



Denton City County Day School
- est. 1952 -

Parent Handbook

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Program

Mission, Vision and Purpose

The mission of Denton City County Day School (DCCDS) is to support a diverse, multicultural population of pre-kindergarten children and their families in Denton County by providing quality, affordable childcare and early childhood education. Special emphasis and attention are placed on serving children from low to middle-income families.

DCCDS vision is committed to providing research-based curriculum and instruction that embraces developmentally appropriate early childhood education practices. Aimed at enhancing young children's cognitive, physical, social, and emotional growth, DCCDS uses a child-centered, hands-on learning activities within a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment.

The ultimate purpose of DCCDS is to ensure pre-kindergarten children's success as productive citizens, community members and creative, critical thinkers and problem-solvers in present and future academic endeavors and in real-world work-life experiences.

Accreditation

You have chosen an early childhood program that is licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and adheres to Texas Rising Star Guidelines.

Because we are a licensed state program, you have the right to review Minimum Standards at any time. Minimum Standards books are in each classroom as well as the school office or can be reviewed on the internet at www.dfps.state.tx.us. In addition, you have the right to review our most recent licensing report, fire inspection, and health inspections, which are posted on the office bulletin boards.

Accreditation is an official review process performed by a nationally recognized outside agency. The process of achieving and maintaining accreditation is no easy feat. It involves staff and family participation, classroom observations, and health and safety checks. The accrediting agencies have high standards that often go above and beyond our state's minimum licensing requirements for childcare centers. We have to meet these high standards in order to achieve this mark of excellence.

Our center is pursuing national accreditation from the National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NAC). The National Accreditation Commission provides a comprehensive, ongoing quality improvement system that recognizes the inherent diversity among programs through the self-study and award process. A full printed copy of the accreditation standards can be found in the school office.

Texas Rising Star Program

A Texas Rising Star (TRS) provider is a childcare facility that has an agreement with a local Workforce Development Board. Childcare contractors serve the Texas Workforce Commission which supports subsidized childcare. The contractor voluntarily meets requirements that exceed the state's Minimum Child Care Licensing Standards. TRS certification is available to licensed centers and licensed and registered childcare home providers who meet the certification criteria. The TRS Provider certification system offers three levels of certification (two-star, three-star, and four-star) to encourage providers to attain progressively higher certification.

Enrollment Requirements

In accordance with Federal Law and the US Department of Agriculture policy, DCCDS is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

To enroll a child in school, parents must:

- Complete an enrollment packet;
- Provide a current copy of the child's immunizations record (updated as needed);
- Statement from a physician or health clinic that the child is healthy and can participate in childcare activities (updated annually);
- Provide proof of income;
- Pay by money order the **nonrefundable enrollment fee of \$75.00**

Once we receive all required materials including the enrollment fee, we will then begin your enrollment process. This process may take up to at least one week to complete.

Tuition and Fees

Enrollment fees are non-refundable and non-transferable. There is a \$75.00 enrollment fee due at the time of enrollment. Open registration is available for new and returning students, if space is available. Classes are always contingent upon reaching a minimum number of enrollees. **Re-enrollment procedures, including re-enrollment fee (\$35.00) is due yearly in February,** must be completed each year for placement to be maintained.

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When you enroll your child, you reserve a space for the entire school year. We employ staff and teachers in accordance with the number of students enrolled and must pay those staff whether a child attend or not.

Fees are due weekly and are to be paid every Monday.

1. Tuition may be paid through our Tuition Express, Automated Clearing House (ACH), Visa or Mastercard, check, or money order.
2. **Tuition will be considered late if not paid by the close of business Tuesday.**
3. A \$25.00 late fee added to your account when payment is late.
4. Tuition fees are based upon enrollment and are nonrefundable.
5. There are no discounts for days missed due to illness, absences, vacations, or the school being closed for holidays, emergencies, or inclement weather.

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All CCS (Child Care Services) fees are due on the 3rd of each month. Any late payments must be reported to the appropriate CCS caseworker.

Returned Check or ACH Fee: A \$35.00 fee will be charged for any returned payments. The total amount due must be paid in full including all fees for your child to continue at DCCDS. After two occurrences involving returned payments, due to insufficient funds, the parent will be required to pay fees only by an acceptable payment method of either a cashier's check or money order.

Prompt payment of tuition is necessary to cover the basic operating expenses. If an unforeseen situation prevents the parent from being able to pay tuition, you must plan with the Executive Director/Assistant Director **prior to** missing a payment to reduce the likelihood of your child being unenrolled.

If tuition is **past due**, parents will receive notice that he/she is not to bring the child back to DCCDS until the account balance is made current. Failure to pay will result in unenrollment. **Nonpayment of accounts will result in either collections or court cases.**

Academics

Curriculum

Denton City County Day School's curriculum is a comprehensive, research-based program that integrates instruction across developmental domains and early learning disciplines. It supports every aspect of a child's development: physical, social, emotional, cognitive and linguistic skills. One important focus is the development of language and literacy skills.

The cornerstone of the center's developmental curriculum, the Frog Street Program is:



- An extensive integration of theme, disciplines, and domains;
- Social and emotional development includes Dr. Becky Bailey's Conscious Discipline®;
- Differentiated instruction to encourage children to think, reason and experiment;
- Demonstrate sound health, safety, and nutritional practices;
- Equity of English and Spanish materials and instruction;
- A joyful approach to learning.



Academic Assessment

Academic assessment is the process of tracking the developmental progress of each student. We use a variety of instruments and methods to gain insight into each student's social, emotional, cognitive, language, and physical development. Our assessment process also addresses areas of self-help and classroom functioning. The assessment instruments used are both formal and informal. Formal tools are based on the Frog Street Curriculum. Informal tools are staff-generated and paced for use in the classroom. Work samples, classroom observations, and developmental checklists are the informal assessment tools used. These tools are aligned with our curriculum and completed four times each academic school year.

Your child's confidentiality is maintained throughout the assessment process. Only a student's classroom teachers, Executive Director, you, and your spouse have access to the child's assessment information. All assessment data collected is maintained in the child's portfolio, which remains in the classroom. If there is a need for outside specialists to review the assessment data, your written consent is required.

Commented [DD55]: Change to school administration

Classroom Placement

The state requires that each student meet the age level of his or her class by September 1st of the school year.

The placement of students in the classroom is determined by age, developmental level, learning style, sibling class placement, teacher's teaching style, gender balance, and special circumstances. DCCDS reserves the right to ascertain that all students who enter have the necessary skills to participate in age-appropriate classrooms. Students currently part of the school may be moved to a more developmentally appropriate age group after being assessed by staff. Parent recommendations are always considered but moves are at the discretion of the preschool staff. The student will be initially placed with his or her age group until a move in group is recommended or necessary to benefit that child. We want each student to be placed where his or her needs will best be met, and interests will be challenged.

Student/Teacher Ratio

Classes are limited in size for students to receive as much individual attention as possible, keeping in mind the need for healthy student group relationships. Enrollment numbers vary from year to year.

Children with Special Needs

All students are accepted conditionally. If a student's academic progress or social behavior is not acceptable, or if the school is not equipped to handle certain deficiencies, the parents will be contacted as to choices, including the possibility of referral to another school better equipped to meet the needs of the child.

Our preschool is staffed with teachers and assistants at ratios below the state maximum. Classes are not small enough to allow for individual attention for any one student throughout the entire school day. Our staff is well-qualified with many teachers either holding degrees or having specialized training in early childhood education. However, there is not a professional special education educator on staff.

Daily Schedule

Lesson and activity plans are posted on the Parent Information boards in or near each classroom. The following activities are typically included every day in our program:

- Greeting Circle (Unite, Calm, Connect, Commit), Morning Message;
- Moving and Learning;
- Small Group Rotation and Practice Centers;
- Outdoor Learning;
- Mealtimes (Breakfast, Lunch and Afternoon Snack)- Meets requirements for Federal Food program participation and provided each day. Teachers eat with children to foster good manners and social skills. Children are encouraged to clean up after themselves;
- Outside/Large Motor Play- Students have opportunities for large motor, social development, and cognitive development through indoor and outdoor play times daily, as weather permits
- Nap/Rest Time- All students have a rest time after they eat lunch. Students bring in a small blanket to use during this time;
- STEAM Activity-STEAM is the acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math. Activities develop thinking, reasoning, teamwork, investigative and creative skills;
- Closing Circle.

“Free-play” (also called child-initiated activities, free choice, self-selection) activities are incorporated into the morning and afternoon schedule. During free-play, teachers actively participate with the children by asking questions about what the children are doing, participating in their pretend play, reading books when prompted, encouraging children to try new activities or play with a new toy, etc. Free-play is another opportunity for a child to grow socially and cognitively through the development of relationships.

Napping Policy

State Licensing requires that all students enrolled be provided a rest time after the noon meal. Students are encouraged to sleep; however, if they are not able to sleep, we ask they rest quietly for one hour. After one hour, students may participate in quiet activities until their friends wake up. The rest period must not exceed three hours. Each child should bring a small blanket that can fit into cubbies and can be left for a week at a time. Blankets will be sent home every Friday to be sanitized.

Attire and Belongings

Because of the wide range of activities, DCCDS recommend children be dressed in washable, comfortable clothing. Parents are responsible for providing an extra set of clothing for their child that is appropriate for the season. **Each child should have at least one complete set of extra clothes marked with your child's name.** If wet or dirty clothes are sent home, please bring a clean set the next morning. If your child does not have extra clothes when needed, you may be called to bring the necessary items.

Clothing and shoes should be easy to take off and put on. All shoes must be closed-toed. Athletic shoes are preferred. Slick-soled shoes, slip-on shoes, or shoes without a back are not allowed for safety reasons. Students must wear closed-toe shoes for playing on the playground. No flip-flops, sandals, or Crocs. Dangling jewelry, necklaces, and strings can be dangerous and are not permitted.

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Attendance

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Withdrawals

DCCDS must be notified fourteen business days (14) prior to your child withdrawing from school. If a fourteen (14) days' notice is not given, you will still be financially responsible for two week's tuitions following the last day of attendance.

Vacation and Absence

After one year (1yr) of consecutive enrollment, you will be eligible for one-week half-price tuition, per year, per child. Any other vacation or time off will be full priced tuition to hold your child's place. This does not apply to winter break in December or spring break in March. **Vacation discount will not be given unless two weeks advance notice is given.**

Commented [DDS7]: MUST start enforcing effective August. Need

- ✓ Written notice will be required in cases of an extended absence (three weeks or longer), such as a vacation or extended leave, **at least fourteen days (14) prior** to the planned leave.
- ✓ **Your full weekly tuition will be due and payable for the entire time of your absence to hold your child's spot.**
- ✓ If your child is absent for five days without notification, the child will be dropped from the roll and the parents will be charged for those five days.

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Remember, your space is reserved for your child and cannot be filled on a short-term basis. There are no discounts for absences of any duration for any cause, partial months, days missed due to illness, absences, vacations, or the school being closed for holidays, emergencies, or inclement weather.

Weekly fees are based on family size and annual income for each individual family indicated on the completed self-certification form. Proof of income is required to determine food program status. Total income will be reviewed bi-annually in February and August to determine continued status. Parents will need to provide a copy of last two current paychecks and/or their last year's income tax return.

Holiday and School Closings

Our school follows Denton ISD's policy for inclement weather or emergencies. If Denton ISD schools are closed, DCCDS will be closed. If Denton ISD schools are delayed, watch local television stations (channels 4

and 11) for information about DCCDS. Details will also be posted on our website, Social media, and text message sent through Class Dojo.



DCCDS reserves the right to close early due to inclement weather and/or emergency situations. Parents will be contacted via phone calls and DCCDS will close at the time indicated.

DCCDS will close to observe the following holidays:

- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the Friday after Thanksgiving,
- Holiday Break (December/January),
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day,
- Spring Break,
- Good Friday,
- Memorial Day,
- Independence Day,
- Two in-service days for teachers to be announced (TBA).

If a holiday falls on a Saturday, we will observe the Friday before. If the holiday falls on a Sunday, we will observe the following Monday.

Morning Drop Off and Entering the Facility:

DCCDS is open Monday through Friday, 6:30 am to 6:00 pm. **Our core curriculum hours are from 9:00a.m.-4:30 p.m.** Each classroom's daily schedule and lesson plans are posted on their classroom parent information board located either in or near the classroom.

Parents must sign children in and out each day. The sign in/out computer is in the front office. Quick good-byes are easier on your child. Let them know that you think school is a great place to be and you will be back at the end of the day.

Timely arrivals and departures, as well as regular attendance, are important for each student's progress and development. **Please have your child in class by 9:00 am**, so that he or she may receive the full benefits of our school. If your child will be absent, a parent must contact the school office at (940) 382-6485 the morning of the absence. Tardiness decreases the time your child spends within the classroom curriculum. Continual tardiness and absences can result in your child falling behind in curriculum goals.

Child Care Licensing requires that all children must be escorted to their classrooms where a caregiver or teacher is present. **Children must be supervised by an adult at all times.** For this safety requirement, do not send your child through the school alone for any reason. Keeping your child with you will ensure their safety both inside our school and outside in the parking lot.

Late Pickups

The school closes at 6:00PM. Any parent that is late will be charged a late fee of \$1.00 per minute starting at 6:01 p.m. **Late fees are due the next morning at drop off. If not paid, you will not be allowed to leave your child.** In the event you are unable to pick up your child on time, please contact the school immediately to make other pick-up arrangements. Because our employees have personal obligations after closing, your consideration to our staff is greatly appreciated.

It is extremely important that parents make sure that all phone numbers are kept up-to-date and that emergency contacts are aware that they will be called in case a parent is not available.

Pickup/Authorized Persons

When you pick up your child, please make contact with the teacher in charge and allow your child a moment to say goodbye to the teachers and classmates.

- Children may not be picked up by persons under the age of 18.
- No child will be released from DCCDS to individuals who are not authorized on the pickup release form.
- To ensure each child's safety, DCCDS will ask for photo identification from anyone attempting to pick up a child while in the care of the school.

In the event of a custody dispute or court order, proper documentation must be filed with the school office before parental rights can be enforced. If a staff member suspects a parent or authorized person to be under the influence of an intoxicating substance, we will notify the authorities and refuse transport of the child to this driver.

Custody Situations

DCCDS will follow all court orders exactly as they are written. Per Texas state law, if no court order exists, then both parents automatically have equal rights to the child. If you do have a court order, please provide us with the most recent written copy. If a custody dispute occurs on our property, the police will be notified immediately to ensure the safety of our facility and our staff. DCCDS has the right to terminate care of a child if such a dispute arises.

Communication and Parent Involvement

Social Media

We ask our families at DCCDS to use discretion when including DCCDS on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or other social media outlets. If you take pictures of your child at school (at a birthday or other special event), **do not include other students** because this violates their privacy. To respect privacy of our staff, please refrain from mentioning employee names or "friending" staff on personal social media accounts.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Formal parent-teacher conferences are provided twice during the school year, once in the fall and once in the spring. Written progress reports will be provided to the parent at each conference. This is an opportunity for parents and teachers to share information about their child. Additional conferences may be conducted by telephone or by appointment at the discretion of the teacher or Executive Director.

Conferences can be scheduled at any time. Parents need to make an appointment to discuss their child's progress. It is not appropriate to discuss details about your child at the classroom door. Please feel free to stop in at the office and discuss any concerns or praise you may have concerning the class, teacher, or school.

Parent Advisory Committee

Parent participation is strongly encouraged in our center. The purpose of the Advisory Committee is to bring parents and staff together to accomplish goals that will enhance our center for the benefit of the children's needs and to build on relations.

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Volunteers and Visitors

All visitors are required to check in with the school office. Parents are welcome to visit their child throughout the day, but we ask visitors not disturb classes during naptime from 12:30-2:30. All volunteers must first complete a criminal background check in order follow state licensing guidelines. No parent or volunteer may be left alone with any child other than their own without a completed FBI fingerprint background check on file with the school.

Volunteers may be asked to:

- Assist with classroom activities;
- Share cultures and family traditions;
- Share your profession and/or skills with the students;
- Save materials and “stuff” for school projects;
- Prepare materials at home (cutting, stapling, sewing);

Discipline and Guidance

Diapering and Toilet Training

Diapers and Pull ups: Only commercially available disposable diapers or pull-ups may be used at DCCDS, unless the child has a documented medical reason that does not permit their use. Documentation from the child’s physician must be provided to the Director and/or Assistant Director before cloth diapers will be used while the child is at the center. If approved, families must provide a container for storage of soiled cloth diapers while at the center.

For children still in diapers, cleanliness is an essential factor of maintaining an appropriate level of care. Therefore, diapers/pull-ups will be changed when soiled or at minimum every hour and a half to two hours. Diaper changes will be noted on the child’s daily activity sheet.

Toilet training: When your child is ready to start toilet training, we ask that you begin teaching at home. Please let us know what routines you are using at home so the teacher can do the same in the class. Consistency is key when toilet training. Please bring any supplies such as a few pairs of extra clothes, including socks and shoes, to put in the child’s cubby for any accidents.

Discipline Expectations and Procedure

Our program promotes a positive approach to managing the behavior of children. Discipline at the school has two primary goals. First, we strive to find a solution to the immediate situation. Second, we attempt to help the child to process feelings, recognize consequences and then explore alternative solutions and outcomes and to develop self-control.

Children will be given clear rules of behaviors: respect others and equipment, do not harm others in the classrooms, and do not engage in unsafe activities. When these rules are not followed, the following disciplinary procedures will be in effect:

1. **Redirection:** when a situation warrants redirection, the child will be given alternative activities to direct the child away from the conflict.

2. **Conflict Resolutions:** the child or children and the teachers will discuss the behavior and come up with a resolution that satisfies both parties involved in the conflict.
3. **Time Out:** timeout will be used only in cases where the first two options did not work. The appropriate amount of time is one minute per year of age.
4. **Sent to Office:** If the child cannot or will not calm down and is in danger of hurting themselves or others they will be brought to the office. Parents may be called to speak to their child or notes will be sent home detailing the events.

If we have concerns about a child, we will inform the parents as soon as possible and collaborate on a plan of action for positive change. Uncontrolled and/or aggressive misbehaviors will be discussed with the parents. If no resolution is available, children who exhibit uncontrolled aggressive and/or dangerous behaviors may be asked to leave the school. Aggressive behavior is defined as repeated biting, hitting, kicking, running away, pushing or other abusive behavior that is directed to other children or staff. **Corporal punishment, physical, verbal, or emotional punishment is not allowed.**

Biting

Biting is a behavior that usually appears between the ages of one and three years. While biting is an age-appropriate behavior, it is important to remember it is also an unacceptable behavior in a childcare environment. Children bite for a variety of reasons: teething, sensory exploration, cause and effect, imitation, crowding, seeking attention, frustration and stress. Biting is not something to blame on children, their parents or their teachers. There are a variety of strategies we implement at DCCDS to prevent and stop biting. This is the process followed when a child bite:

- The biting child is stopped and told, “That hurts” in a firm voice. Teachers should remain calm, being careful not to show anger or frustration towards the child.
- The biting child is removed from the situation. Depending upon the observed motive for the bite, the separation may include re-direction or meeting the child’s needs. As little attention as possible will be placed on the biting child, to avoid reinforcing the behavior.
- Appropriate first aid will be provided to the child who was bitten. Bite will be washed with soap and water; cold compress will be applied to reduce pain and swelling. A bandage will be applied if necessary.

It is important to explore the reasons for biting when it occurs. Teachers need to work with parents to gather information about the child’s behavior and begin observations to determine the reasons for biting. Examples of triggers would be communication deficits, transitions, hunger, lack of sleep, need for oral stimulation or teething pain. Once triggers are identified, staff can work on prevention strategies and start teaching replacement skills. Below are the steps the teacher will take to identify triggers and replace the behavior:

1. The teacher will examine the context in which the biting is occurring and look for patterns. The following questions should be asked:
 - Was the space too crowded?
 - Were there too few toys?
 - Was there too little to do or too much waiting?
 - Was the child who bit getting the attention and care he/she deserved at other times?
2. The teacher will change the environment, routines or activities if necessary.
3. The teacher will work with the child who is biting to resolve conflicts and frustrations in more appropriate ways.
4. The teacher will observe the child, to get an idea of why and when they are likely to bite.
5. The teacher will identify children likely to be bitten and make special efforts to reduce their

chance of being bitten.

6. The teacher, parent and Director and/or Assistant Director will meet regularly to regulate an action plan and measure outcomes.

7. If biting continues the teacher will observe the group more closely and work with the parents to seek out additional resources as necessary to shadow the child who is biting.

All information is confidential, and names of the children involved in the incident are not shared between parents. In addition, biting is always documented on an Incident/Accident Report which is completed and signed by a teacher and parent. A copy is provided to the parent, if requested and the original kept in the child's permanent enrollment file in the office.

Suspension and Expulsion

DCCDS reserves the right to suspend or expel any child from the school for the following reasons:

- Failure to follow DCCDS policies and procedures;
- Behavior which is a threat to the safety or emotional well-being of the children or adults;
- Physical or verbal abuse of children or adults;
- Special needs which cannot be adequately accommodated by our employees or facility;
- Nonpayment or excessive late payment of fees or tuition.

Health and Safety

Emergency Preparedness Plan

An emergency preparedness plan is designed to ensure the safety of children during an emergency. DCCDS's emergency preparedness plan is available in the school office and each classroom for review upon request. The plan addresses the types of emergencies most likely to occur in the area including, but not limited to, natural events such as tornadoes, floods, or hurricanes; health events such as medical emergencies or communicable disease outbreaks; and human-caused events such as intruder with weapon, explosion, or chemical spill.

DCCDS will use the emergency preparedness plan to keep all staff informed of their responsibilities to ensure the safety of our children and staff in the event of an emergency situation. We conduct fire drills monthly; severe weather drills and lock down drills are conducted once every three months. Each room is equipped with emergency lighting and has a building diagram with exit routes marked. Each classroom keeps a class binder with contact information; the office has the master copy. Parents will be notified in the case of an emergency.

Immunizations

State licensing require specific medical and immunization records to be on file for each student at the time of enrollment. After your child receives an immunization, it is very important we are provided updated copies from a health care provider. The documentation needs to clearly state the date, number of doses, and type of immunization the child received.

It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure up-to-date immunization records are on file in the school office. TXDFPS Childcare Licensing audits our records regularly and your child will be excluded from attendance at DCCDS if this information is not current or is incomplete. A list of immunizations required for your child's age may be found at www.dshs.texas.gov.

Annual Physical

In compliance with state licensing, all students are required to have a physician signed health form on file. This form is included in the enrollment package and must be completed before your child can be admitted to the program. The form includes a written statement from a licensed physician stating that your child has been examined and can participate in a childcare program. The physician's statement must be updated annually.

Allergies

If your child has **any medically diagnosed allergies, we are required to have a completed allergy plan on file.** This plan includes a letter from a physician stating the allergy, signs, and symptoms, as well as a treatment plan listing the medication required.

Vision and Hearing Screenings

Students who are **four years old by September 1** must have a hearing and screening evaluation certificate on file from their doctor prior to the start of school. Students turning four years of age during the school term must have documentation of vision and hearing screening results on file within thirty days.

Tuberculin (TB) Testing

TB testing is not required at this time by Denton County.

Injury or Illness

If your child becomes ill or injured while at school, we will notify you immediately to make pick up arrangements. We will do our best to comfort him/her until you arrive. To avoid the spread of disease, state licensing requires ill children to be isolated from their class and picked up from school as soon as possible. If emergency medical care is required, we will call 911 for immediate assistance. Parents will assume financial responsibility for any emergency care treatment.

To attend school, students need to be well enough to function in group care. **Students must be able to follow their class's daily schedule, including going outside, without the need for individual attention from the teachers.** If your child exhibits any of the following symptoms, he/she must be excluded from attendance:

- Has a fever of 101°F or higher;
- Was given medication to reduce a temperature within the last 24 hours;
- Has or is vomiting or has upset stomach accompanied by diarrhea;
- Shows evidence of a communicable disease, such as chicken pox, pinworms, or pink eye;
- Has an undiagnosed rash;
- Has discharge from eyes, ears and/or profuse, colored nasal discharge;
- Has difficulty breathing;
- Head lice and hair nits (child must be nit and bug-free to return to school);
- Has unusual lethargy, irritability or persistent crying.

DCCDS requires that your child be free of symptoms of illness or fever for twenty-four (24) hours without the use of medication before returning to class. **A doctor's release is required if your child is diagnosed with a communicable disease or sees a doctor for illness and is absent three or more consecutive days due to illness.** Parents will be notified of any outbreaks of contagious childhood diseases within the school.

While we encourage our staff members to get annual flu shots, we do not require them to do so. The same is true of a whooping cough and Hepatitis A vaccines. Texas State Minimum Standards does not have a required vaccination schedule provided for employees working with young children; however, our staff members are

given the adult CDC recommendations and information regarding safeguarding themselves against communicable diseases.

To reduce the spread of infections, students and staff wash their hands frequently throughout the day. We do not allow students to share cups, utensils, etc. Procedures for washing hands and wearing gloves are posted in all classrooms and bathrooms. Staff members are required to follow these procedures to protect themselves and the students from bodily fluids and any cross contamination.

It is extremely important that parents make sure that all phone numbers are kept up-to-date and that emergency contacts are aware that they will be called in case a parent is not available.

Health Check Policy

A health check will be performed on each student at morning drop-off. Some things our staff will be looking for include:

- General mood and changes in behavior;
- Fever or elevated body temperature;
- Skin rashes, unusual spots, swelling or bruises;
- Complaints of pain and not feeling well;
- Signs/symptoms of disease (severe coughing, sneezing, breathing difficulties, discharge from nose, ears, or eyes, diarrhea, vomiting, etc.);
- Reported illness in child or family member.

Medication Procedures

We prefer not to give prescribed medication to students. However, the school will administer medicine as stated on the prescription medicine's label directions or as amended by the physician in writing from a script pad with a completed and signed Medication Authorization form. Medications brought by parents for their child must:

- Be in an original container;
- Be labeled with the child's name;
- Be labeled with the date filled and expiration;
- Include directions to administer the medication;
- Include the name of the physician prescribing the medication.

Medication can be very dangerous in the hands of children and must never be left in a child's backpack where it might accidentally be available to any child. Do not give medications or authorization forms to your child's teacher; authorization forms along with the medication must be turned in to the school office.

Apart from prescription medications for allergies or asthma, medicine will not be administered on an as-needed basis. A specific time for administering medication must be indicated on the Medication Authorization form. Medicine will not be administered after its expiration date without written permission from a physician. Aspirin or aspirin substitute will be administered only with a physician's written approval.

Nutrition

DCCDS provides a nutritional breakfast, well-balanced lunch, and an afternoon snack each day. All these meals follow the nutritional guidelines established by the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Menus are posted on the parent boards in or near each classroom. Menus are subject to change without notice. **NO outside food or drinks** can be brought into the school due to the Child Food & Nutrition Program guidelines, except for special

occasions. Children are encouraged to eat each part of their meal but may refuse what they don't want. Withholding food is never used as a form of discipline.

Children who have special diets or food allergies must have a doctor's statement stating their dietary limitations. If your child has a diagnosed allergy that can cause a life-threatening reaction such as anaphylactic shock, we require you to work with the school office to make sure we have the completed allergy plan on file for emergency situations. Due to types of life-threatening allergies with children, **our school is NUT FREE**.

Birthday and Special Occasions

Parents may bring a special treat to share with their child's class on birthdays or special occasions. Please let the school know in advance if you are bringing something. When the school celebrates special holidays or events, parents may be asked to sign up to bring treats for the children. All outside food must be purchased from a store and cannot be homemade. The school requires all special occasion treats brought into a class to comply with guidelines that will provide a safe environment for all students.

Additional Information

Independent Babysitting

Employees of DCCDS **are prohibited** from outside employment with parents of the organization. This includes, but is not limited to, babysitting and/or nanny- type jobs.

Parent Referrals

If you refer a family member to DCCDS and they enroll a child, you will receive a credit of \$25.00 as a thank-you towards your account after their child has been enrolled for a continuous six weeks.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding mothers, including employees, shall be provided a private and sanitary place to breastfeed their infants/toddler or express their milk. This area has an electric outlet, comfortable chair, and nearby access to running water.

Additional Policies

Cell Phone Policy

Texas Department of Family & Protective Services has passed regulations preventing the use of cell phones in classrooms. We ask parents to help us stay in compliance with this by hanging up your phone when entering the school. Your child deserves your undivided attention when saying goodbye and hello, these are both important transition times during their day. Spend a few minutes making it special for them without your phone.

Smoking Policy

DCCDS is a smoke free area. No smoking is allowed by anyone, parents, staff, or visitors anywhere on our campus. (City of Denton Ordinance No. 2012-367).

Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)

DCCDS is required to check the Consumer Product Safety Commission for recalled children's products. It is requested that parents also check the CPSC website, www.cpsc.gov. Please do not send recalled items to school.

Gang Free Zone

Under Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty. DCCDS is a drug, alcohol, and weapons free zone.

Firearms and Weapons

Firearms, hunting knives, bows and arrows and other weapons are prohibited on DCCDS premises unless carried by a law enforcement official trained and certified to carry a firearm on duty. All others--including parents, employees and service workers--are banned from carrying firearms

Reporting Abuse and Neglect

The State of Texas requires that all members of daycare institutions look for and report to the State all cases of child abuse. DCCDS is obligated to and will report to the State any suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect. DCCDS staff completes annual training in what to look for and how to report suspected abuse or neglect of a child. When hired each staff member completes child abuse and neglect training before assuming responsibility for a classroom.

Call the Child Abuse Hotline number, 1-800-252-5400, to make confidential reports, or report online at www.txabusehotline.org. Failure to report suspected child abuse or neglect is a crime. Employers are prohibited from retaliating against employees who make reports in good faith.

Parents should be aware of the following contact information: Denton Child Care Licensing 940-381-3447
Licensing Web Site www.tdfps.state.tx.us/child_care

Copies of the Texas Department of Licensing, Childcare Minimum Standards are available upon request in the school office. Our most recent Licensing inspection is posted in the hallway on the school bulletin board.

Grievance Procedures

It is the policy of DCCDS to afford parents the opportunity for fair and prompt consideration of complaints and grievances.

Steps in the grievance procedures are:

1. Arrange a conference with the teacher within five days of the event that triggered the grievance.
2. Request a conference with the Executive Director which will be arranged within three days of the request. Bring a written copy of your grievance to the Executive Director.
3. If steps one and two do not resolve the grievance, a written description will be forwarded to the President and the Board of Directors of DCCDS. The Personal Committee and the Executive Director will meet with the parents to resolve the issue.

In the event a parent is dissatisfied with the response or action taken by the Executive director on any matter, the parent may request a meeting with the Board. The request, along with a summary of the issue of concern, should be submitted in writing to the Chair of the Grievance Committee. If a parent requests a meeting, the parent should not only be able to explain the issue of concern but should also be prepared to articulate the nature of the response or action that the parent believes the committee should take to resolve the matter. The decision of the Grievance Committee will be the final decision for the preschool, and the parent and administration will be expected to accept and support the decision in a professional manner.

Policy and Procedure Updates

DCCDS reserves the right to change, revise, supplement, or delete any of our policies and procedures, including all those covered herein, at any time. Changes will be effective on the dates determined by DCCDS and will be

communicated to parents. If changes are made, parents will be given notice of a new handbook and will be asked to sign a new agreement form.

This Parent Handbook contains general information concerning the policies and procedures of DCCDS. The policies and procedures described herein are not intended to be and should not be interpreted as a contract between DCCDS and any other person. This information does not constitute a legal document, nor does it constitute a contract. It does not confer any legal rights nor create any contractual obligations, expressed or implied.



Please sign and return to your teacher.

I, _____ have read and understand all the information from the in the Parent Handbook. I understand that a digital copy of the Parent Handbook is also available on the DCCDS website for reference. Hard copies can be requested at any time.

Signature _____

Date _____

Partner and Participating Agency with:

