed to leave after 2:00 p.m. unless a doctor's note is provided upon return. After school, parents who are driving must stay in their cars in an orderly manner and wait for students to be brought out to the pickup stations. Parents who are walking, must wait outside at the Ave K entrance.

Napping/Rest time

It is required that all children under the age of 5 and in care for more than 4 hours have a rest time.

Infant and Toddlers: Children under the age of 18 months will sleep in a crib and may not sleep with covers or toys. We will provide children over the age of 18 months with a cot and cover for naps. A toddler can bring a small blanket or stuffed animal from home to have at naptime. Children that are not sleeping after ½ hour rest can get up to have quiet play, like books, puzzles, coloring, etc. If your child falls asleep they will be allowed to sleep for the entire nap time.

In order to reduce the risk of SIDS the following rules will be applied:

1. All infants under one year of age will be placed on their backs to sleep.

2. NO Pillows or blankets.
3. The infant's head shall remain uncovered at all times
4. When an infant is able to roll over from back to belly, they will be put down on their backs but will be allowed to adopt whatever sleep position they prefer.
5. If your child is asleep when arriving we will arouse them a bit.

If you have any questions about this or need further information, please ask or call the SIDS alliance at 1-800-221-SIDS or Back to Sleep Campaign at 1-800-505-CRIB.

PreK3: Students will be given a 45-minute rest period. Children that are not sleeping after ½ hour rest can have quiet play time, like books, puzzles, coloring, etc. If your child falls asleep they will be allowed to sleep for the entire nap time.

Clothing and Personal Belongings

All children should have at least one complete set of clothing that is to be kept in the classroom or backpack in case of accidents, spills, etc. The clothes should have the child's name on it and should be seasonally appropriate. Parents of children using diapers are asked to provide diapers and wipes.

Toys, money, gum, candy, cosmetics and jewelry are prohibited. All clothing and objects brought from home should be clearly marked with the child's name.

Food

Mealtime philosophy

Moody Early Childhood Center participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program and provides all necessary food and beverages throughout the day, for children 12 months and older. Outside food is prohibited without director permission due to the Food Program guidelines. We approach diverse family values around food in the same way we support the individuality of each child. Meals are a time for coming together as a community and sharing the observations of the day.

Breakfast, morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack are provided for all solid food children. Breakfast is served 7:00-7:20. Food will not be served after 7:20, and all food must be finished or disposed of by 7:30. Breakfast is not allowed in the classrooms, so as not to interfere with instructional time. If you would like for your child to participate in our breakfast program, please make sure your child arrives before 7:20. Please refer to Tadpoles for your child's snack and lunch schedule.

Infants: We ask that parents supply all milk, breast milk, and formula for bottle feeding children as well as baby food for those working up to solid table food. Bottles should be brought to the Center labeled with the child's name and date they were prepared, and "ready to feed." Bottles will be refrigerated and warmed with water by the teachers. Empty bottles will be rinsed and placed in your child's diaper bag.

Until children are able to eat the meals provided by the Center, parents are required to supply formula and baby food. When your child is making the transition to table food, we will offer appropriate selections from the daily menu. Milk and fruit juice will also be available.

Allergies

If your child has an allergy or food restriction or special diets, documentation must be on file with Moody Early Childhood Center. For the safety of your child, parents are required to provide a signed copy of the “Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan” form, detailing any allergies, or food allergies, the child suffers from at the time of enrollment or when the allergy is discovered.

This form must be completely filled out by the child’s Physician and Parent(s) or Legal Guardian(s), and must be updated every six months, or more frequently, as needed. In addition to this form, parents must provide Moody Early Childhood Center with a copy of any additional Physician’s Orders and procedural guidelines relating to the prevention and treatment of the child’s allergy. This form can be obtained from the Business Office.

Parents must also execute a “Release and Waiver of Liability for Administering Emergency Treatment to Children with Severe Allergies” form. This form releases Moody Early Childhood Center from liability for administering treatment to children with severe allergies and taking other necessary actions set forth in the “Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan” form, provided Moody Early Childhood Center to exercise reasonable care in taking such actions. Any medication required to treat an allergic reaction must be provided in accordance with the Moody Early Childhood Center Medication Policy.

Setting limits

Behavior policy

If a negative behavior occurs in the preschool, staff will address and seek to resolve it directly with the child. It is important that parents, teachers, and administration work together, but the consequences and problem solving need to be immediately tied to the behavior. Our policy is as follows:

- Hurting another child or throwing a tantrum leads to being away from the group until the child is calm enough to rejoin the activity.
- Abuse of an activity or object leads to a loss of the privilege of using that object or material for a specific length of time
- Repeated, unprovoked hurting of another child and/or using object as weapons to injure staff or children leads to a conference of the parent, teacher, and Family Advocate to determine additional interventions
- Biting is subject to the same behavior actions as hurting another child and repeated, unprovoked hurting of another child
- We do not believe in expulsion of children from MECC for behavioral issues

Discipline and Guidance

The goal of discipline is to develop self-regulation. Our early childhood program fosters an environment in which children learn to respect others and their surroundings. We teach and encourage children to use problem solving and conflict resolution skills. Other discipline techniques we employ are

1. **Prevention** - Children are explained the rules of the classroom frequently so that all know the guidelines.
2. **Teacher shadowing** – The Child works one on one with a teacher and mimics positive behavior.

3. **Redirection**- We offer alternatives to children engaged in undesirable behavior by presenting a different activity.
4. **Positive modeling** - Asking a child to stop and think about their behavior to enable the child to work at self-control.
5. **Gentle reminders**- We explain to the child the inappropriate behavior and show him/her the appropriate way to handle the situation.

Discipline shall be fair, consistent and appropriate for the age and maturity of the child. Physical punishment, such as spanking, is strictly prohibited on the premises of the preschool program. Any cruel and unusual discipline that is frightening or humiliating is never used.

Every effort will be made to help parents and children resolve difficulties that may arise in the program.

Steps toward resolution include:

- Scheduling a parent/teacher/Family Advocate conference
- Developing a written plan of action agreed upon by parent, teacher, and Family Advocate.
- A referral to assess if there seem to be developmental or behavioral concerns.

Celebrations

Birthdays and holidays

Here at the Moody Early Childhood Center, excitement and adventure abound. We celebrate each child's special day. You are welcome to bring a special snack, but please do not under any circumstances feel obliged! We like to emphasize that your child's life is the most important treat of the day. Please check with your teacher beforehand to make sure there are no dietary restrictions that need to be met and avoid excessive sweets. Muffins, fruit, yogurt, bubbles or stickers are great! If you choose to bring a treat please provide for all children in the class. Parents are invited, but we understand scheduling often gets in the way of your ability to attend. No pressure!

If you are planning a birthday party for your child outside of school, please don't have invitations passed out at school unless all students in the class are invited. We will not be able to provide students' full names or addresses.

Staying healthy

Sick child policy

Parents are required to keep children home if they exhibit any symptoms of illness as listed below. We understand the difficulty of this for working parents, but this must be done to maintain a healthy environment for everyone. Parents are obligated to report any communicable disease or condition (i.e., conjunctivitis, head lice, chicken pox, etc.) to the staff so that we can alert other parents as soon as possible, in order to prevent spread of symptoms. Students who miss 3 or more days of school due to illness will need a doctor's note to return.

As required by the Texas Department of State Health Services, please keep your child home if they have any of the following conditions:

- Fever of 100+: (Must be fever-free for 24 hours before returning)
- Diarrhea: More than one loose stool within a 24 hour period
- Vomiting: More than once in 24-hour period
- Severe coughing with runny nose and colored mucus

- Rashes: (un-identifiable or non-typical rash)
- Pink-eye (conjunctivitis): Redness of eyelid, swelling and/or discharge
- Change of color of skin or eyes (may be signs of hepatitis)
- Unable to participate in normal activities including outdoor play
- Lice or scabies: For head lice, children and staff may return after treatment and no nits; for scabies, return after treatment.
- Ringworm: (May return 24 hours after treatment was begun)

If your child becomes ill while at the Center, you will be called to pick-up your child as soon as possible. A student may not return to school the following day unless a doctor's note is provided. A student must be fever, or diarrhea free, or on medication for 24 hours (1 calendar day) before returning to school. You will be notified should your child be exposed to a contagious disease. Please notify the Center should your child become ill so that we may notify other parents of a contagious illness.

Illness at school

We will follow this procedure if a child becomes ill while on campus:

- If a child exhibits possible symptoms of an illness, we will move the child away from others and have them lie down quietly and rest. The on-premises nurse will be on-hand for consultation.
- If a child continues to feel ill, we will call the parents. If parents cannot be reached, a relative or emergency contact will be called to pick the child up.
- In the case of minor injury, the child's parents will be notified and an "Ouch / Illness Report" will be completed.
- If a child has a head or eye injury, the parent will be notified by phone.
- In the case of an emergency involving serious illness or injury, parents and 911 will be called.
- Staff members will follow the same exclusion criteria as children.

Medication policy

Any medication or special medical procedures will be administered only with a signed Medication Authorization form (available upon request) from the parents or guardians. They are required for all types of medication, including non-prescription medication such as Tylenol, sunscreen, Chap Stick, lotions and ointments, etc. Please follow the procedures below:

- Prescription drugs must be in the original prescription bottle with the child's and physician's names, the prescription number, dosage, and frequency must be current and legible
- Non-prescription medications must be in the original container with the child's first and last name and the date it was brought to school written on the container.
- Medication will only be administered to the limit of the instructions on the label.
- All medications must be dispensed by a staff member for Infant and Toddlers, or the School Nurse for PreK3 students.
- Before we can administer any prescription or non-prescription medications to your child you will need to do the following:
 - 1. Keep them home for 24 hours after the first dose ~ for possible allergic reactions
 - 2. Sign a Medication Authorization Form
 - All medications must be brought in the original container with the following information on the label: Child's name, Prescription name, Doctors name, dosage, Pharmacy name

and phone number, Instructions for administering, & dates the medication is to be used for.

- Nonprescription medications may include but are not limited to:
 - 1. Antihistamines,
 - 2. NON-aspirin fever reducing/pain reliever
 - 3. Decongestants
 - 4. Anti-itching ointment or lotions
 - 5. Diaper rash ointments or lotions
 - 6. Sun screen
 - 7. Cough syrup
 - 8. Teething gels
 - 9. Insect repellent
 - These must be sent in original containers. If any of them will be taken differently than indicated on the labels or for more than 5 days, we will need a note from the physician.
- If you fail to bring your child's prescription medication, you will be asked to go home and get it, or take the child home and give them the required dosage.
- We have a medication log that you can review at any time to see when your child was given his/her medications. Plus a note giving the times and dosage administered will be on your daily reports.
- If a child will be on long term meds, or as needed medications like asthma inhalers, a note from your doctor will be required to put in our files.
- Medications that are not being used must be sent back home. Inhalers, nebulizers and epi pens can be kept here to be used when needed.

Immunizations and hearing/vision screenings

We require that all children be vaccinated. Families must submit a vaccination record prior to the start of school, and update them periodically as additional vaccinations are due. Families have the right to choose not to vaccinate their children for personal, philosophical, or medical reasons; however, for the safety of the other children at Moody Early Childhood Center we cannot enroll a child who is not current on their developmentally-appropriate vaccines.

The State of Texas requires all children age 4 and older receive hearing and vision screenings. As our children are not of the required age we do not provide screenings for all children; however, if parents or teachers are concerned about developmental hearing or vision issues Family Advocates may be tapped to coordinate screenings for the child.

HIV/AIDS and blood-borne pathogens awareness

Every staff member is required to attend an HIV/AIDS / BBP awareness course. We will follow Texas Guidelines when working with bodily fluids. All staff members will use universal precautions when exposed to bodily fluids with universal precautions, including:

- Using gloves or some other barrier when dealing with a bleeding wound
- Washing hands thoroughly after dealing with blood or bodily fluids, even if gloves were used
- Disposing of bloodied gloves, tissues, etc., by sealing in 2 plastic bags and placing in a waste receptacle
- Cleaning and disinfecting all exposed surfaces

Tuberculosis policy

MECC requires that all staff receive TB testing. PreK3 students also must complete a form prior to enrollment.

Additional policies

Field trips, water activities, and transportation

Infant and Toddlers: By signing the contract and enrollment form you are giving your child permission to participate in all activities at the daycare.

PreK3: We will have additional notification forms and permission slips regarding field trips and activities going on throughout the school year. It is your responsibility as a parent to check your child's folder and Tadpoles for notifications of events. For your child's safety, the student will not be able to attend the event if a permission slip is not signed.

Child abuse reporting

As required by Texas State Law, suspected child abuse and/or neglect will be reported to Child Protective Services (CPS). Employees are responsible for submitting reports. Under law, employees do not notify parents when CPS has been called about possible abuse, neglect or exploitation except on the recommendations of CPS or police personnel.

All Moody Early Childhood Center staff receive recurring training on identifying the signs of child abuse and reporting procedures. Additionally, Family Advocates have ongoing relationships with the Texas Department of Family Services as well as other agencies that assist families in crisis, including Family Services Center. Moody Early Childhood Center will periodically host Family Information nights that may highlight the warning signs of child abuse or neglect.

If you have questions about the signs of child abuse, please consider our Family Advocates as a resource. Additionally, you may contact the abuse and neglect hotline at 1-800-252-5400 or visit the Texas Department of Family Protective Services at <https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/>.

Anti-harassment

We are committed to providing an environment where staff and families are treated with respect. We will not tolerate harassment from staff, families, vendors or visitors. Harassment takes many forms, and can include unwelcome comments, slurs, jokes, innuendoes, cartoons, pranks or other verbal or physical conduct that creates an uncomfortable working environment.

Nondiscrimination policy

Moody Early Childhood Center does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, disability, religion or age in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, and all other school-administered programs.

Grievance and licensure check policy and procedure

We recognize parents as the first and most important influence in their child's life, and that a positive working relationship between the parent and Moody Early Childhood Center is of primary importance. If a grievance occurs that cannot be satisfied by discussion with the teaching staff, families are advised to contact their Family Advocate and/or Executive Director.

Parents may review a copy of minimum standards and Moody Early Childhood Center most recent licensing inspection by inquiring in the business office or contacting the Executive Director directly.

The local licensing office is located at 2221 West Loop S, Houston, TX 77027.

Gang-free zone

Moody Early Childhood Center is located in a 'Gang-Free Zone'. Moody Early Childhood Center will report any and all criminal activity within the 'Gang-Free Zone'. Moody Early Childhood Center will post all policies and notices associated with being a gang-free zone in the main office.

Emergency preparedness plan

In the event of an emergency closing and/or inclement weather, Moody Early Childhood Center will notify families via Tadpoles®. Should the school need to close in the middle of the day, the school staff will attempt to reach the child's parents first to arrange for pick up. If the staff be unable to reach the parents, the persons listed on the emergency contact form will be called until pick up arrangements can be made. Should the children need to be evacuated from the child care center, staff will notify the parents or emergency contact person of the pick-up location.

Confidentiality

The Moody Early Childhood Center respects the privacy of every child and family and holds confidential all records regarding your child's personal information. All records will be kept secure in the child's file in the office. Only the Executive Director and lead staff have access to these records. Moody Early Childhood Center will always seek your permission to share information with other professionals.

I _____ have received the Moody Early Childhood Center Parent Handbook and Handouts and know to talk to the office if I have any questions.

Parent Signature

Date