

Parent Handbook & Policies and Procedures 2018-2019



Learning Academy
801 West Avenue B
Garland, TX 75040
972-494-3096

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Learning Academy Policy & Procedures

2018-2019

The First United Methodist Church Day School in Garland, Texas, was organized in 1968 for the purpose of providing a preschool for its members and for families in the community to fill a need it believed existed. Early years are known to be the foundation for life and what better place for helping form this foundation than the church.

We believe that every child is a unique creation and we will strive to work with them and their families in such a way that they may experience what it means to be a child of God. Today we try to teach the whole child by providing activities that develop the mind, body, and spirit.

The Learning Academy is a non-profit, interracial, Christian oriented center and was established as a ministry to young children and their parents by the First United Methodist Church of Garland, Texas. It is an integral part of the church's total education ministry. Under the leadership of quality teachers, the classes include a balance of guided play activities, creative art work, music, outdoor play, conversation, story time, dramatic play, and group activities. Each child is helped to grow in independence, social development, and to develop his/her own unique talents and abilities.

The Learning Academy is licensed by the State of Texas and meets the requirements mandated by the Department of Family and Protective Service of Texas. We constantly strive to meet the highest standards in Early Childhood Education. The Learning Academy has an “Open Door” Policy—parents and guardians are always welcome.

WHAT IS A HIGH QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM?

A high quality early childhood program provides a safe and nurturing environment while promoting the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of young children.

A high quality early childhood program includes:

- frequent, positive, warm interactions among adults and children
- planned learning activities appropriate to children's age and development, such as block building, painting, stories, dress-up, and active, outdoor play

- specially trained teachers
- teacher to child ratios that allow us to respond to individual children
- many, varied age-appropriate materials
- a healthy and safe environment for children
- nutritious snacks
- regular communication with parents who are welcome visitors at all times

The curriculum of the Learning Academy is composed of basic academic subjects presented in a developmentally appropriate manner to give the child a well-rounded educational foundation within his/her learning capacity and in such a way as to provide positive learning.

Academic subjects include:

Early Literacy	Social Skills	Science Exploration
Outdoor Play	Number Concepts	Fine Motor Skills
Creative Art	Music	Cultural Exploration
Computer Literacy	Godly Play	Spanish

The Learning Academy’s goal is to provide learning experiences for children of the church membership and the community in an environment which encourages the child to . . .

- Ask questions . . . explore . . . experiment.
- Help develop a new security and independence in the world outside the home.
- Make friends and learn to get along with children and adults.
- Find that he/she is a person to be valued for his/her own unique being as a child of God.

CHAPEL TIME & GODLY PLAY

Children two years and older will have an opportunity to attend chapel once a month led by members of our church staff. Wednesday will be Godly Play with Pastor Caroline. The three and four year old classes will participate. Children Two years and younger will participate in sacred circle time in their classrooms once per week. We feel that it is the responsibility of the school to lead our children and their families in such a way that they may experience what it means to be a child of God.

ENROLLMENT POLICIES

A. Enrollment shall be open to any child, provided the School can meet the needs of that child.

B. Enrollment in the Learning Academy shall be granted without discrimination in regard to sex, race, color, creed, or political belief.

C. The child must be at least 6 weeks old when enrolled and not older than five years of age (Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the director.)

D. FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, Garland members and those families already enrolled in the School shall be given two weeks enrollment privileges. In the event classes fill during the first two weeks of the enrollment period, families will be placed on a waiting list according to the date of their application.

E. Children are required to be toilet trained before they are accepted into the three and four year old programs. Our teachers are not responsible for potty training, but they will aid the parents on this journey. We will not stress a child out over potty training at school. We will encourage children with positive praise.

F. Class groupings, whether by age-level or developmental level, shall be at the discretion of the director and the staff.

G. Class size shall be determined by the director and the Weekday Ministry Board.

H. The designated curriculum fee must be received by the School in order for a child to be enrolled.

I. All children must be current on state required immunizations and this must be documented by your physician. Updated immunization records must be submitted to the office whenever a new immunization is administered.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

An enrollment form, Discipline & Guidance Policy form**, and student medical form with current immunization records are required for each child entering the Learning Academy. These documents include:

- Pertinent Admission Information
- Emergency Contact Information
- Release to Alternate Parties
- Authorization for Medical Treatment**
- Special Problems and Allergies Information
- Media Release Permission
- Health-care Professional Statement (that child has been examined within the past year and is physically able to take part in the school program.)**

- Health Requirements (current immunization record must be kept on file in the Learning Academy office.)**
- Vision and Hearing Statement & Results (for student who are 4 years or older)**

**These are State of Texas Health Requirements for children in childcare settings.

The Learning Academy is a year-round program. A separate enrollment form and fee is required for summer and academic school year programs.

TUITION AND FEES

****Recurring Billing is highly encouraged for tuition payments. We are also able to take credit/debit card payments for enrollment and other fees.**

Weekly tuition is due Friday of each week—tuition is paid in advance of the week your child will be in attendance. Tuition is late if not received by Monday at 6:00 p.m. There will be a late fee of \$25.00 assessed if tuition is received after 6:00 p.m. on Monday.

Biweekly and monthly payments will be accepted provided tuition is paid in advance. Monthly payments are due the first class day of each month. Biweekly payments are due on the 1st and 15th of each month. Monthly tuition is late after the 10th of the month. Biweekly Payments are late after the 3rd and 18th respectively. A fee of \$25 will be assessed for each late payment.

All families are required to sign a financial agreement regarding tuition payments and policies regarding late fees.

Parents are responsible for payment until the school is notified in writing that the child is being withdrawn. Two weeks notice is required.

August is prorated, September-May is required to be paid in full. The Learning Academy staffs by enrollment numbers, not by attendance. There is NO credit for absences, snow days, or vacation days.

WITHDRAWAL OF PUPILS

Please call the Learning Academy office at 972-494-3096 and notify the Director **TWO WEEKS BEFORE** you wish to withdraw your child.

Current tuition is due in full. No additional tuition fees will be charged after the two week period.

In the case of parental separation or divorce, the Learning Academy **must have a certified copy of the most recent court order** regarding child custody which designates who can pick up the child at which times. The Learning Academy is legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent with legal custody. Without a document, both parents have equal rights to custody. We keep this information confidential and solely for the safety and wellbeing for your child. If a new custody order or a restraining order is issued against either parent, we must have this information on file. It is our policy to remain neutral in these matters. The Learning Academy may not serve as a visitation site.

ABSENCES

If your child is ill or is not able to attend school on any given day, please call The Learning Academy office (972) 494-3096 by 8:40 am and leave a message concerning your child's condition. . The Learning Academy staffs by enrollment numbers, not by attendance. There is **NO** credit for absences, snow days, or vacation days.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Plan to have your child at school by 8:15 a.m. Three and Four year old class teachers will be down by the 9th Street door to welcome the children. Parents of our Babies, Waddlers, Toddlers, and Two year old students drop off and pick up at their student's classroom. Please remember to sign your child in and out with the classroom teacher.

Arrival time is no earlier than 8:15 (during the Academic Year), unless your child is enrolled in our extended hours program. After 8:30, you will need to use your key code to enter and then ring the bell on the second floor door. Please walk your child upstairs and sign them in with their teacher.

****Academic class time begins for all classes at 8:30 a.m. It is important for all students to be on time to class as they often find it difficult to enter a classroom where activities have already begun.**

When arriving in the mornings, we encourage parents to make their good-byes **SHORT** and **SWEET** at the door. Please tell your child that you are leaving and will see him/her after school.

The children will be downstairs between 3:00-3:15 every afternoon for parent pickup. After this time, you will need to use your key code to enter and then ring the bell on the second floor door.

Please pick up your child on time. There will be a fee of \$1.00 per minute you are late.

Only children registered and paying for Extended Care should be here after 3:15 (Academic Year). If you have any questions about our Extended Care or to get cost options, please see the Learning Academy office.

Each family will be issued a key code. The codes are programmed for your child's scheduled enrollment times. Adults must accompany the children to the door. No sibling under the age of 18 will be allowed to pick up any children.

CHILD RELEASE

Adults **MUST** show a Driver's License when picking up children. The Learning Academy will not release a child to anyone not listed on the student's enrollment form. If a person not listed on enrollment form will be picking up your child, please contact the office prior to pick up with individual name and driver's license number.

CLOTHING, BACKPACKS, & PERSONAL ITEMS

Clothing: Children should wear washable play clothes and shoes that are not slick. Closed toed shoes are strongly suggested. **(Flip-Flops are highly discouraged.)** For your child to have the best experience possible, they must be dressed in comfortable clothing. Clothing should be appropriate for the outside weather. Coats, hats, & mittens should be worn in cold weather.

Please send extra clothes (winter/summer) for anticipated needs. These will be kept during the year and returned at the end of the year. All items should be marked with the child's first and last name to avoid confusion and loss. They should be enclosed within a zip-lock bag also marked with his/her name.

****If these come home soiled from school, please return a set of clothing on the student's next school day.**

Backpacks: Students should bring a backpack that is large enough to hold the following:

1. Communication Folder

2. Lunchbox and water bottle
3. Lightweight nap blanket
4. Extra set of clothes

Children should not bring any of his/her personal toys to school. This creates a sharing problem with the other children and it is difficult to keep track of individual toys. Remember, popular toys are popular with all children and often cause arguments and disagreements. **We cannot be responsible if toys are broken or lost.**

Personal Items: Please label all articles with your child's first and last name. Please take extra care to label lunch kits, diaper bags, blankets, cups/bottles, and anything else your child might bring to school so that your child's name is visible from the outside for the teacher's convenience. Please do not label on the inside.

SNACKS & LUNCHES

Morning and afternoon snack time is a part of every school day. The snack might include crackers, fruit, foods prepared by the class, treats sent by parents, etc. Snacks served daily are recorded in each classroom and posted for parents' information. Snacks are collected with the supplies requested from families at enrollment. Perishable snacks will be purchased by the Learning Academy.

Each child will need to bring their lunch on every day of school, with the exception of Fast Food Frenzy (FFF) days if you have signed up and paid for your child to participate. The Learning Academy does not provide lunches.

** Lunch should be in a lunchbox or bag labeled with the child's name. Lunches should be ready to eat. **Refrigeration and heating are not available.** We **STRONGLY** recommend that you send water in a thermos with your child's lunch. Thermos/water bottle must be labeled with your child's first name and last initial. If your child needs a disposable fork or spoon, please remember to send one.

**In order to promote independence and readiness for kindergarten, we request that families to pack lunch items in containers that can be opened by the student. Children will always be encouraged to attempt opening items first and offered assistance as needed.

Children need a balanced lunch to provide consistent energy throughout the day. A student's lunch should contain protein, fruit or vegetable, carbohydrates, and

water. Children are encouraged to save dessert or treats for after the main portion of their lunch.

**Fast Food Frenzy (FFF) are designated days where you may purchase a meal for your child instead of sending a lunch. These meals will cost \$5.00. A full listing of dates and meals will be sent home at the beginning of the school year and will also be available in the Learning Academy office. Parents may sign up for the entire year or for specific days. For your convenience, we encourage you to pay for the selected meals when turning in the FFF form.

FOOD ALLERGIES POLICY

We are aware that some children attending our program are highly allergic to some food items, some of which can be life threatening.

The Learning Academy is doing all it can to prevent an incident or any contamination. The classrooms are multi-use and have many groups and substances in them at various times. They are kept clean on a daily basis.

The teachers at the Learning Academy are kept aware of any food allergies of their students and strive to keep each child safe on the days they attend school. Parents have the option of providing their child's snack daily if needed.

Students with food allergies must have an Allergy Action Plan on file with the Learning Academy office. This plan will also be posted in a student's classroom.

INFANT CLOTHING AND ESSENTIALS

Infants should have diapers, wipes, bottles, food, extra clothing (weather appropriate and well-fitting), and any other items they will need while in attendance. Please label all materials including their bag with their first name and last initial. Any needed items will be listed on the child's daily note home.

INFANT FEEDING SCHEDULES

**All infants are required to have an Infant Feeding Instructions form on file in the Learning Academy office and in their classroom. This form must be updated every 30 days or whenever new foods are introduced.

**Mothers have the right to breast feed or provide breast milk for their child while in care. The Learning Academy has refrigerators in both infant rooms and a nursing room is located downstairs in Room 119.

HEALTH AND ILLNESS

Children who are ill must be kept at home. **Children need to be fever free without fever reducing medicine for 24 hours before returning to school.** If a child develops a contagious disease, the teacher should be notified. Parents will be notified if a communicable disease is developing among children in the classroom.

We cannot admit an ill child for care if one or more of the following exists:

- (1) The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in child-care center activities including outdoor play
- (2) The illness results in a greater need for care than caregivers can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children in care
- (3) The child has one of the following, unless medical evaluation by a healthcare profession indicates that you can include the child in the child-care center's activities:
 - (A) Oral temperature of above 101 degrees and accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness
 - (B) Rectal temperature of above 102 degrees and accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness
 - (C) Armpit/Forehead temperature of above 100 degrees and accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness
 - (D) Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, two or more vomiting episodes in 24 hours, rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, behavior changes, or other signs that the child may be severely ill
- (4) A health-care professional has diagnosed the child with a communicable disease, and the child does not have medial documentation to indicate that the child is no longer contagious
- (5) Green or yellow runny noses...must have a note from a doctor that states they are not contagious
- (6) Swelling in any part of the body
- (7) Cough due to a contagious condition
- (8) Discharge from eyes or nose due to an unknown cause or a contagious condition

If a child becomes ill in The Learning Academy's care, we will:

- (1) Contact the parent to pick up the child as soon as possible
- (2) Care for the child apart from the other children until parent arrives
- (3) Give appropriate attention & supervision until the child is picked up
- (4) Give extra attention to hand washing and sanitation if the child has diarrhea or vomiting

MEDICATIONS & PROCEDURES

Because of the great responsibility involved in giving medication to children, we ask that parents give any necessary medication to their children if possible. If this is not possible a medication form must be completed by the parent and/or physician depending on the circumstances. The Learning Academy will not administer or be responsible for any medication signed “as needed.” The time to administer medication must be a specified time.

1. All medications will be kept in the container in the director’s office.
Medications must not be placed in the child’s backpack.
2. All medications must be accompanied by a medication release form specifying purpose, time, dosage, and designated staff members name(s)
3. All medications for breathing machines must be premixed by parents and stored in the container.
4. All medication must be in the original container, clearly and permanently marked with:
 - Child’s full name
 - Doctor’s name
 - Medication name
 - Prescription number
 - Dosage

Only the director or designated staff members will give medication. Permanent records of medications are kept in the student’s file.

ACCIDENTS/INJURIES

In the event of an accident or injury at the school, the school personnel will immediately assess the extent of the injury. If the injury requires immediate care, emergency assistance (911) will be called and parents will be contacted. If the accident is not of a severe nature, parents will be contacted. If a parent cannot be reached, the emergency contacts (listed on the child’s enrollment form) will be contacted.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

The Discipline Policy of the school is one of guidance and redirection. During the preschool years children are learning to develop their own inner controls and it is the responsibility of the teachers to guide them in this process. Limits are set and explained to the children. When children overstep these limits, they are redirected to another activity or, as a last resort, separated from the group in time-out.

If a problem arises which re-direction or guidance cannot solve, the parents are contacted so all can work together for a common solution. It is NOT the policy of the Learning Academy to spank or physically or emotionally discipline any child. We believe loving, firm, and consistent discipline is most effective and appropriate in guiding your children.

Communication between home and school is a major part of our discipline policy. It is essential to check your child's folder daily for communication from your child's teacher regarding academics and classroom behavior.

If your child is involved in the injury of another child, you will be notified immediately. **If we observe inappropriate behavior over a period of four weeks, a parent conference will be scheduled. If the inappropriate behavior involves injury to another child, a conference will be scheduled immediately to initiate a behavior plan.**

PARENT CONFERENCES

Please feel free to call the school or email your child's teacher to make an appointment at any time during the school year.

Parents are encouraged to observe their child's class several times during the year. In order that our staff is able to give their full attention to the safety and confidentiality of all students, please avoid hallway conferences, as well as conferences at arrival or dismissal time.

Feel free to come and visit your child's classroom anytime. The Learning Academy has an open door policy to all classrooms during school hours. Please come by the office so that a member of the office staff may walk you to your child's class. This is for the safety of all children.

BIRTHDAYS

Cookies are suggested as a treat for the children's birthdays. Cupcake icing may stain the children's faces and clothes. All treats **MUST** be store bought. **NO** **HOMEMADE** snacks are allowed per the State of Texas Minimum Standards. Parents should be in contact with the teacher several weeks in advance of the child's birthday. We suggest that there **NOT** be an exchange of **gifts OR favors**.

Please be sensitive to all children in a given classroom, we ask that invitations to birthday parties or other special events be sent to school to be passed out **ONLY** if the entire class is invited.

WATER PLAY

Water play will consist of water tables in the classroom and a sprinkler device on the playground.

LICENSED BY TDFPS

The Learning Academy is licensed by Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. We are inspected by a representative from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Garland Health Department, and Garland Fire Department to ensure we meet health, safety and other state requirements. Parents may contact:

www.DFPS.STATE.TX.US
24 hour hotline: 1-800-252-5400
Kala Hunter, Child Care Inspector
214-809-7098

A copy of Minimum Standards is also available in the office. We have an Open Door policy and parents can visit at will. Parents can contact the Director to review and discuss any questions or concerns about the policies and procedures of The Learning Academy.

****Any changes in the Learning Academy Policies and Procedures will be communicated via email in pdf format. Hard copies of the Learning Academy Policies and Procedures will be available in the office for parents to pick up at their convenience.**

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In Case of fire, severe weather, or emergency evacuation, we strive to be as prepared as possible. We have regular safety drills so your child can react in a safe

and orderly manner. If we are required to evacuate beyond the immediate premises, we will contact families immediately at the emergency contact numbers and children will be relocated to one of the following locations:

First Baptist Church
801 West Avenue D
Garland, TX 75040
972-276-7194

First Christian Church
115 S. Glenbrook Drive
Garland, TX 75040
972-272-5423

The Learning Academy will follow the Garland ISD weather closures. Please check with channel 8 and or the GISD website for weather related closures.

GANG FREE ZONE

FUMC Garland Day School is a gang-free zone. Child care providers are required to inform parents of children attending their center about our gang-free designation. Certain gang-related criminal activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of our program is a violation of this law and is therefore subject to increased penalty. The goal of gang-free zones is to deter certain types of criminal activity in areas where children gather by enforcing tougher penalties.

GUN POLICY: No Firearms or weapons permitted on FUMC property.

FUMC is a smoke free facility.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

In an effort to protect the well-being and safety of children, the State of Texas requires anyone who suspects child abuse and/or neglect to report it to the proper authorities. The Learning Academy staff is required to have annual training to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect annually. All suspect indicators will be documented and reported. Parents will receive a pamphlet from DFPS outlining the warning signs that a child that a child may be a victim of abuse or neglect. The Learning Academy is required by law to cooperate with any investigation of child abuse or neglect. The phone number to call to make a report is 1-800-252-5400.

--Abuse and neglect affect people of every age, race, and family income level. The majority of parents who abuse their children love their children, but many factors can lead them to do things they regret.

- **Trouble managing stress.** Problems with work, money, or relationships put a strain on family life. If a parent or caretaker has trouble managing stress, it can lead to abuse.
- **A lack of parenting skills.** Some parents might not understand how to care for a child's basic needs or they might have unrealistic ideas about a child's abilities and behavior. They might punish behavior that is natural for a child.
- **A history of abuse.** Many child abusers were abused or witnessed abuse as children.
- **A problem with alcohol or other drugs.** Alcohol and other drugs impair a person's ability to act as a responsible, caring parent. They can also make it harder to control emotions—especially anger.

These factors can be overcome, and abuse and neglect can be prevented. Don't lash out when you are angry with a child—instead:

- Take a deep breath.
- Call someone or ask a friend to watch your kids while you calm down.
- Call one of the hotlines listed below to find someone to talk to.
- Find a parenting class in the community to learn about ways to handle the stresses of dealing with kids.
- Use this website (www.dfps.state.tx.us.com) to find programs in your area to help you resolve any underlying issues, such as alcohol or drug abuse.

Hotlines

- ***Texas Abuse and Neglect Hotline*** Report suspected abuse and neglect. 1-800-252-5400 1-800-252-5400 TxAbuseHotline.org
- ***Texas Runaway Hotline*** Counseling, services, and referrals for runaway youth and their families. 1-888-580-HELP (1-888-580-4357) 1-888-580-HELP (1-888-580-4357) www.TexasRunaway.org ***Texas Youth Hotline*** Services and counseling for youths and family members in times of stress. 1-800-210-2278 1-800-210-2278 www.TexasYouth.org
- ***Texas Poison Control Center Network*** Don't wait for the victim to look or feel sick—call poison control. Always call 911 if a victim is collapsed or not breathing. 1-800-222-1222 www.poisoncontrol.org

Parenting Skills

- ***National Parent Helpline***® (1-855-4A PARENT or 1-855-427-2736)(1-855-4A PARENT or 1-855-427-2736)
- ***Car Safety: Look Before You Lock*** Online education about vehicle safety for children
- ***Family Compass*** Parenting and family programs in the Dallas area.
- ***Texas Education Agency*** Life skills classes and resources for teen parents.
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- If you are the parent of a child who is a victim of abuse or neglect you should call one of the following hotlines for assistance and intervention:
- **Family Violence**
- **Texas Council on Family Violence**
- ***National Domestic Violence Hotline*** 1-800-799-7233 1-800-799-7233
- ***Texas Abuse and Neglect Hotline*** Report child abuse and neglect. 1-800-252-5400 1-800-252-5400 www.txabusehotline.org
- ***Childhelp***® ***National Child Abuse Hotline*** The 24/7 hotline offers crisis intervention, information, literature, and referrals. 1-800-4-A-Child (1-800-422-4453) 1-800-4-A-Child (1-800-422-4453) www.childhelp.org
- ***National Domestic Violence Hotline*** 24-hour support through advocacy, safety planning, resources, and hope to everyone affected by domestic violence. 1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233) 1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233) www.thehotline.org

Office Staff

Heather Medlock

Director

hmedlock@fumcgarland.org

Jennie Sawyer

Assistant Director-Computer & Science Instructor

jsawyer@fumcgarland.org

Caroline Noll

Children's Pastor

Valarie Englert

Senior Pastor

Office Hours:

Monday-Friday 8:30-3:30

School Hours:

Monday-Friday

6:30-6:00

Year-Round (January-December)

Office Number: 972-494-3096

Office Fax Number: 972-272-3473

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