

P A R E N T H A N D B O O K

CHAPELWOOD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
CHAPELWOOD SCHOOL FOR YOUNG CHILDREN
11140 GREENBAY
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77024
(713) 465-4657

LICENSED BY TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES
ACCREDITED BY THE NATIONAL ACCREDITATION COMMISSION FOR EARLY
CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS (NAC)

• INTRODUCTION

Chapelwood School for Young Children (also referred to as Chapelwood School) was designed and constructed in 1957 as a ministry of Chapelwood United Methodist Church, in an answer to the identified need for quality children's preschool programs in the Memorial area. The school will provide educational care for children three months to five years of age. The school year starts in August and ends in May. Special programs with activities appropriate to the child's developmental stage make Chapelwood School for Young Children unique.

Chapelwood School for Young Children is a non-profit, non-governmental program which exists to benefit members of Chapelwood United Methodist Church and to provide quality preschool programming to the community.

• PROGRAM VISION, MISSION, AND PHILOSOPHY

VISION

The Vision of Chapelwood School for Young Children is that all children are confident in God's love and are fully prepared for life.

MISSION

The Mission of Chapelwood School for Young Children is to build a strong foundation in children for faith, learning, creativity, community, and confidence.

PHILOSOPHY

Chapelwood School for Young Children allows children to experience their world around them through a non-pressured classroom environment which encourages children to reason, wonder and experiment. Our learning centers provide for different learning styles through a flexible curriculum with varying levels of difficulty and low teacher-to-child ratios. Because children learn by doing, the school offers a "hands-on" curriculum which in turn nurtures their physical, social, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual growth. By offering a wide variety of developmentally appropriate materials and activities, Chapelwood School gives every child the opportunity to build their self-esteem while experiencing challenges and success.

• STATE LICENSING & NAC ACCREDITATION

Chapelwood School for Young Children is licensed by the State of Texas' Department of Health and Human Services to provide care for children who are 3 months through 6 years of age. As a licensed facility, we operate using the Minimum Standards for Day Care Centers as a basic guideline for setting policy and procedures. A copy of the Minimum

Standards is available through the school office for all interested parents to check out and read. If you would like to contact the local licensing office or the PRS child abuse hotline, their number is 713-940-5200. Further information can also be found on their website at: www.hhsc.state.tx.us.

The National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NAC) administers a national, voluntary, professionally- sponsored accreditation system for preschools, childcare centers and school age childcare programs. Under their auspices, Chapelwood School for Young Children conducted the required steps of self-study and validation by outside authorities to qualify for accreditation. This process must be repeated every three years.

The Association defines a high-quality early childhood program as “one that meets the needs of and promotes the children and adults (parents, staff, and administrators) who are involved in the program. Each day of a child’s life is viewed as leading toward the growth and development of a healthy, intelligent, and contributing member of society.” We are very proud to be accredited by this national association. The latest accreditation was completed in May 2016.

• ELIGIBILITY AND ADMISSION

Educational childcare is available to any family in the church or community without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, or ancestry.

Children who are physically handicapped or emotionally disturbed to the degree that they cannot benefit from instruction at Chapelwood School will not be accepted. Enrollment will be based on a first come, first served basis, with all registration applications being time and date stamped for a position of priority on the waiting list. Children are conditionally accepted for the school year pending timely provision to and acceptance by the school of all properly completed paperwork, including all completed immunizations, as well as any outstanding tuitions and fees.

When a vacancy occurs, the next child on the waiting list who fits the age criteria will be admitted based upon the enrollment priority. At Chapelwood School for Young Children, enrollment priority will be given to (in order):

- † school staff
- † returning families with one child enrolled, needing care for second/third child
- † families of CUMC members
- † alumni with children who have previously been enrolled at Chapelwood School
- † children who are new to the school

Although each child is admitted by chronological age, every effort will be made to meet the emotional, social, intellectual, spiritual, and physical needs of the individual child on a developmental basis. We reserve the right to assess each child’s developmental needs before and during enrollment to confirm the proper placement of each child.

When a child is registered in the school, the registration application and fee will be submitted to the school Registrar. This fee is nonrefundable if your child is placed in a class at our school.

When a child is placed or enrolled in a class, the staff will make every attempt to arrange for the child to visit the school before his/her first day. At the beginning of the school year, each class has a student orientation to accomplish this goal. If a child is enrolled after the school year has started, this visit is made on an individual basis. The child will be invited to visit his/her potential new class. The school Director along with the classroom teacher will be able to observe the child. These classroom visits allow the child to see his/her new teacher in the context of his/her own classroom and to get acquainted to his/her new surroundings. The classroom visit is not used as a basis of selection in any way but serves the child well in working through an adjustment period in his/her new school.

Each parent will be emailed a Chapelwood School for Young Children Parent Handbook to read. Upon receipt of this handbook, parents are asked to sign the Parent Handbook Acceptance form. Your signature indicates your commitment to know the contents of the handbook and indicates you will abide by the policies of Chapelwood School.

• **AGE GROUPING**

Our classes are based on the child's age as of **August 31** for the academic school year. Placement is made by the school's administration and is further based on parental input, teacher input, and the administration's assessment of the child's developmental level. Final placement will be determined by the school's administration.

• **STAFF**

Chapelwood School for Young Children has adopted a policy of hiring which requires all full-time/part-time Lead Teachers and Teacher Assistants to fulfill the requirements of the Texas Department of Health and Human Services Minimum Standards for working with young children, and the National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs.

All staff members participate in a continuous program of in-service education and studies for professional advancement in order to remain alert to the ever-changing needs of today's families and to the findings of current research. All teaching staff members are required to attain 24 clock hours of training within the field of early childhood education annually. All staff members are fingerprinted. In addition, a criminal history check is done on each employee. Chapelwood School encourages staff to get flu shots each year, but these shots are not required.

• **PROGRAMS**

Chapelwood School for Young Children offers programs for 3 months – Pre-K on Monday through Friday beginning at 9:00 a.m. and ending at 2:00 p.m. The school year starts in August and concludes in May.

• **FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Chapelwood School for Young Children is a non-profit program and tuition is based on the actual costs of operating the school divided by the number of students enrolled. Fees and tuition are set annually for the entire school year and are divided into nine monthly payments. Tuition is due by the first school day of the month. Payments will be considered late after the fifth school day of the month and a \$20.00 late fee will be assessed. Payments are the same regardless of the number of school days in each month. Tuition may be paid on a semester or yearly basis if desired.

Discounted tuition fees are offered to Chapelwood United Methodist Church members at a rate of 5% of their monthly tuition. Chapelwood School employees are given discounted rates for monthly tuition based upon the number of days worked. Discounted fees are for monthly tuition only and do not include registration fees or activity fees.

No credit on tuition is given for regularly scheduled school holidays, vacations, absences, bad weather days or class closures due to illness.

REGISTRATION FEES ARE NON-REFUNDABLE AND NON-TRANSFERRABLE, NO MATTER THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

Please keep in mind the following policies regarding financial arrangements:

1. In the case of withdrawal, two weeks' written notice must be on file. Registration fees and May tuition are never refunded. No credit on tuition is given for regularly scheduled school holidays and vacation periods.
2. A tuition fee will not be modified/refunded for absences due to short-term illness or bad weather school closings.
3. Checks must be made payable to **Chapelwood School**. *We cannot accept cash payments*. Your account must be paid by check, credit card (on-line only), electronic bank draft or money order.
4. Our teaching staff **cannot** accept payments. Please do not give your tuition check to them or leave it on any desk in the School Office.
5. You may mail your payments to: Chapelwood School for Young Children – 11140 Greenbay – Houston, TX 77024. Please indicate “Day School” on the outside of your envelope. These need to be sent with enough time to reach the school by the fifth school day of each month – **NO EXCEPTIONS!**
6. Tuition is divided into nine payments (collected August – April) and is due on the **first school day** of each month. A tuition payment must be received by 2:00 p.m. on the fifth school day of each month in which it is due. If tuition is not received by the fifth school day of the month, your account is considered delinquent, and a \$20.00 late fee will be added to your child's account. If you are faced with unforeseen circumstances, these need to be communicated to the Registrar so that a course of action can be taken, and your account may be rectified.
7. At the end of the fifth school day, when the account is considered delinquent, a late notice will be sent. If the account is not paid within seven calendar days, the family will be required to withdraw their child from the school.
8. Should a family be withdrawn for financial reasons more than 10 school days, the child's place will be forfeited, and the place will be filled from the wait list.
9. Changes in your child's schedule **must** be made in the Registrar's office. The parent will receive a confirmation copy of the schedule change and a tuition statement should a balance be due because of the schedule change. This balance is due within five days of the date on the statement or late fees will apply.
10. Returned checks will be charged back to your tuition account and a \$25.00 returned check fee will be assessed. Another check to replace the returned check will not be accepted. A cashier's check or money order is to be presented for the tuition plus the \$25.00 returned check fee. A late fee of \$20.00 will be assessed if the account is not paid in full within five days of the returned check notice date. **There will be a limit of two returned checks per account**. If two checks have been returned, personal checks will no longer be accepted, and the account must be paid with money orders or cashier's checks.
11. Parents may expect a complementary monthly statement of the current tuition fee amounts on or about the third (3rd) week of each month. The statement will be delivered via email through the SmartCare Program. *No monthly statements will be mailed to the families enrolled in the school.*
12. A parent who does not pick up his/her child by 2:10 p.m. will be assessed an administrative late fee of \$5.00 and charged an additional fee of \$1.00 per minute.
13. Tuition scholarships may be available for families with a financial need. Please contact the school Director for more information about scholarship opportunities.

- **S A F E T Y A N D E M E R G E N C Y P R E P A R E D N E S S**

We have written policies and procedures we believe will bring about safety in all classrooms. All staff are trained in these procedures and are committed to providing a safe environment for the children.

We follow the Spring Branch Independent School District (SBISD)'s guidelines in case of emergency or school closings. Therefore, if a disaster were to occur, it is important that you listen to the television/radio or check social media to see what SBISD is doing. If they are dismissing schools, we will do the same. Chapelwood School will also activate our **One Call Service** that will immediately begin contacting parents and staff via listed phone contacts about school closing and emergencies. In the event we have to move the children from the immediate school classroom areas for safety, we will consider the areas listed below. The final decision will be made by the school administration. The staff members and students will be directed to go to these areas **immediately**.

We will first move all children to the basement area in the Children's Building and await further instructions from the school administration.

Second, we will take the children to the basement area in the Youth Building of the church if the first area is not considered secure one and await further instructions from of the school administration.

Third, if none of these areas are safe, we will take the children to the Smith Building and await further instructions from the school administration.

If Chapelwood UMC is in total devastation, children will be taken to Memorial Drive Elementary by using staff cars, or walking.

*Staff members and the school administration will coordinate contacting parents via cell phone, and the School Administration will be available to release the children to their parents or guardian. **Staff members are to keep their cell phones and parent phone numbers in a place that can be quickly taken with them in the event of an emergency.***

In compliance of Minimum Standards of the DHHS Subchapter W. Division 2: **Chapelwood School for Young Children maintains an emergency preparedness plan that is designed to ensure the safety of children during an emergency. This plan is on file in the school office and in place in each classroom of the school. Parents, upon request, may have the plan made available to them for review during normal school hours.**

All classrooms used by the children are monitored by a fire alarm system and remain in constant contact with the Village Fire Department. The school holds monthly fire/foul weather/intruder drills so the staff and the children will know how to handle the situation most efficiently (evacuate the building or shelter in place). The school has annual inspections by the Health Department, Fire Department, and Department of Health and Human Services. The school halls, offices, parking lots and playgrounds are monitored by security cameras. All staff members have current CPR and First Aid training.

The children are to always remain in the secured school area during the school day (unless on a supervised outing as a class) to ensure a safe environment. However, the ability to maintain the safety of the children depends on all the adults who enter and exit the facility. The gates leading to the parking lot areas are a high concern for the school staff. **PLEASE BE SURE THAT THESE GATES ARE ALWAYS CLOSED PROPERLY AND SECURED UPON EXITING THE SCHOOL AND ENTERING THE SCHOOL.** A child who is just adjusting to the school may try to leave the facility to "get mommy" to give her one last hug or kiss. This can lead to an extremely dangerous situation. The school gates and exterior doors will be locked each day at 9:30 a.m. and will remain locked until 1:45 p.m... When the gates and exterior doors are locked, all visitors must enter the school on the east side by the School Office (Entrance 5 under the green awning). Push the intercom button to ask for admittance and proceed to the School Office **with your driver's license** to obtain a security badge. This badge must be worn by all visitors for the duration of the time they are on the school campus.

THE PARKING LOTS OF THE CHURCH ARE CELL PHONE-FREE ZONES FROM 8:30 A.M. – 3:00 P.M. ON SCHOOL DAYS. In addition, we ask all parents to refrain from talking on their cell phone while they are on the school premises in order that they may give their full attention to the children.

Due to licensing requirements regarding the number of children on the playground and the age range, the school playgrounds may only be used for children currently enrolled at Chapelwood School. Please do not play with your child on the playgrounds while our school is in session. If you wish to play with your child before or after school (after 2:00 p.m.), **adult supervision is required at all times**. Please remember that you are asked to **leave the toddler motor room by 2:20 p.m. and all school playgrounds by 2:30 p.m.** so the custodial staff may begin their cleaning process. Furthermore, the playground rules are posted on the playgrounds and must be followed even after school hours. Children need to have consistency since we require them to follow those rules during the school day.

The School Garden is for school use only and may only be accessed when a school staff member is present.

Chapelwood School for Young Children will do everything in its power to secure the safety of the children in our program. All policies and procedures were written to provide our children with opportunities to prosper and develop in a nurturing atmosphere, secure from today's misdeeds and hazards. The school administration will always consider issues with a "safety first" attitude for the children's sake when considering daily routines and changes.

• DAILY PROCEDURES AND ABSENCES

Each child must be accompanied by a parent/guardian to the child's assigned room. **IT IS MANDATORY FOR THE PARENT/GUARDIAN TO SIGN THEIR CHILD IN AND SIGN OUT ON A DAILY BASIS** while the child is greeted by the teacher. It is very beneficial for the child to witness the positive communication between these two caring adults in his/her life.

The teacher can help and support the parent and child if events or problems are communicated. It is helpful to hand the teacher a note or communicate through a phone call about any issues which are particularly stressful for the child. A follow-up appointment or a phone call can be helpful if you have more than just a few minutes of information to deliver. The teaching staff has made it a policy to schedule from 9:00-9:05 a.m. each morning to receive the children, exchange any pertinent information about the child, and help all the children transition into the class. If your child is arriving after 9:05 a.m. and you wish to exchange pertinent information, please either leave the teacher a note in her school mailbox or leave her a message with the school Administrative Assistant so that the teacher may call you later. Your teacher will be sharing her email with you in which you may also leave her an email message.

The staff in each classroom will post a schedule of the daily instructional program for the parents to view. Your child's environment will include age-appropriate activities in:

MUSIC EXPERIENCES/MOVEMENTS
LITERATURE AND STORYTELLING
CREATIVE ACTIVITIES
INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP PHYSICAL ACTIVITY--INDOOR AND OUTDOOR
SOCIO-DRAMATIC PLAY
MATH AND SCIENCE ACTIVITIES
LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH
READING, WRITING AND READINESS ACTIVITIES
NUTRITION EDUCATION /GARDENING
SPANISH LANGUAGE EXPERIENCES (2 Years and Older)

Time schedules vary between groups according to developmental needs (e.g., attention span, physical ability, etc.). The goals and objectives of our support programs, Music (offered at all ages), Motor Development (offered beginning at 2 years of age), and Spanish (beginning at 2 years of age), have been included in the appendix of this handbook. These programs are a vital part of Chapelwood School and will be scheduled into the daily routine of your child.

Each schedule is designed to enhance the group physically, emotionally, socially, and intellectually. The parent is responsible for notifying the teacher if the child is to be absent, late, or on vacation. This is important for the teacher to know.

In the event the parent cannot be reached by the staff, any child absent for one month will be dropped from the program.

• **I L L N E S S**

Chapelwood School for Young Children will keep accurate emergency information for each child. These records include your authorization of who should be called in case of your child's illness if the mother or father cannot be reached. It is the parent's responsibility to keep these records current if addresses, telephone numbers or other relevant information changes.

If your child is sick or injured at school, he/she will be kept in the school Nurse's office. The Nurse will:

- 1. Assess the nature of the illness; and**
- 2. Notify the parent(s) (or the authorized alternate emergency contact if the parents cannot be reached). Once the parent has been contacted, they must come pick the child up from schooloffice within 45 minutes; otherwise, an administrative late fee of \$5.00 and an additional fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged.**
- 3. If it is an emergency that requires the child be seen by a physician, Chapelwood staff may transport the child to the Memorial City Medical Center Emergency Room. The parent will be responsible for any charges incurred.**

If your child contracts any of the following illnesses/conditions, it is imperative that the school Nurse be notified immediately. This list includes Flu, Giardiasis, Hand Foot and Mouth Disease (HFMD), Lice, Pinworms, Pinkeye, Croup, Mononucleosis, Shingles, Strep Throat, Fifth Disease, Rotavirus, Impetigo, Roseola, RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus), and COVID.

Should your child contract any of the above-listed illnesses/conditions, it is important to get a note from the child's physician before returning to school. The note must be from your child's current pediatrician stating that the child is not contagious and is healthy enough to resume all school activities. The physician's note should be submitted to the school Nurse before your child can return to their classroom. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the nurse, Abi Von Feldt RN, at (713)354-4469 or avonfeldt@chapelwoodschool.org.

Effective communication can also help prevent other children from getting ill. Once we are informed of any contagious illness within your child's classroom, our school Nurse will email an informative letter to all the parents within that class, letting them know what illness their child may have been exposed to, signs and symptoms to look out for, as well as recommendations for treating the illness if your child possibly displays symptoms. Our staff is trained to observe symptoms as well as to use illness prevention techniques, such as frequent hand washing. We love our children and will make every effort to protect the health of all our children. State licensing requires that Chapelwood School for Young Children use the Communicable Disease Chart as a guide to determine length of illness, readmission criteria, and treatment which is necessary to reduce the chance of contamination to the children.

A sick child belongs at home where he/she is more comfortable. Please notify your child's teacher and/or the school Nurse if your child is going to be absent for more than one day.

Chapelwood School's Core Team has adopted a no waiver policy for immunizations. All immunizations must be kept up to date. It is of vital concern to the State of Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services that your child's

medical records be kept up to date. When your infant through preschooler receives booster shots or has a change in medical information, this must be communicated to the school through a “shot record” or with dates supplied by you to be added to the records. All immunization records must be up to date prior to your child starting school at Chapelwood. We do not accept any alternative immunization schedules. Any child who has medical records which are out-of-date can be excluded from attending classes by the State of Texas, licensing division--this will be enforced by the school as well. We have included, in the appendix of this handbook, a copy of the State Vaccine Requirements for Texas Children chart which is supplied and followed by the State of Texas in examining our school’s records. Please refer to this chart when checking yourchild’s records.

If your child has any type of procedure (including stitches, cast, splint, or sling) and/or surgery performed during the school year, your child may not return to school without a note from his/her doctor stating that the child is able to return to school and is able to participate in all school activities. You must provide this note to the school Nurse before your child is readmitted to class.

ANY AND ALL DOCTOR’S NOTES MUST COME FROM YOUR CHILDS CURRENT PEDIATRICIAN.

The child MUST be kept at home under the following circumstances:

1. Fever of 100.4 degrees or higher:

Children with fever must be excluded from school until they have been fever-free for 24 hours, including a full school day, without anti-fever medication.

2. Diarrhea:

Children with two or more diarrhea stools in a twenty-four-hour period will be excluded from school until the child has been free from diarrhea for a 24-hour period and has been absent for a full school day.

3. Other symptoms which indicate that a child belongs at home are:

- vomiting within the previous 24-hour period.**
- a heavy, constant, non-clear nasal discharge.**
- a constant cough or sore throat.**
- fussy, cranky, and generally not himself/herself.**
- a skin rash.**
- symptoms of a possible communicable disease; and/or**
- live or dead lice and/or nits (lice eggs).**

Following an illness, a child may return when:

- 24 hours have elapsed since the last diarrhea stool, vomiting or fever and has been absent for a full school day.**
- In infants and toddlers, it is determined the symptoms are related to teething, and the child is not running a fever.**
- It is determined by your doctor that the nasal discharge is due to allergies and no infection is present.**
- He/she has been exposed to a communicable disease, but the school has been notified so the incubation period can be discussed, and it can be determined on what days he/she should stay at home.**
- The child’s physician clears the child if the infection was contagious or thought to be contagious when discharged from school. The child’s pediatrician must furnish written clearance for the child to return to school. In addition, the student must be away from the school for the prescribed period of time as stated in this handbook.**
- All lice or nits are removed from an infected child, and the child is seen by the school Nurse prior to returning to the classroom.**

• MEDICATION AND FOOD ALLERGY PLAN

The policy of Chapelwood School for Young Children does authorize our school Nurse to give medication that includes prescription as well as non-prescription drugs. However, for medication to be given at school, the student must be **non-contagious and on long-term medication that cannot be administered other than during school hours.**

1. You must complete the **Medical Prescription/Parental Permission Form** in the school Nurse's office. This three-page form includes a Food Allergy Action Plan that must be signed by the child's physician.
2. Prescription medication or non-prescription medication will be provided by the parent.
3. Medication must be taken to the school Nurse the day the medication is to be started.
4. Medication must be in the correctly labeled prescription container or manufacturer's package labeled for that student.
5. Medications are NEVER to be kept in school bags or lunch boxes - they are to be taken to the school Nurse. All medications will be disposed of if they are not picked up on the last day of school.
6. A child may not come to school while taking medication that mask symptoms of a contagious illness or medications with the side effect of drowsiness such as Benadryl and pain medication.

All Epi-Pens and Inhalers and paperwork MUST be turned in to the school Nurse by your child's first day of school for your child to begin their first day.

Chapelwood School will be a nut-free campus for the first week of school. **ALL TWO AND UNDER CLASSROOMS WILL BE NUT-FREE FOR THE ENTIRE SCHOOL YEAR.** After the first week of school, teachers in the Three and older classes will notify you whether their classrooms will continue to be nut-free for the remainder of the year.

All children will be involved in physical fitness activities (recess as well as motor skills) which are an important part of the curriculum. If you believe your child is too ill to participate, he/she will probably be more comfortable at home in familiar surroundings. We do not staff the classrooms to allow one child to remain indoors or excluded from an activity due to illness while the remainder of the class plays outdoors or participates in a physical activity.

• PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO ABUSE AND NEGLECT OF CHILDREN

All Chapelwood School employees are trained annually on preventing and responding to abuse and neglect of children. Information is available for parents in the School Office on this issue. In addition, the school may send home information to parents or direct parents to information on the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

How to Report

If a child show signs of physical abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect, report this to the school Director. The school Director will then be responsible for reporting this to the Child Protective Services (CPS) at 713-394-4000.

Investigation

CPS is required by the Family Code to investigate every report of abuse or neglect received. The code requires an interview with the subject child at any reasonable time and place, which may be during school hours.

Teachers who see evidence of abuse or neglect and who report it in good faith belief that such conditions exist and do so for the best interest of the child or children are immune from liability, and their reports are kept confidential.

• SCHOOL CLOSINGS

In case of severe weather (i.e., hurricane, tornado, high water, high winds, etc.), please listen to news reports. We will automatically cancel school if SBISD cancels or if the roads are impassable. If an emergency exists at ChapelwoodUMC (for example, no heat, electricity, school closing etc.), we will contact our **One Call Service** to begin calling parents from their listed phone numbers to alert them of the school closing or emergencies.

In the event of severe weather conditions which would prohibit you from picking up your child, we reserve the right to release your child to an authorized person listed on your information form. In the event we are unable to reach you, we will post a notice on the office door indicating to whom your child was released and the time of pick up.

Each family should refer to the school calendar for scheduled school closings to make arrangements to take time off from work or to have alternate care in place for your child on those days.

In the event of unscheduled school closings due to severe weather or other unforeseen circumstances, there will be an attempt to make up the day(s) missed. The final decision regarding makeup days will come from the school Core Team.

• COMMUNICATION AND CALENDAR

Parent communication with the staff at Chapelwood School is vital to the success of your child. The following forms of communication have been set up as a system to keep you informed of school events and calendar events:

Infant/Toddler: The Infant/Toddler program uses daily sheets called the “Heart to Heart” reports. Parents are requested to fill out this form every day and leave it on the counter in the lobby. The staff then fills in the information on these sheets and places it in your child’s diaper bag before they go home. Other forms of communication in the Nursery are monthly calendars which will keep you informed of the curriculum in the classroom, and teacher emails.

The Preschool: Through notes in the tote bags, monthly calendars, newsletters, and teacher emails, the teachers will deliver curriculum information and school events to you. Parents should also check the classroom bulletin board at drop off and pick up as they often contain information which was sent home or will be sent home that day. If your child is in a carpool, it can often result in the loss of information through the shuffling of totes during the ride home. Understanding that the teacher will be unable to have a lengthy conversation, parents are also encouraged to communicate face-to-face with the teacher at drop off and pick up times as well. This is a good time, however, to establish the need to hold a conference with your child’s teacher. Other forms of communication in the school are phone calls to the school requesting that the teacher call you, a note handed to the teacher at drop off or pick up, or a message for the teacher on her school email. Please know that teachers may not be able to answer your email during the school day as they will be with the children. Parents can expect a response by the next school day.

A yearly calendar which contains school openings, closings, all-school events, and holidays is provided for parents before the beginning of school. The school does not follow the SBISD calendar directly but does try to observe the holiday closings scheduled by SBISD. Chapelwood School will not have the same in-service days as SBISD as it does not correlate to the seminars and workshops offered to private schools such as ours. In addition to a yearly calendar, the school provides more detailed monthly calendars with the Chapelwood School newsletters and weekly emails to the parents.

- **REQUIRED ENROLLMENT PAPERWORK**

At the time of enrollment, you must have the following forms on file in our office:

1. **ENROLLMENT INFORMATION FORM** – This form identifies both parents/guardian of the child, along with their phone numbers, emergency authorization information, and those to whom your child may be released. Please be sure this information is kept current throughout the school year. Updates should be made in person in the school office as needed.
2. **FINANCIAL POLICY AGREEMENT** – This form details the financial policies for enrollment and participation in Chapelwood School. It outlines the fiduciary responsibilities of the parent/guardian for each student they have enrolled in the school.
3. **RELEASE OF LIABILITY FORM** – This form must be signed by **both** parents/guardians.
4. **RELEASE, INDEMNIFICATION AND AUTHORIZATION TO CONSENT TO EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT OF A MINOR FORM** - This form gives authorization to Chapelwood to seek emergency medical treatment of a child if necessary.
5. **PARENT INFORMATION FORM** - This form indicates your rights as a parent in our school and explains admission requirements as set by the Dept. of Health and Human Services regarding illnesses, shot records, and follow-up visits to your child's physician.
6. **HEALTH REQUIREMENT FORM** - Your child's health is a matter of major importance to all of us. The health form must be signed by your child's physician. The physician must have examined your child within the past year. We also require that your child have certain immunizations and tuberculin clearance which we keep on file in the office. A copy of therequired immunizations is available in the appendix of this handbook. **The health form must be in our files upon enrollment, but no later than the first week of August. Without this report on file, your child will be refused entrance to the school. Chapelwood School Core Team has adopted a no waiver policy on immunizations.**

You will need to make changes on your child's release information when carpools change, nannies change, etc. as this contains information about who can pick up your child. **It is imperative that all pertinent information be updated with the child's teacher and in the School Office as necessary to ensure the safety of your child!**

- **CHILDREN'S TOTE BAGS AND CUBBIES**

You should check your child's school tote bag daily. Your child's tote is used as the staff's primary communication system for monthly newsletters, parent evenings, conferences, etc. Tote bags/cubbies are not intended to be used by parents as a means of communication for birthday parties, etc. If you would like to have a party for your child, please mail your invitations instead of using the school tote bag/cubby system. Your child should also have a complete change of clothing in his/her classroom in the event of an accident. You will need to make a change in the clothing at least two to three times a year to reflect seasonal changes in the weather.

Should you have an article of interest or special community event you would like to share with other parents, please bring the notice or article the school Director for approval. Nothing should be placed on school bulletin boards, on doorways, in tote bags or in the cubbies without prior approval of the school's administration.

● **ARRIVAL TIME**

At 9:00 a.m. the children should enter their assigned classroom ready to begin the school segment of the day. School hours are from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. We will not supervise those children who arrive at the program before 9:00 a.m. If you bring your child earlier, you must stay with him/her until school begins. You may supervise him/her on the playground abiding by the playground rules which are a part of this handbook. You will be asked to leave the playground if you are permitting your child to break the playground rules as this is not in good standards to conflict with the daily safety rules of the school.

The teachers are never free to discuss problems with you when they have the responsibility of the children. You may call and make an appointment for scheduled conferences at any time you wish with your child's teacher and the administration. Prior to 9:00 a.m., the teachers are very busy setting up their classrooms and attending to the last-minute details.

It is essential that your child arrive at school promptly. The school day begins at 9:00 a.m., and many activities start as early as 9:05 a.m. The teacher is prepared to greet all the children who enter the classroom between 9:00-9:05 a.m. Children arriving after this time should prepare to quietly enter the classroom as the daily flow of events has already begun. In some cases, the parent and child may need to wait outside the classroom until the teacher indicates it is OK to enter. If your child arrives after his/her class has left the classroom to take part in an activity, it will be the responsibility of the parent to take the child to the activity location as posted outside the child's classroom. You may not drop your child off in the school office or in another classroom as we are unable to change the ratios in the classrooms and this could cause your child to feel insecure and uncomfortable with a different set of teachers. It is the responsibility of the parents to show discipline of promptness to your children by being on time.

A parent will be notified immediately if a child is in a carpool situation, and he/she is not dropped off properly. All parents should check with their carpool drivers to be sure they understand that each child must be walked into the classroom and not dropped off outside of the door.

● **DISMISSAL TIME**

A parent may authorize another person to pick up his/her child by either:

1. Listing the authorized person on the Enrollment Information Form.
2. Bringing in a written, dated, permission slip to the child's teacher authorizing the child's release to someone else on the day of the release; or
3. Sending an email to the school Administrative Assistant with the child's name, the teacher's name, the date, the person authorized to pick up (including their phone number, and address) and their relationship to the child.

NO CHILD WILL BE RELEASED TO AN UNAUTHORIZED PERSON EVEN IF THE PERSON IS KNOWN TO THE CHILD. WRITTEN PERMISSION IS MANDATORY. WE WILL ASK FOR IDENTIFICATION SUCH AS A TEXAS DRIVER'S LICENSE. NO CHILD MAY BE PICKED UP BY ANYONE UNDER THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN (18).

Please notify the school immediately if you are going to be detained. This will not excuse you from being assessed late charges. A late notice will be completed upon your arrival and a late fee will be added to your next monthly tuition statement.

A parent who does not pick up their child by 2:10 p.m. will be assessed an administrative late fee of \$5.00 and will be charged an additional fee of \$1.00 per minute. Even if the parent contacts the school to make special arrangements, these fees will be assessed.

Parents are free to visit on the playground after the 2:00 p.m. pickup, but are asked to leave the school grounds by 2:30 p.m. Empty classrooms should not be used by parents and children after 2:00 p.m. Our custodial staff is contracted to begin

cleaning the rooms and tending the outside grounds at 2:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Because chemicals and hazardous products are used in the cleaning process, we ask that you leave the premises to avoid contact with these chemicals. This will allow the custodial staff to complete their jobs and provide optimum safety for your child.

If a parent is unable to send an email and calls to authorize the emergency release of a child, we will verify that the caller is actually the parent by asking information which is relevant to your child. If there is still some doubt, we will ask to call you back and continue to ask you information pertinent to your child.

We are legally unable to refuse visitation or the privilege of picking up a child to a parent UNLESS WE HAVE A CERTIFICATE OF CUSTODY from the legal parent or guardian with physical custody. It is the parent's responsibility to furnish a CURRENT CERTIFIED COPY OF THE COURT DIVORCE DECREE AND CUSTODY ORDER FOR YOUR CHILD'S FILE. The order must be specific as to who has legal custody, visitation rights, and care for the child (ren) in the event of holidays.

• **P A R K I N G L O T S A F E T Y**

PLEASE FOLLOW THE RULES FOR PARENT PARKING. DO NOT LEAVE YOUR CAR PARKED IN THE DELIVERY LANE. ALL CHILDREN MUST BE WALKED INTO THE BUILDING BY A PARENT/GUARDIAN. DO NOT LEAVE YOUR ENGINE RUNNING OR LEAVE CHILDREN IN PARKED CARS. THIS IS AGAINST THE LAW AND WILL BE REPORTED TO THE PROPER AUTHORITIES. IN ADDITION, ALL PARKING LOTS ARE CELL PHONE-FREE ZONES FROM 8:30 A.M. – 3:00 P.M. ON SCHOOL DAYS.

The following rules must be followed, so we can achieve safety in the parking lot:

1. *When driving in the parking lot, obey all directional arrows--one way.*
2. *Parents must not park in the drive located next to the sidewalk outside of the building--this poses a safety hazard.*
3. *Do not speed over the speed bumps or drive around the speed bumps.*
4. *Fasten your child in his/her seat belt before you leave our parking lot. It is unlawful to transport a child without a safety belt or restraint.*
5. *The designated handicapped parking spaces are reserved for those persons who qualify with properly marked license plates or window decals.*
6. *Our parking lot is a cell phone-free zone. Please do not text or talk on your cell phone while driving in our parking lot.*

NEITHER CHAPELWOOD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH NOR CHAPELWOOD SCHOOL FOR YOUNG CHILDREN IS LIABLE FOR THEFT OR DAMAGE TO VEHICLES OR PERSONAL PROPERTY IN THE PARKING LOT.

• **P E R S O N A L B E L O N G I N G S / C L O T H I N G**

All children should wear loose, comfortable clothing appropriate for active, involved experiences. Parents may want to label clothing with the child's full name to help us return any lost or misplaced clothing. Furthermore, each child (regardless of age) should have a complete change of clothing in his/her classroom including socks and underwear. Each child will be indoors/outdoors and in (or near) potentially messy activities. **PLEASE AVOID ANY ARTICLE OF CLOTHING THAT IS NOT WASHABLE.** Smocks are worn in the classroom while children are painting or participating in messy activities, but sometimes creativity takes a turn and is messy resulting in stained clothing. Play is our work and children should be dressed appropriately.

Closed-toed tennis shoes or rubber soled shoes must be worn at all times for safety reasons. Motor development classes and music movement experiences do not permit children to participate without these types of shoes. No sandals, boots, or crocs, please.

Occasionally, your child may return home in borrowed clothing from our school and with his/her own soiled items in a plastic bag. Please launder and return the borrowed clothing for another child to use. Lost and found articles can be claimed in the school office.

• TOYS/OBJECTS FROM HOME

Except for transitional objects that are needed in the very opening days of school to help ease your child's transition from home to school, we ask that you leave your child's toys at home or in the car. Please try to help your child leave them at home. Parents who have children in the infant and toddler programs may choose to send a favorite "lovey", blanket, or pacifier to school as a comfort item. The staff will make every attempt to return these items to your child's bag when he/she has lost interest in this transition object and has settled into the daily routine. These items may or may not be necessary during the year, but whatever the case, our staff will work with you to ensure the safety of these items at the end of each day. Some teachers have regularly scheduled "show and tell" time, and items brought for this purpose should be labeled with the child's name and put into the child's cubby until the proper time.

Please make sure the child understands the items brought for "show and tell" will be shared. We cannot be responsible for broken, borrowed or lost toys or clothing. When children are bringing pets from home, the school must have prior knowledge of the arrival. As a licensed facility, the school must provide documentation at the facility that animals requiring vaccinations have been vaccinated according to the state and local requirements. Parents in the classroom must be advised when animals are present. The animals must not create unsanitary conditions.

Your child will have no use for toy guns or weapons in this program because he/she will be involved with friends here, not enemies. Weapons frequently frighten other children even in play. Many other modes of play will offer your child avenues to express emotion or power. Costumes depicting superheroes are often "adopted" by young children and they often cannot distinguish between fantasy and reality, thus depending on adult direction and intervention. Responsibility for weapons is appropriate for adults with a more mature sense of self-control and judgment.

• CURRICULUM

Chapelwood School has written curriculum plans for each classroom that are based on knowledge of child development and learning and assessment of individual needs and interests. The learning environment and activities for the children reflect our program's philosophy and goals. The teachers have clearly defined goals and objectives for the individual children that guide the curriculum planning. Teachers accurately assess the skills and progress of each child in the program using observations, assessment tools, and activity records. Teachers identify children who experience difficulties in behavior or development and develop a plan to help children acquire acceptable behavior or develop skills as needed.

Developmentally appropriate materials and equipment are available to infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Materials and equipment that project diverse racial, gender, and age attributes are selected and used. Active media that children can control, such as computers, may be in the classrooms for children where appropriate but will not replace highly valued early childhood activities and materials such as art, blocks, sand, water, books, exploration with writing materials, and dramatic play. Some classrooms may have live animals such as fish, turtles, etc. These animals will be secured in appropriate enclosures and will only be touched or handled by the children under the direct supervision of the teacher.

At Chapelwood School, the teachers provide a variety of developmentally appropriate activities and experiences that are selected to engage children in active, meaningful learning and to achieve the following goals:

- a. foster positive self-identity and sense of emotional well-being
- b. develop social skills and knowledge
- c. encourage children to think, reason, question, and experiment (as used in mathematics, science, and social studies)
- d. encourage language (speaking, listening) and literacy development (emerging reading, writing awareness and skills)
- e. enhance physical development and skills
- f. encourage and demonstrate sound health, safety, and nutritional practices

-
- g. encourage creative expression, representation, and appreciation for the arts
 - h. respect cultural diversity
 - i. grow in love for God and others

The teachers provide materials and time for the children to select their own activities during the day. Children may choose from among several activities that the teacher has planned, or the children initiate within a “learning center classroom environment.”

Routine tasks are incorporated into the program as a means of furthering children’s learning, self-help, and social skills. Routines such as diapering, toileting, eating, dressing, and sleeping are handled in a relaxed, reassuring, and individualized manner based on developmental needs. Our teachers plan with families to make toileting, feeding, and the development of other self-regulation skills a positive experience for children.

Children three years old and up must be fully potty trained by the first day of school to attend Chapelwood School. Our school has adopted a policy of “no pull-up” diapers for children as this does not encourage self-regulation of the body functions relative to toilet learning.

● DISCIPLINE POLICY OF THE SCHOOL

Our children live in a society which requires self-discipline, consideration of others, respect for property, as well as respect for themselves. Teachers support children’s emotional development, assisting children to be comfortable, relaxed, happy, and involved in play and other activities. The staff helps children deal with anger, sadness, and frustration by comforting, identifying, and reflecting feelings and helping children use various strategies to express emotions and solve social problems. Children are encouraged to verbalize feelings and ideas.

By setting clear, consistent, and reasonable limits on your child's behavior, we give him/her the security of knowing exactly what is expected. Then, life becomes predictable. Within these limits, the child will be encouraged to make choices and successful decisions. The staff uses children’s mistakes as learning opportunities, describing the situation, and encouraging children’s evaluation of the problem rather than imposing the solution. A child's growing self-esteem flourishes as he/she experiences success with a variety of tasks and is safe to learn from natural mistakes. We do not expect perfection from any adult or child.

As the children grow in an age-appropriate environment, the teachers will set reasonable limits and/or will stop and re-direct unacceptable behavior without humiliation or physical punishment. More importantly, the teachers will model, reinforce, and nurture positive actions. Often it is possible for an experienced teacher to re-direct or anticipate a child's behavior before a negative action occurs thus resulting in prevention.

Often parents ask us if we use "time out" as a form of discipline. If you mean that a child is told to sit in a chair or specific area alone to "think about" what he/she has done, the answer is "no, we do not". A young child does not "think" about wrong actions, and it is our responsibility to teach the child the words he/she should or could use or the actions he/she could or should take when frustrated. In other words, we intervene in a situation to allow the child to vent his/her feelings safely and to regain control, while giving the child the words to use to solve his/her problems. Usually, the child stays with the group and solves the problem, letting other children hear and see the solution. If possible, the staff “re-creates” the frustrating play situation and stays with the child to offer assistance and words in a positive way thus allowing for success and practice. Just as adults need practice to perfect a new sport or trade, children require this same need.

Occasionally, a child will lose control of his/her physical actions, voice, and language to the extent that he/she must be removed from the group for the child to regain control and to safeguard the other children. Removal is not a punishment. As soon as the child is quiet, the teacher will plan with him/her what he/she will do when he/she returns to the group. This version of “time out” is a solution to a problem because it teaches the child what to do. Our responsibility is to model the words and actions a child can use the rest of his/her life to solve problems.

Our goal is to have a secure, happy child who is confident of his/her own ability and able to live and communicate with the people around him. We will frequently arrange conferences with parents to communicate our methods and to discuss how we can work consistently together for the child's optimal growth.

A telephone call from the school should not be considered a bad report or an emergency. Our role is to support your family by conferencing with parents for a variety of reasons. Often, we need to communicate a situation and the actions we took while working with your child. Sometimes we need to inform the parents about feelings the child has expressed. Often, we need to ask questions about a child's behavior at home to be realistic about his/her behavior at the school. All information is confidential and is used to help us nurture and teach your child.

• BEHAVIORAL CONCERNS

During a child's enrollment in the school, he/she may exhibit some behavioral concerns which can manifest themselves in the form of spitting, head banging, biting, hitting and temper tantrums. While most of the behavioral actions do not inflict harm or reduce the safety of the children, some of these behaviors can cause concern by harming or frightening the other children in the classroom. For example, occasional and infrequent biting can be displayed by pre-verbal children who will bite instead of communicating when confronted with a friend who chooses not to share a toy. Other behaviors, such as temper tantrums, can often result when limitations are enforced in the classroom.

At the point when the problem behavior becomes more frequent, severe, and/or results in injury to the child or his/her classmates, the school will contact the parents for a conference. Parents must realize that when a classroom environment becomes unsafe or unpredictable for all of the children, the school must intervene and take the necessary steps to bring about safety. The parents and the school will consult to look for possible changes which may have triggered the behavior and work as a team to search for possible solutions, if time permits.

In the early childhood years, a child's ability to "communicate" frustration is not fully developed by the time he/she enters play with peers. Therefore, actions are used instead of reasoning abilities. It is with this in mind that Chapelwood School for Young Children may consult with a Speech and Language Pathologist or Licensed Professional Counselor to assist the staff and the parents with advice should there be a need.

The school will ask the parents if they wish for the Speech and Language Pathologist to attend the conference, so he/she may offer her expertise and recommendations. However, if the situation escalates to a "daily" pattern of inappropriate behavior, the school will ask the parents to seek immediate and necessary care for their child so as to reduce the chances of setting up a "negative irreversible environment" which may be difficult to correct. "Labeling" can and will occur by children who identify the child with the inappropriate behavior, and this is quite often communicated to parents at pick up and drop off times. While this labeling seems cruel, it cannot always be avoided and finding immediate professional help is a necessity at this point before the child's self-esteem is damaged.

During the conference, the parent/staff/professional team will formulate a written plan of action to follow to bring about the desired change. This document will include, but is not limited to, the type of controls and actions which will be implemented, when necessary, dates of follow-up conferences, responsibility of parents and school staff, agreement of desired behavior, and target dates for improvement. At that time, it will be up to the parents to decide to contract with a Speech and Language Pathologist or with other professional sources who would work with the teachers in the classroom to help bring about the desired behavioral changes. The school may seek the pathologist's advice prior to the conference but cannot proceed with any further remedial intervention without parental consent.

• NAPPING

Children ages infants to 3 years are required by licensing to take a nap while at school. Children who are not in the infant's room are required to bring a labeled nap mat every day they come to school. If a child is in a napping classroom, that child may not be dropped off after 12:00p.m., during nap time as it disrupts the entire class and wakes up children who have fallen asleep. If a child is leaving early from a napping classroom the parent or guardian must be prompt and pick that child up by noon so to minimize the disruption to the entire classroom.

Following the conference, the staff and parents will work together as a team to bring about the desired change in behavior. Should the efforts of both parties be unable to change the behavior during the allotted time, the school's administration will conference again with the child's parents and at that time will offer the following recommendations:

- 1. The parents may wish to seek outside intervention with a professional who may offer additional recommendations to both the school and the family (the school will offer names of those professionals who work with young children).*
- 2. The parents may wish to reduce the number of hours/days the child is in our school to receive outside intervention and target the behavior.*
- 3. The parents may wish to withdraw their child on a temporary basis until the inappropriate behavior is under control (the child's place in the school would be kept open for a specified time).*
- 4. The parents may wish to permanently withdraw their child from the facility and place their child in another setting more applicable to his/her needs.*

This school reserves the right to and will request that a family withdraw their child if it is determined the parent cannot abide by our policies, or if we cannot adequately meet the needs of the child/family due to classroom size, teacher experience, budgetary limitations, or the inability to preserve the safety of the other children.

• P A R E N T C O M M U N I C A T I O N

Throughout the year, you will receive many notes from both your child's teacher and the school office. Please read them! It is very upsetting for a child to arrive late and/or miss a special activity just because his/her tote bag was not checked daily, and notes were not read. Often classes will hold special events such as "Muffins with Mom" or "Donuts with Dad" as a means of bringing the families into the school curriculum.

Each Friday, you will receive an email from the school announcing upcoming events, school happenings and important dates to add to your calendar. In addition, notices of upcoming events and changes will be posted on the bulletin boards inside and outside of the classrooms for you to view. You will also receive emails from your teacher to inform you of school events. Be mindful that carpooling can reduce the chances of notes/newsletters arriving home due to the number of children involved in the carpool.

Communication regarding a child's behavior and life is crucial. All of the teachers are interested in knowing facts related to your child's well-being. All information shared with the preschool staff on the Supplemental History Form is considered confidential.

• C O N F E R E N C E S

The school has made arrangements to provide parents with information about their child (ren) in a more formal manner two times during the academic school year. It is always understood, however, that a parent/teacher conference may be called at any time, by either party, to discuss concerns regarding a child's development, behavior, or otherwise.

The fall conference is intended to discuss how your child has acclimated to the school classroom. It is also a time to discuss concerns that the staff may have regarding your child's adjustment.

The spring conference is intended to further discuss your child's performance for the entire year. This conference will reflect the growth and developmental accomplishments of your child from the beginning of the year.

The school uses the basic guidelines for early childhood education in the classroom to measure your child's development and will use a summary report during the end of the year conference. The parents will be given a copy of this comprehensive report for their own records.

● P A R E N T C O N C E R N S A N D C O M P L A I N T S

As an early childhood school, we are a community of children, parents, and staff all interacting and sharing our lives together. In a community, people work closely together and hopefully interactions are positive, helpful, kind, and understanding. Yet it is to be expected that from time-to-time people will experience some conflict, some concerns, and some difficulties.

We recognize that parenting is one of the most difficult and intense activities any adult can undertake. We want you as parents to share your thoughts, hopes, and dreams for your children. We know that you want what is best for your child and that your job is to advocate and protect your child.

We, as a staff, will make mistakes, create misunderstandings, and occasionally miscommunicate. When mistakes ~~occur~~ we want you to tell us. As a staff, it is our hope to offer your family the best early childhood services possible. To meet our goal, we need your input, your suggestions, your questions, and your concerns.

When you have a concern, please remember...

- ❖ Teachers really want to please parents. They really want to make you happy and have you very satisfied with the care your child is receiving. It is difficult for teachers to be happy with the children when they know you are not happy!
- ❖ Talk to teachers directly whenever possible. If you feel comfortable, ask your child's teacher first about any concerns. Teachers prefer that you talk with them directly, but they do understand if you prefer to speak with the school Director.
- ❖ Realize that if you have a concern about a teacher and speak with the school Director instead of the teacher, the Director will need to investigate and probably talk to the teacher directly about your concern. The Director will deal in a straightforward manner with the teacher so she can improve her performance and correct any mistakes.
- ❖ Teachers will not "take it out on your child" after you have made a complaint. We would not hire anyone at our school that would react in such an inappropriate manner. The reverse is more likely to be true. After expressing a concern, your child's teacher will be more conscientious about your issue and will provide better care. Remember there are two adults in the room with the children, so there is usually an extra set of eyes.
- ❖ Consider using the "one is OK" rule. With minor issues, allow staff to make a mistake once or twice. But, when it becomes a pattern, it is time to bring it to their attention.
- ❖ On the other hand, don't allow concerns to "build up." As concerns occur, share them with the staff. It is always disturbing to the school Director to find out later that parents have had a number of concerns and never expressed them to anyone except other parents. Speaking with other parents or rallying up parents to understand your concerns is the same as gossip. Our staff signs a covenant and abides by a Code of Ethical Conduct which states that "no staff member may disclose personal opinions about a family and shall maintain confidentiality in all matters relating to children in their care."
- ❖ Talking in person or on the phone is preferable to writing your concern. Setting up a time to talk allows for more give-and-take and gives the staff an opportunity to respond.
- ❖ Expect follow-up from the school Director or teacher to make sure your concern has been addressed.
- ❖ Sometimes we cannot make a change you may request due to other restrictions, but we ALWAYS want to hear your suggestions. We promise to consider them seriously and respond to you in a timely manner.

● F I E L D T R I P S

Field trips are part of the extension of the school experience. It should be a culminating activity that would enhance the child's learning experience. Field trips are a part of the Chapelwood School for Young Children curriculum for children who are placed in 3-year-old classes through Pre-K. Notices are posted outside the classroom door at least 48 hours in advance of the field trip. If the teacher is leaving the confined area of the church campus with his/her classroom of children, it is considered a field trip. An excursion to visit the church soccer field would not be considered a field trip, so the staff would not request parent volunteer assistance for the children. Furthermore, you would not be advised, as you would with a field trip, of these excursions since they are a part of your child's scheduled activities during the year.

Each qualifying age level will be allowed to participate in one field trip a year away from the school grounds, funds permitting. Parents will be responsible for transporting their own child to and from the field trip location. It will be the responsibility of the teacher to provide the parents with a map of the location of the field trip. Some of our field trips may require a parking fee or purchasing a ticket to gain entrance. These fees will not be reimbursed, to keep programming costs low.

Children are asked to wear official Chapelwood School for Young Children tee shirts when participating in a field trip. Tee shirts are distributed to each child through the office or ordered through the office at the beginning of each year. Orders are placed during the school year when minimum orders are met.

The shirts are easy to spot when keeping track of children on field trips. The school urges parents to be sure that on field trip days, their child comes to school in a Chapelwood School shirt. The school asks the parents who volunteer for the field trips to try to wear similar colored shirts as well.

• CHAPEL IN THE WEEKDAY SCHOOL

Chapel is held every Wednesday, primarily in the church Chapel. We do not consider this time as a field trip activity as it is a part of our regular preschool curriculum. Chapel begins promptly at 9:20 a.m. and it is vital that the children arrive at school on time to enjoy this positive interaction. During Chapel, we explore ways we know God, we interpret Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, and birthdays from a Christian perspective, and we sing songs about Jesus and other Biblical teachings. See the Chapel insert in the appendix of this handbook for further concepts. If your child attends only a Tuesday- Thursday Preschool class, you are invited to attend Chapel with your child on Wednesday if you chose.

Because we believe each person is a child of God and worthy of love, acceptance, and support, we provide many experiences to build a good self-image in children. Our teachers reflect a firm faith and have learned to share that faith with our children in our daily curriculum and teachings.

• ACTIVITY PROGRAMS

If your child is involved in after-school enrichment activities which occur after 2:00 p.m., please be aware of the dress requirements listed on the program handouts. Enrollment is made on-line by parents who wish for their child/children to stay for extracurricular activities. The school works with the vendors for parent convenience, but we do not have any supervision over these programs. **This is considered an after-enrichment school activity and is not under our license.**

• LUNCH

The children during the lunch portion of the day will have time to sit and eat lunch with peers while enjoying a smaller group. You should pack a simple lunch consisting of a sandwich or its equivalent, a piece of fruit, a drink, and possibly a dessert. Please do not send candy for your child to eat during this time. We really try to emphasize good nutrition. A cool lunch is always a better option. The Lead Teacher and Teacher Assistant will eat lunch with the children, encouraging socialization among the children and conversation with their teacher.

After eating lunch, children in the 3-year-old classes and younger will have the opportunity to rest on a mat. Some children will need to rest and will fall asleep, but other children will not have this need. Therefore, after twenty to thirty minutes, those children who do not fall asleep will participate in quiet activities in the room.

Chapelwood School will be a nut-free campus for the first week of school. **ALL TWO AND UNDER CLASSROOMS WILL BE NUT-FREE FOR THE ENTIRE SCHOOL YEAR.** After the first week of school, teachers in the Three and older classes will notify you whether or not their classrooms will continue to be nut-free for the remainder of the year.

• S N A C K S

Snack is scheduled in the mid-morning for all children. Parents are responsible for providing a snack for their child. A snack can make a real contribution to the day's nutrient intake, but it is not meant to take the place of a meal. The snack time food should be considered a small "hold over" until the noon meal is served. **Please do not send cake, cupcakes, and sugar-filled treats such as candy. These should be special treats away from school.**

Chapelwood School will be a nut-free campus for the first week of school. **ALL TWO AND UNDER CLASSROOMS WILL BE NUT-FREE FOR THE ENTIRE SCHOOL YEAR.** After the first week of school, teachers in the Three and older classes will notify you whether their classrooms will or will not continue to be nut-free for the remainder of the year.

The following chart is not a complete list of ideas, but it is a list of some healthy acceptable snacks.

Fresh Fruit	Vegetables	Other Ideas
Oranges	Carrots	Celery
Sliced grapes	Celery	Pretzels
Peaches	Broccoli	Cheese and crackers
Apples	Cucumbers	Bran muffins
Plums	Tomatoes	Dried Fruits
Cantaloupe	Radishes	Popcorn

• B I R T H D A Y C E L E B R A T I O N S

On your child's birthday (or un-birthday for those with summer birthdays), your child's teacher will highlight this day with a special celebration within the classroom. Your child will be our VIP (Very Important Person) of the day. In recognition of each child as a unique and special individual, we will celebrate birthdays within the classroom and each child will be given a special birthday book from the school.

Your child's teacher will give you specific guidelines for birthday celebrations. We cannot hold birthday parties at the school. Please be sure to communicate with your child's teacher prior to making a purchase for your child to bring to school for his/her birthday.

• P A R E N T R E S O U R C E S

The church library has books with current literature on early childhood education and other topics of interest to families with young children. You are welcome to check these out at any time.

The school administration has information on community happenings for children, parenting workshops, etc. These parent education sessions will discuss topics of interest to parents and will be communicated through our weekly email and website.

The school administration will work with parents throughout the school year to share information on developmentally appropriate practices and procedures for your child's age. They are always willing to conference with you over any concerns that you have for your child.

• B R E A S T F E E D I N G A C C O M M O D A T I O N S

Chapelwood School offers a private, comfortable place (LC109, near the Nursery foyer) with an adult-size chair for mothers to breastfeed their child. Parents have the right to breastfeed or to provide milk for their child while they are in the care of the school.

- **SAFE SLEEP POLICY (INFANTS ONLY)**

Parents of infants will be required to receive and sign our Safe Sleep Policy in accordance with the State of Texas Minimum Standards. They will receive this information prior to the start of school at their scheduled Parent Orientation meeting with their child's teacher.

- **PROFESSIONAL SERVICES / RECOMMENDATIONS**

The school provides some screening services through professionals and can refer you to services which are available for evaluations. Conferences can be arranged upon request. Chapelwood School for Young Children works with several licensed speech and language pathologists and counselors who offer the following services:

- Individual therapy
- Screening and comprehensive evaluations
- Parent/teacher consultation for home or classroom behavioral control and self-esteem improvement

These licensed speech and language pathologists and counselors are not employees of Chapelwood School for Young Children, but they are welcome by Chapelwood to visit our campus. With prior arrangements from the school Director, Chapelwood School will allow the pathologist or counselor of your choice to see your child on our campus for the purpose of observation and assessments. Because of the church's Safe Sanctuary requirements and state licensing requirements, services for therapy **cannot be provided** at our school.

Chapelwood School is willing to complete letters of recommendations for new schools that children may attend in the following year. We are requesting **a week turnaround** from the time the paperwork is given to the teacher to make sure it is sent off in a timely manner.

- **VISION AND HEARING SCREENING**

Vision and hearing tests are performed according to Chapter 36 of the Texas Health and Safety Code. This code states that all four- and five-year-old children enrolled in a Texas Department of Family and Protective Services licensed childcare facility in Texas are provided with a vision and hearing test. Chapelwood School provides this service for the four- and five-year-old students enrolled in our Pre-K program. The school Nurse performs the vision and hearing test every fall. If your child fails their vision and/or hearing test, you will be notified by the school Nurse.

- **VOLUNTEERS**

In compliance with licensing and accreditation standards, no volunteers will have access to the children's programs without school screening and orientation sessions with the administrative staff. Volunteers will work with the children only under the supervision of a school staff member. The orientation sessions will train the parents in handling small groups of children, the licensing laws by which the school operates, discipline of children, release of children, and basic safety and first aid procedures. A criminal history check will be completed on each parent volunteer.

We are always in need of volunteers. As an accredited early childhood facility, we recognize that parent participation is vital to the growth and the development of the children. Children learn to trust in many ways. Many times, seeing a parent active on the campus is one way in which the child can learn trust. This is your school. We need and urge your voluntary assistance in planning field trips, programs, sharing, hobbies, fundraising, recruiting future students, and making educational games. We always need extra parents to assist us in making our school the best.

• P A R E N T T E A C H E R O R G A N I Z A T I O N

Chapelwood School has a Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) which consists of very important volunteer parents who oversee:

- supplying the classroom with volunteers to assist the teachers during the school year.
- assisting with whole school events such as the Scarecrow Festival, Rodeo, and Book Fair.
- aiding the school's administration with parent orientations at the beginning of the year.
- aiding with on-site photography sessions, and vision, hearing, speech, and language screenings.
- remembering the staff in a special way with small treats, special snacks/lunches, and an end-of-the-year luncheon in their honor.
- honoring the teaching staff and recognizing their birthdays by presenting them with a special basket or flower in the teacher's honor.
- assisting with special activities such as water days, field days, field trips, and motor activities, and
- assisting with room representatives in setting guidelines for class parties.

Before the beginning of the school year, the school administration works with parents to fill positions for PTO President, Vice President, Secretary, Book Fair Chairs, Scarecrow Festival Chairs, Rodeo Chairs, Teacher Appreciation Chair, Auction Chairs, Service Project Chairs, Art Project Chairs, and Social Coordinator. Throughout the year, this group meets on a regular basis to review parent events, plan future events, and to assist the school's administration. Meeting dates are announced in the parent calendar published on the school website and through signs posted around the school. Please stop by the School Office if you would like to participate in any of our volunteer groups as we urge all parents to become active in our programming.

At the parent orientation, you will be asked to sign up for a share of volunteer events. With each volunteer position, there is a description of the job and the number of volunteers needed to make it successful. We strive for parent involvement in the school, and this is an excellent way to be a part of your child's education. Parents who do not sign up for volunteer assistance will be called by the Room Parent and asked to participate.

Childcare is provided for parents who need childcare for PTO events. If you need to make reservations, you must email the Chapelwood Church Nursery nursery@chapelwood.org to make your reservation.

• F U N D R A I S I N G E V E N T S

The school will host a Book Fair, an Auction parent night, and/or various other fund-raising activities. The Book Fair is a family-oriented event, and all family members are encouraged to visit the fair during the week. Proceeds from the Book Fair are used to purchase birthday books for each child as well as other classroom supplies. In addition, there will be opportunities to donate to the PTO to supplement their sponsored events.

• W A Y S I N W H I C H W E M A Y B E O F H E L P T O Y O U

- Conferences in regard to your child's progress may be arranged upon request. Tests that we administer are primarily for screening purposes. You will be referred to persons who provide special services if we feel that your child needs further evaluation of his/her school performance.
- Your own child will be given maximum consideration as an individual.
- The school presents a planned program geared to be developmentally and educationally beneficial. No one is more needed in a child's life than the person he/she loves the most. You have the greatest power over his/her effort, growth, and destiny.