



Parent Handbook 2020-2021

Abiding Love Lutheran Children's Center at its option, may change, delete, suspend, or discontinue parts or the policy in its entirety, at any time without prior notice.

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1 WELCOME FROM PASTOR BRAD

“Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.” - *Proverbs 22:6*

My friends, welcome to the Abiding Love Lutheran Church Children's Center! Partnering with parents in loving, caring for and nurturing the growth of children is a central part of our congregational life. Our Children's Center has been a primary expression of that ministry since 1986.

Our mission is to provide a safe and creative place for learning and play for the wider Austin community where children and parents can experience the love and grace of God as we grow together. Our great Center leadership and gifted teachers are devoted to the best practices in early childhood education even as they innovate to provide the right environments, activities and contexts for learning in new ways. I love celebrating with all your kids in Chapel every Thursday morning!

You share a sacred trust with us, in these vital early years, to help your children step forward down the path toward healthy, happy, fulfilling lives. We work each day to be faithful to that trust and are here to assist you and your family in every way can, now and in the time to come.

Yours in abiding love,

Pastor Brad Highum

2 WELCOME FROM DIRECTOR

Welcome to Abiding Love Children's Center! We consider it an honor and a privilege to care for your children. Our great desire is to come alongside you, the parents, and collaborate with you to love your child and to aide in your child's early growth and development.

You are now a part of the Abiding Love family, and we want you to feel welcome here. You are welcome to visit, volunteer, and generally make yourself at home. There are many "rules" in this handbook. We have adopted these policies to bring order and to eliminate surprises about the expectations we have for our families and for ourselves. If you have any questions about this handbook or anything else, please come have a chat with me.

We believe that God created each precious child with immense potential. We want to share, both by word and by example, the love of Jesus with each child. In addition, to the rich spiritual atmosphere your child will experience, we will help your child grow in all developmental areas through hands-on, **meaningful** learning experiences. It is our great joy to walk with you through these exciting childhood experiences. You will be amazed at how your child will grow and how fast the time will fly. There will be struggles, but it is my prayer that together we can walk through the trials and celebrate the triumphs of your child's early years!

Blessings and love,
Debbie Tonne

3 MISSION

Abiding Love Lutheran Church Children's Center offers full-time and part-time programs that were established to care for young children in a way that tells them and their family the story of God's love through Jesus Christ.

Birth through 5 years are a child's formative years. It is important that children of this age be given a stimulating environment that allows for creative play and sensory experiences. Learning centers (Bible, Dramatic Play, Blocks, Books, Manipulative, Art, Science, and Outside Play) are used to help develop the child's spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional, and physical needs.

4 PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The Abiding Love Lutheran Children's Center was founded as an integral ministry of Abiding Love Lutheran Church. The church believes that it is of utmost importance to provide a safe and loving place for families to bring their young children, nurturing them in the love of Jesus Christ each day.

The goal of Abiding Love is to provide teaching, training, and loving care that will foster a pleasant environment where children will feel loved and secure. The Children's Center strives to provide an enriched environment where children can grow in the following developmental areas:

A. Spiritual

All children will be given opportunities to...

- Develop awareness that the Bible is a special book that tells about God's love through Jesus Christ.
- Participate in worship experiences on individual developmental levels.
- Witness positive examples (sharing, kindness, helping, loving, etc.)
- Develop a habit of giving thanks through prayer for things that God gives us to enjoy.
- Increase their ability to make positive choices and understand the consequences of choices made.

B. Intellectual

All children will be given opportunities to...

- Understand that God gives us a mind to learn about all aspects of creation
- Participate in math readiness experiences (numbers, concepts, shapes, etc.)
- Explore science concepts (nature, senses, etc.)
- Immerse themselves in reading readiness and oral language experiences at appropriate developmental levels
- Express themselves in art and music

C. Social

All children will be given opportunities to...

- Understand that God gives us other people and a way to live with them in harmony
- Demonstrate acceptance of all people; people of all ethnic groups, those who are differently-abled, and people of all ages
- Learn in small and large grouping arrangements
- Develop a sense of sharing, caring, loving, and kindness
- Participate in individual play experiences
- Give and receive approval, encouragement, and affection

- Set limits and boundaries
- Use interpersonal skills
- Choose “free choice” materials and activities regardless of gender
- Model language that is gender inclusive

D. Emotional

All children will be given opportunities to...

- Understand that God has given us our feelings and that there are acceptable ways to express them
- Recognize different expressions of feelings
- Feel secure and stable in this Center's environment
- Respond to different expressions of feelings
- Express themselves verbally
- Understand that other children have rights
- Develop awareness that body language expresses emotions (smiling, frowning, worrying, surprising, clapping, etc.)

E. Physical

All children will be given opportunities to...

- Accept that each child is one of God's individual creations
- Develop an awareness that each of us grow and develop at different rates
- Learn good hygiene habits
- Develop special awareness and adapt to spaces provided for specific activities
- Use books, toys, material, and activities that are age appropriate and inclusive of other cultures
- Keep rooms clean and organized
- Participate in both quiet and active activities
- Eat nutritious, appealing snacks
- Increase stimulation through changes in instructional environments (indoor/outdoor, walks, etc.)

Christian teaching and learning experiences are interwoven into all areas of the Abiding Love Lutheran Children's Center's operation to convey knowledge of God in every aspect of a child's world. Our Christian foundations can be seen in spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional, and physical growth of our children.

5 LICENSING INFORMATION

5.1 Board of Directors

The Children's Outreach Ministry Board, a subsidiary of Abiding Love Lutheran Church, formed in 1986, establishes policies.

Parents may address the Board according to the following procedures:

- a. Discuss the issue with the teacher or aides as seems appropriate.
- b. Discuss the issue with the Director.
- c. Request in writing to be on the agenda for the next Children's Outreach Ministry Board meeting. The request should include the reason you wish to address the Board. Requests should be received by the Director of the Center 72 hours prior to the meeting.
- d. Bring your request/concern in writing to the Board meeting.

5.2 Governmental Licensing Information

Abiding Love Lutheran Children's Center is licensed by the State of Texas and receives periodic reviews by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Parents may view a copy of the minimum standards and the most recent Licensing inspection report at any time. Copies of the minimum standards are available in each classroom or the Children's Center office. The most recent HHSC inspection report hangs on the bulletin board near the kitchen.

You may contact the local Licensing office at 512-834-3195. The HHSC child-abuse hotline number is 1-800-252-5400. The HHSC website is www.dfps.state.tx.us.

6 ENROLLMENT

6.1 Waiting List

Classes at the Abiding Love Lutheran Children's Center tend to remain full throughout the year. Abiding Love keeps waiting lists, divided by age and program. There is no fee for our waiting list, but we do ask that families contact us monthly to let us know that they still desire a spot in the Children's Center.

Children are considered for admission based on the following priorities:

- 1st: Current students
- 2nd: Siblings of current students
- 3rd: Abiding Love Church members
- 4th: Community at-large

6.2 Enrollment

A child is enrolled to the Center when the Admission Information Form has been completed and turned in, including the physician's signature; and the registration fee has been paid.

A copy of your child's current immunization records must be submitted to the Children's Center office at least 5 days before your child's first day. Children who are not current with their immunization will not be allowed to stay at the Children's Center. For the safety and health of all the children enrolled at the Children's Center, it is imperative your child is up to date with his/her immunizations.

For children who register after September 1, 2018, Affidavits for Exemption from Immunizations for Reasons of Conscience are not accepted. If you do not immunize your child for religious reasons, you must provide documentation from your religious leader. If you do not immunize for medical reasons, you must provide documentation from your child's Pediatrician.

6.3 Hours, Days, and Months of Operation

The Center will open at 7:00 a.m. and close at 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday for those children enrolled in the full-time program.

We are open from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m., Tuesday through Friday for our half-day program.

7 TUITION POLICY

7.1 Contracts and Fees

The Center requires that parents give a minimum of two weeks written notice of withdrawal so that the Center may advise others who are seeking admission. Two weeks written notice is required for unused tuition to be refunded on a prorated basis.

Separate annual registration fees are assessed for school-year (September-May) and summer (June-August) enrollment.

7.2 Payment Schedule

Tuition rates for the school year (September-August) are announced each spring. Tuition is due on the 1st day of each month.

There is a \$20.00 charge for each returned or NSF check. After two NSF/returned checks, it will be necessary to pay tuition by money order or in cash.

Tuition does not include fees for field trips and extracurricular activities such as SportBall.

7.3 Late Tuition Payments

Tuition is due on the 1st of each month. If arrangements have not been made for late tuition payment, any payment received 5 days after the due date each month will be assessed a late fee of \$10.00 and your child will not be permitted to attend the preschool until payment is received.

Arrangements may be made for special payment schedules.

7.4 Child Care Subsidies

Abiding Love has approval for two children to attend through the Texas Workforce Commission.

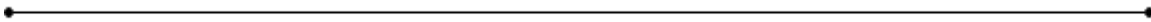
8 CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Within Abiding Love Lutheran Children's Center, confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with employees of Abiding Love who have a "need to know" to care for your child most appropriately and safely. Confidential and sensitive information about staff, other parents, and/or children will not be shared with parents, as the Children's Center strives to protect everyone's right of privacy. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to names, addresses, phone numbers, disability information, and health related information of anyone associated with the Center.

Outside of Abiding Love Lutheran Children's Center, confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when the parent of the child has given express written consent, except where otherwise provided for by law.

Any parent who violates the confidentiality policy will not be permitted in the Children's Center thereafter.

You may observe children at our center who are disabled or who exhibit behavior that may appear inappropriate (i.e. biting, hitting, and spitting). You may be curious or concerned about the other child, but our Confidentiality Policy protects **every** child's privacy.



9 MANDATED REPORTED OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND/OR NEGLECT

Under the Child Protective Services Act, mandated reporters are required to report any **suspicion** of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities within 48 hours. The employees of Abiding Love Lutheran Children's Center are considered mandated reporters, under this law. The employees of Abiding Love are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior, or condition prior to making a report. Under the Act, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. We at the Children's Center take this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities. The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children.

As mandated reporters, the staff of the Center cannot be held liable for reports made to Child Protective Services that are determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in "good faith."

Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Unusual bruising, marks, or cuts on the child's body
- ◆ Severe verbal reprimands
- ◆ Improper clothing relating to size, cleanliness, season
- ◆ Transporting a child without appropriate child restraints (e.g. car seats, seat belts, etc.)
- ◆ Dropping off or picking up a child while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- ◆ Not providing appropriate meals for your child
- ◆ Leaving a child unattended for any amount of time
- ◆ Failure to attend to the special needs of a disabled child
- ◆ Sending a sick child to school over medicated to hide symptoms, which would typically require the child to be kept at home until symptoms subside.
- ◆ Children who exhibit behavior consistent with an abusive situation

Each member of our teaching staff receives at least one hour of annual training regarding the prevention, recognition, and report of child abuse and neglect. The director and some staff members attend an annual all-day training through Prevent Child Abuse Texas. We support and participate in promoting awareness events for parents and staff members.

The director is available to help find resources for parents of children who have been victims of abuse or neglect. Our community has a variety of public and private resources to help children cope with the results of abuse.

10 PARENT'S RIGHT TO IMMEDIATE ACCESS

Parents of a child in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their children whenever they are in care at Abiding Love Lutheran Children's Center, as provided by law.

In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (e.g., Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order) Abiding Love must be provided with a **Certified Copy** of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent(s) requests a more liberal variation of the order in writing. In the case where both parents are afforded shared/joint custody by order of the court, both parents must sign the request for more liberal interpretation of the order.

In the absence of a court order on file with the Children's Center, **both** parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. The Center cannot, without a court order, limit the access of a one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, Abiding Love suggests that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued, since our rights to retain your child are secondary to the other parent's right to immediate access. Children's Center staff will contact the local police should a conflict arise.

Visitors are allowed in the childcare facility only at the discretion of the Center Director. An employee of the Center will always accompany visitors throughout the Center.

Abiding Love will have to dismiss any child whose parent is prohibited from entering upon the Children's Center property. Due to the parents' right to immediate access policy, as well as state and federal regulations, the Center cannot have a child at Abiding Love when the child's parent is prohibited access. The Children's Center will not agree to any request to maintain a child's enrollment even if the parent agrees to stay out of the center. Such an agreement is a violation of the law and will not be entertained.

11 DISMISSAL

The Center also reserves the right to dismiss a child upon a two-week notice for serious behavior problems or repeated late payment.

12 WITHDRAWAL

The Center requires that parents give a minimum of two weeks written notice of withdrawal so that the Center may advise others who are seek admission. Two weeks written notice is required for unused tuition to be refunded on a prorated basis.

13 ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

Parents are required to sign up for arrival times on the designated website portal provided in the welcome letter and closed Facebook group (Abiding Love Lutheran Children's Center). Upon arrival at Abiding Love Lutheran Children's Center, parents will drop-off children at the designated location. Full-time program will drop off at the check-in area at the front doors and the half-day children will have specific instructions for each class. Temperatures will be taken with an infrared thermometer upon arrival. Children are encouraged to walk into the building and carry their own belongings, as appropriate for their age and development. Parents do not have to get out of the car if children can get in and out independently. Parent who get out of the car must wear a mask.

Drop-off slots are available between 7:00 and 9:30. No children may drop-off, for any reason, after 9:30.

Separation anxiety is a normal developmental stage for children between 8 months and 2 ½ years. Parents can make the process smoother for the child by allowing the child to be as independent as their age allows and having a quick, positive drop-off. The longer the departure takes, the more anxiety the child is likely to feel. The professional employees of the Center are available to discuss other options if the child does not settle into the arrival routine after a reasonable period.

At arrival, parents are required to follow the Medication Policy if a child must receive medication during the day.

Parents are required to notify the staff of any special instructions or needs for the child's day. These special instructions include but are not limited to: Early Pick Up, Alternative Pick Up Person, health issues over the previous night which need to be observed and/or any general issues of concern which the child care providers should be aware to best meet the needs of your child throughout the day.

Abiding Love does not serve or provide breakfast in the morning. Parents are required to feed their child a nutritious and filling breakfast prior to arriving at the Children's Center.

13.1 Notification of Absence

Consistent and prompt attendance is advised. If a child will be absent, the parent should notify the child's teacher of the office. The Center will make no refunds for the absence.

14 PICK-UP PROCEDURES

Parents are required to sign up for departure times on the designated website portal provided in the closed Facebook group (Abiding Love Lutheran Children's Center). The full-time program and afterschool program will pick up at the front doors and the half-day children will have specific instructions for each class.

Pick-up slots are available between 3:00 and 6:00. Please notify the office if you need to pick-up during naptime.

14.1 Late Pick-Up

Full-Time & Afterschool Programs

The Children's Center closes at 6:00 p.m. We realize that traffic can be difficult, however, we are only licensed until 6:00, and we want to respect our teachers and their families by allowing them to leave on time. There is a late pick-up charge per child for anyone who is still in the building after 6:00 p.m.

- First time each school year – grace period up to 10 minutes; after 10 minutes, \$1 per minute per child, based on when you exit the building
- Each subsequent time - \$25.00 plus \$1.00 per minute per child, based on when you exit the building

This fee is charged to your account with payment due no later than the next scheduled tuition payment. If your child is picked up late more than five times over the course of the school year, the Children's Center reserves the right to dis-enroll your child from the program. Families will be given written warning a month prior to disenrollment.

If we have not heard from a parent, all attempts will be made in good faith to contact you and the others on your authorized list. If no one can be reached within thirty minutes after the program closes, Child Protective Services along with the police department will be notified. CPS will take custody of the child while further attempt to reach you are made.

Half-Day Program

The Half-Day program closes at 1:00 p.m. There is a late pick-up charge per child for anyone who is still in the building after 1:05 p.m. If a late fee is assessed, it will be based on minutes past 1:00 p.m. that you are in the building.

- First time each school year – grace period up to 10 minutes (1:10 p.m.); after 10 minutes, \$1 per minute per child, based on when you exit the building
- Each subsequent time - \$25.00 plus \$1.00 per minute per child, based on when you exit the building

This fee is charged to your account with payment due no later than the next scheduled tuition payment. If your child is picked up late more than five times over the course of the school year, the Children's Center reserves the right to dis-enroll your child from the program. Families will be given written warning a month prior to disenrollment.

If we have not heard from a parent, all attempts will be made in good faith to contact you and the others on your authorized list. If no one can be reached within thirty minutes after the program closes, Child Protective Services along with the police department will be notified. CPS will take custody of the child while further attempts to reach you are made.

14.2 Safe Departure Policy

If we are concerned for the safety or well-being of your child, should we release that child to you, we will inform you of our concern and call another person on your authorized pick-up list to pick up the child. If we are concerned for your child's safety when a person on your authorized pick-up list picks up your child, we will phone you immediately and/or call another person on your authorized pick-up list to pick up your child.

15 TRANSPORTATION

The Abiding Love Lutheran Children's Center does not typically provide transportation. Vans may be used for school-age summer camp field trips. Families would be notified in advance.

16 SCHOOL CALENDAR – Full-time Program

August 2020

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
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| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 30 | 31 | | | | | |

11 – Parent Orientation @ 6:00
14-7 – Closed for Planning & Prep
17 – Open House, 5:00-6:00 PM
18 – First Day of School

February 2021

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| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | | | | | | |

11 – What to Expect in Pre-K Mtg.
15 – Closed for Staff Development

September 2020

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7 – Closed for Labor Day

March 2021

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| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | |

1 – Summer Registration Begins
22 – Open Enrollment for Summer
29 – 2021/2022 Registration
30 – Kinder Prep Parent Meeting
31 – Parent Conferences

October 2020

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
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| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |

5-30 – Parent Conferences
12 – Closed for Staff Development
15-17 – TXAEYC Conference
31 – Halloween

April 2021

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
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1-28 – Parent Conferences
2 – Closed for Good Friday
12 – Open Enrollment for Fall

November 2020

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| 29 | 30 | | | | | |

4-7 – NAEYC Conference
25-27 – Closed for Thanksgiving

May 2021

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
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20 – Pre-K Graduation
28 – Closed for Planning & Prep
31 – Closed for Memorial Day

December 2020

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| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
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18 – Christmas Sing-Along
24-31 – Closed for Christmas

June 2021

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
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| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | | | |

1 – Summer Sessions Begin!

January 2021

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
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| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| 31 | | | | | | |

1 – Closed for New Year
18 – Closed for MLK Day

July 2021

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
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| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |

5 – Closed for Independence Day
24 – ELEA Day Conference

17 SCHOOL CALENDAR –Half-Day Program

August 2020

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
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| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 30 | 31 | | | | | |

18-21 – Planning & Prep
18 – Parent Orientation @ 6 PM
21 – Open House – 10:30-Noon
25 – First Day of School!

February 2021

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| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | | | | | | |

2 – 2021-2022 Registration
11 – What to Expect in Pre-K Mtg.
15 – Staff Development Day
16 – Open Enrollment for Fall

September 2020

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March 2021

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| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | |

2 – Summer Enrollment Begins
16-19 – Closed for Spring Break
22 – Open Enrollment for Summer
30 – Kinder Prep Parent Meeting
31 – Parent Conferences

October 2020

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| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |

5-30 – Parent Conferences
12 – Staff Development Day
15-17 – TXAEYC Conference
31 – Halloween

April 2021

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
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1-28 – Parent Conferences
2 – Closed for Good Friday

November 2020

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| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | | | | | |

4-7 – NAEYC Conference
24-27 – Closed for Thanksgiving

May 2021

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| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 30 | 31 | | | | | |

20 – Pre-K Graduation
21 – Last Day of School
25-28 – Planning & Prep

December 2020

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18 – Christmas Sing-Along
22-31 – Christmas Break

June 2021

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
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2 – Summer Camp Begins!

January 2021

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
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1 – Christmas Break

July 2021

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
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24 – ELEA Conference

18

19 EMERGENCY CLOSINGS, INCLEMENT WEATHER, FUNERALS

The Center will close or have a delayed start for bad weather if the Austin Independent School District closes or delays start. In the event of a delayed start, we will open at the AISD elementary schools start time. Tuition will not be adjusted for bad weather days, nor are there make-up days.

In the event of a COVID-19 or other health related closure, as mandated by Austin Public Health or other government organizations, we will notify everyone as soon as possible via the Facebook group and through email. Closures could be due to a case amongst the staff or children, government orders restricting attendance, or other unforeseen public health circumstances. Tuition will not be adjusted unless the closure extends beyond two-weeks per school year.

On occasion, the church may require the use of the Fetter Activity Center for funeral services, requiring the half-day program to close. While this may be an inconvenience, your understanding is appreciated. Tuition will not be adjusted.



20 CURRICULUM INFORMATION

Abiding Love Lutheran Children's Center offers a program that reflects the guidelines established by the National Association for the Education of Young Children in its *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs*. The low staff/child ratios in the classrooms enable the teachers to plan for individual children at each child's developmental level.

The Center adheres to the National Association for the Education of Young Children's *Position Statement* on how children learn:

"...collectively the principles that follow form a solid base for decisions about how best to meet the needs of young children...:

- All the domains of development and learning, physical, social, and emotional, and cognitive—are important, and they are closely interrelated.
- Many aspects of children's learning and development follow well-documented sequences, with later abilities, skills, and knowledge building on those already acquired.
- Development and learning proceed at varying rates from child to child, as well as at uneven rates across different areas of a child's individual functioning.
- Development and learning result from a dynamic and continuous interaction of biological maturation and experience.
- Early experiences have profound effects, both cumulative and delayed, on a child's development and learning; and optimal periods exist for certain types of development and learning to occur.
- Development proceeds toward greater complexity, self-regulation, and symbolic or representational capacities.
- Children develop best when they have secure, consistent relationships with responsive adults and opportunities for positive relationships with peers.
- Development and learning occur in and are influenced by multiple social and cultural contexts.
- Always mentally active in seeking to understand the world around them, children learn in a variety of ways; a wide range of teaching strategies and interactions are effective in supporting all these kinds of learning.
- Play is an important vehicle for developing self-regulation as well as for promoting language, cognition, and social competence.
- Development and learning advance when children are challenged to achieve at a level just beyond their current mastery, and when they have many opportunities to practice newly acquired skills.

- Children's experiences shape their motivation and approaches to learning, such as persistence, initiative, and flexibility; in turn, these dispositions and behaviors effect their learning."

What are children learning as they interact with each other, the teaching staff, and the environment? Here are some examples:

20.1 Manipulatives

Children learn to: work cooperatively in small groups; develop self-control; demonstrate perseverance and self-discipline; experience pride in accomplishments; sort and match objects by attributes such as color, size, texture, and shape; understand number concepts related to sequencing, serration, and classification; develop emergent reading skills such as directionality and matching like objects; develop fine motor control; develop eye-hand coordination; develop visual discrimination skills; refine sense of touch.

20.2 Dramatic Play

Children learn to: interact with others; express individuality and creativity; play cooperatively with others; understand the social expectations and attitudes of others; anticipate how to act in new situations; address fears and worries; demonstrate empathy for others; identify and plan play episodes with others; draw on past information and experience to solve problems; identify solutions to problems that arise during play; classify props according to common characteristics; arrange objects according to size; persevere at a task; improve small muscle control; use eye-hand coordination; use visual discrimination skills.

20.3 Music and Movement

Children learn to: participate in a group; develop social skills by playing cooperative musical games; express anger, fear, joy, and other emotions through music and movement; recognize that music and dance express moods and feelings; enhance self-concept by sharing the music and dance of each child's culture; refine listening skills by noticing changes in tempo or pitch; increase awareness of different movements or body positions; develop creativity and imagination; understand new words and concepts; explore cause and effect; explore the many ways the body can move; develop large motor skills, improve balance, coordination, and rhythm; improve small motor skills.

20.4 Sensory

Children learn to: play cooperatively with others; explore social roles; develop pride; see a task through to completion; observe materials to see how they compare; understand cause and effect relationships; observe conservation of volume; develop problem-solving skills; develop creativity; strengthen fine motor control; develop eye-hand coordination; improve coordination skills.

20.5 Art Center

Children learn to: express feelings; channel frustration and anger in a socially acceptable way; assert individuality; experience pride; share and cooperate with others; enhance creativity; develop an understanding of cause and effect; label shapes and objects; solve problems; develop planning skills; develop small muscle skills; refine eye-hand coordination.

20.6 Block Center

Children learn to: work independently and in a group; express needs, concerns, and fears in socially acceptable ways; share and cooperate with others; demonstrate pride in accomplishments; develop an understanding of the concepts of length, height, weight, and area; classify and sort objects by size, shape, and function; make use of physical principles; predict cause and effect relationships; solve problems related to construction; organize in sequence; use addition, subtraction, and fractions; use large and small muscle skills; develop eye-hand coordination; control the placement of objects.

20.7 Book Center

Children learn to: develop concern for others; try out different roles; share time and materials with others; enhance self-esteem; develop an understanding of symbols; increase vocabulary; predict events; recognize objects, colors, and shapes; understand sequence; apply knowledge to new situations; develop storytelling abilities; strengthen eye muscles; coordinate eye and hand movements; refine visual discrimination skills.

Abiding Love Lutheran Children's Center staff members are constantly learning new ways to challenge and encourage young children. Individualized staff development plans are implemented each year to encourage staff to grow in all curriculum areas.

20.8 Physical Activity

Abiding Love Lutheran Children's Center strongly believes in and supports the need for physical activity each day.

When children participate in physical activity every day, multiple health benefits accrue. Regular physical activity builds healthy bones and muscles, improves muscular strength and endurance, reduces the risk for developing chronic disease risk factors, improves self-esteem, and reduces stress and anxiety. Beyond these known health effects, physical activity may also have beneficial influences on academic performance. In addition, cognitive skills and motor skills appear to develop through a dynamic interaction. Research has shown that physical movement can affect the brain's physiology.

Infants will be given opportunities for physical activity, including supervised tummy time.

Toddler age children who are in attendance for a full day will participate a minimum of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.

Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten children will participate a minimum of 90 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.

School age children who are in attendance for a full day will participate a minimum of 90 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day. School age children who are only in attendance after-school will participate a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.

Opportunities for active play may overlap with outdoor play when weather permits.

Abiding Love Lutheran Children's Center will promote all children's active play every day. Children will have ample opportunity to do moderate to vigorous activities, such as running, climbing, dancing, skipping, and jumping, to the extent of their abilities.

All children will participate each day in:

- For full-time children, two occasions of active play outdoors when weather permits. For half-day children, one occasion of active play outdoors when weather permits.
- Continuous opportunities to develop and practice age-appropriate gross motor and movement skills.

Physical activity may take place in the classroom or on the playground when weather permits.

When participating in physical activity, children's clothing should protect them from sun exposure and permit easy movement (not too loose and not too tight) that enables full participation in active play. Footwear should provide support for running and climbing, although children may choose to be barefoot as their age and the temperature permits. Examples of appropriate clothing include:

- Clothing for the weather, such as a jacket, coat, or rainboots, as needed.

Examples of inappropriate clothing/footwear include:

- Footwear that can come off while running or that provide insufficient support for climbing.
- Clothing that can catch on playground equipment, such as those with drawstrings or loops.

When weather conditions prohibit outdoor play, physical activities will occur in the classroom during the scheduled outside time. Classroom teachers have activities planned for "rainy days".

20.9 Daily Schedule of Activities

The Abiding Love Lutheran Children's Center day allows for a variety of learning experiences including, but not limited to, the following:

- Cooperative and independent play
- A variety of planned learning experiences as well as the provision for unplanned and spontaneous activities
- A balance of indoor, outdoor, quiet, active, large and small group, individual, child-initiated and adult-led activities
- Structured group activity and explicit teaching opportunities
- Opportunities for the development of personal, social and emotional skills
- Flexibility within the planned program to accommodate for interests of children, unforeseen circumstances and changing needs
- Use of a variety of developmentally appropriate resources, materials and equipment
- Activities and language that is non-biased, non-sexist, avoids stereotypes and reflects a multicultural perspective

20.10 Class Assignments

September 1 birth date cut-off sets class assignments in accordance with public school policy, placing children with the group with which they will eventually go to Kindergarten. For the most part, groups of children remain together as a class until the

following August. At that time, children will promote to the next appropriate class based upon their birth date. Class placements are solely at the discretion of the Abiding Love administration, although we encourage parents to communicate with us if there are special concerns or requests to take into consideration when placing children. Make these requests in writing and deliver to the Children's Center office.

20.11 Staff and Child Ratios

Developmentally appropriate ratios are important to us, helping our teachers facilitate adult-child interaction and constructive activity among children. Groupings of children are arranged according to age with the following staff to child ratios:

- Infants—3.3:1
- Toddlers—4.5:1
- 2-year-old group—7:1
- 3-year-old group—8:1
- Pre-K—9:1

20.12 Nap/Rest Time

Each full-time classroom has a rest time. The times and lengths of naptime varies by age group. If your child has a special blanket or toy that he/she naps with, please feel free to bring it with your child; it will stay in your child's cubby until naptime.

If your children are past the age of taking a daily nap, they will not be required to sleep, but they will be required to rest and play quietly in their area. Books and quiet toys will be available to those children.

Children under the age of 1 year old are on their own nap/rest/feeding schedule.

20.13 Diapering

For children who are unable to use the toilet consistently, parents should only bring commercially available disposable diapers unless the child has a medical reason that does not permit their use. A health provider's authorization is required for the use of cloth diapers when a documented medical reason for their use exists. For children who require cloth diapers, the diaper must have an absorbent inner lining completely contained within an outer covering made of waterproof material that prevents the escape of feces and urine. Both the diaper and the outer covering would be changed as a unit. Cloth diapers and clothing that are soiled are immediately placed in a plastic bag (without rinsing or avoidable handling) and sent home that day for laundering.

Our staff members check children for signs that diapers are wet or dirty at least every two hours when children are awake and when children waken. Diapers are always

changed when wet or soiled. Diapers or soiled underwear are only changed in the designated changing areas. At all times, teachers have a hand on the child when the child is being changed on an elevated surface.

20.14 Birthday and Holiday Celebrations

Celebrations are important children's lives and they help build the bond within each classroom family, so we are thrilled to celebrate children's birthdays or similar special ethnic and/or cultural days. Please inform us in advance of these events and we will be happy to assist you. Birthday parties are usually celebrated with a special food item at the end of lunch or at snack time. It is the responsibility of our teachers to work with their classroom schedule and the family to decide the best time for the celebration. Please be aware that we have many families with various levels of nutrition consciousness and many children have allergies. Your child's teacher can suggest treats that will work for all the children, or give parents of children with allergies a "heads up" to bring an alternate treat (i.e.-gluten-free cupcake, dairy-free pizza, etc.). A birthday breakfast with bagels, a special lunch pizza party, or muffins have all been well received by the children.

Abiding Love Lutheran Children's Center believes in the importance of sharing the love of Jesus with children through many avenues, including times of celebration within the church year, particularly Christmas and Easter. Our society has many ways to celebrate, in both religious and secular ways. While we want to emphasize Jesus as the focus of these holidays, we do allow limited expressions of the holidays that are not religious.

We consider the exploration of different cultural traditions and celebrations as an important part of education. Abiding Love takes the position that an informed respect for other cultures and celebrations is the best way to counteract prejudice and its negative effects. Consequently, families are welcome to share their cultural celebrations with their child's class. Such activities should be undertaken in the spirit of enriching the program and should be devoid of any proselytizing. Families wishing to share their traditions are encouraged to arrange with the child's teacher. The presentation need not be long or complicated--it can be as simple as reading a favorite book or showing special decorations. The children always enjoy these activities and are enthusiastic participants. Your child's teacher can help you come up with ideas that would fit in with the class attention span and interests.

20.15 Conflict Resolution Policy for Children

At Abiding Love Lutheran Children's Center, we assume that...

1. Conflict can be healthy and can foster growth, learning, responsibility, and trust.

2. Helping children resolve conflict gives children control of their environment and their relationships with others. It also fosters their social and personal growth and maintains self-respect and respect for other children.
3. Children's ability to resolve conflict is influenced by multiple factors, including developmental stages, cultural expectations, models from family and significant others' experiences, and the media.
4. Teachers' approaches to conflict are influenced by their knowledge of their students through observations, parental input, previous experiences, and the understanding that each child learns in a different way over time.
5. Children can take responsibility for their actions, and they are able to come up with creative, positive solutions. They can be empathetic to peers and are able to understand the consequences of their actions.

In response to these beliefs, our classrooms will be safe places where everyday conflict is used as a teachable moment to build children's self-reliance, self-esteem, problem-solving skills, trust in peers, empathy, and compassion. Teachers participate as facilitators, allowing children to practice their evolving conflict-resolution skills in varied ways.

(This conflict resolution model was adapted and taken from: Carter, M. & Curtis, D. (1998), *The Visionary Director*, Redleaf Press: St. Paul, MN.)

20.16 Child Assessments / Parent-Teacher Conferences / Communication

It is important to us that all children are part of an ongoing developmental assessment. All our staff members have been trained to use our assessment procedures and interpret results as well as the conditions under which children will be assessed. The details of our process are outlined below.

- Instruments We Use
 - We assess children using various methods including age-appropriate developmental checklists, parent conversations, self-portraits, work samples, photos/videos, and anecdotal observations.
- Use of Results
 - Assessment results are used for arranging for developmental screening and referral for diagnostic assessment when indicated, identifying children's interests and needs, describing the developmental progress and learning of children, improving curriculum and adapting teaching practices and the environment, planning program improvement, and communicating with families.
- Confidentiality
 - Our staff members keep assessment information confidential. We do not share any information with other families. We ask that families not request

information regarding **other children's** development, special needs, or behavior.

- Parent/Teacher Conferences
 - Basic assessment information is shared with the parents twice a year during conferences. At that time, parents will also receive a written developmental summary. Teachers and parents collaborate on goals and plans for the individual child's learning and continued assessment in accordance with each family's values, culture, identity, and home language.

Good communication is a vital element in a successful school experience. We will use a variety of methods to keep you informed about your child and the events at Abiding Love Lutheran Children's Center.

- Teachers are your primary point of communication at Abiding Love, although families are always welcome to come to the office for clarification.
- You are encouraged to take a minute to chat or leave a communication note with the teacher at the beginning or end of each day. Sharing information can help teachers relate to your child appropriately. Please remember, however, that the teacher does not have time for extended conversations during class times, nor are they expected to interrupt classroom routines if children are dropped off late. Conferences may be scheduled with your child's teacher or the director.
- Teachers will provide a monthly newsletter, weekly updates, a classroom website, or have a closed classroom Facebook page.
- Important dates will be sent quarterly via email by the Director.
- Reminders, announcements, and events will be publicized primarily on the Abiding Love Lutheran Children's Center Facebook group. Follow-up emails may also be utilized
- Some teachers may utilize either parent/teacher communication sheets or daily sheets in the classrooms.
- Snack menus are posted in the kitchen, and copies are available outside the Children's Center office.
- Reading classroom communication and making sure children are ready for whatever is planned is the responsibility of each family, not the teacher.

20.17 Pre-K Graduation Celebration

On a designated evening at the end of the school year, students enrolled in the Pre-K program will participate in a special celebration. The celebration is just for those going on to Kindergarten. Graduation programs are held in the main sanctuary of the church. All family members are welcome. The program includes a performance, class

recognition, and sometimes a special slide show. Refreshments follow. We look forward to sharing this very special occasion with you and your child.

21 DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE

Discipline at Abiding Love Lutheran Children's Center shall:

- Be individualized and consistent for each child
- Be appropriate to the child's level of understanding
- Be directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control

Positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction shall be used, including:

- Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior
- Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements
- Redirecting behavior using positive statements
- Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the age of the child

There will be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:

- Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment
 - Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training
 - Pinching, shaking, or biting a child
 - Hitting a child with a hand or instrument
 - Putting anything in or on a child's mouth
 - Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child
 - Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language
 - Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed
 - Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods for the child's age.
-

22 SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

Abiding Love desires to have an inclusive environment, where we can meet the needs of all children and to help all children successfully negotiate their classroom environments. When there are developmental or behavioral differences, we will make every effort to help families find resources to help meet the child's needs. It is never our desire to dismiss a child, and we will only do so when all other avenues have been explored. Children may be dismissed if:

- Behaviors endanger the safety of other children and staff. This would not include developmentally appropriate behaviors.
- Parents do not secure additional assistance and appropriate professional evaluations, including but not limited to occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, and/or counseling, when a need is expressed by the staff of Abiding Love.

In addition, a family may be dismissed if the parents exhibit behaviors that are not in accordance with Abiding Love values, including, but not limited to:

- Disrespectful communication with any staff member
 - Damaging or allowing children to damage Abiding Love property
 - Requesting confidential information about other children or staff
 - Habitual or excessively late pick-up
-

23 TOYS FROM HOME

Children may bring only a stuffed animal or doll for naptime. Other toys may not be brought to the Center except when requested by a teacher for special occasions. Items brought from home may be lost or broken and the Center cannot assume responsibility for them. NO weapons at any time. Bringing books is at the discretion of the teachers. To help your child, give him/her the choice of leaving the toy at home or in the car before leaving home.

24 DRESS CODE

Clothing:

Children are engaged in various activities during the day; some of these activities can be messy, and/or athletic in nature. Additionally, children are engaged in outdoor play daily, weather permitting. Due to these activities, children are required to be dressed in seasonably appropriate, comfortable clothing. Although, children can take their shoes off, they must bring appropriate shoes to school, so that they have the option of wearing them.

Parents are prohibited from dressing children in overalls, or clothing with difficult closures if the child is beginning toilet training or has already been toilet trained.

We encourage outdoor play, except in the event of unsafe weather, all year-round. Coats, hats, and gloves must be provided in the winter months. We recommend rain boots and additional extra clothes on rainy (but not stormy) days.

Children ages 3 through 5 are always required to have one seasonably and size appropriate complete change of clothing at the Center. Children under 3 years of age are always required to have two seasonably and size appropriate, complete changes of clothing at the Center. A complete change of clothing includes shirt, pants, underwear, socks, and shoes. Teachers will post reminders for parents to update changes of clothing as the weather begins to change.

All clothing items must be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name. This includes coats, hats, and gloves. The Children's Center is not responsible for lost or damaged items of clothing.



25 FIELD TRIPS, ANIMALS, AND WATER PLAY

25.1 Field Trips

The children enrolled in Abiding Love Lutheran Children's Center may participate in a few field trips each school year. You are required to sign the permission statement included in your registration form. We do not own transportation vehicles, so parents will be asked to drive. You will receive at least 48 hours' notice of all field trips.

25.2 Animals

Some of our Abiding Love classrooms have pets, including fish, hermit crabs, frogs, and turtles. We consider classroom pets to be a valuable learning opportunity, and we encourage teachers to let the children participate in their care.

Children are not allowed to touch the frogs or turtles.

25.3 Water Play

During summer months, water play will be allowed which includes sprinklers, splash tables, spray bottles, and other creative ways to stay wet. At no time do we allow wading pools that the children would be immersed in. At the beginning of each summer teachers will announce, through their monthly classroom newsletters or additional memos in children's folders, their class water day schedules.



26 PARENT PARTICIPATION / VOLUNTEERS

Parents are may visit the Center at any time during the day, either to participate in an activity or simply to observe. Since routines are a critical part of the day for young children and transitions are sometimes difficult, we do ask that you take consideration of routines such as mealtimes and naptime, in addition to transitions such as separation from parents and departure rituals when planning to visit your child during the school day. Infants and toddlers are many times unable to handle having two drop-offs in one day, as it is very confusing for children, therefore young children may need to go home with the parent after a classroom visit or special event. Please plan for this ahead of time.

All parents are welcome to join the Parents Association, which does fundraisers to assist with school-wide teacher appreciation projects. We also welcome room parents for each classroom. Big parts of the room parents' responsibilities involve coordinating teacher appreciation, such as birthdays and holidays. Depending upon the age-group, room parents may also help with school-wide special events, class parties, and or other things to help the teacher. Room parents are encouraged to act as a coordinator, rather than trying to do it all him/herself!

All parents may set up a meeting to speak with the director to review or discuss any questions or concerns. She is always willing to discuss policy or help resolve concerns about your child. She cannot discuss any other child's behavior, health, or family.

26.1 Social Media

The Center respects the right of the families of the children in our care to use social media. However, because of the public nature of these sites, we request that you help us protect the safety and identity of children in our care by using good judgment and discretion online. Please do not:

- Disclose confidential or proprietary information about the Center employees, the children in our care or their families, or the Center in general including financial, health, or contact information.
- Post photographs or videos of the Center employees, the children in our care (who are not your own) or their families to your social media site (and any sites that you contribute to) without prior written permission. This includes classroom activities, parties, field trips, graduation, etc.

26.2 Parent Code of Conduct

Abiding Love Lutheran Children's Center requires the parents of enrolled children to behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect. One of the goals of Abiding Love Lutheran Children's Center is to provide the most appropriate environment in which all children can grow, learn, and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of the staff of the Children's Center but is the responsibility of each parent or adult who enters the center. Parents are required to behave in a manner that fosters this ideal environment. Parents who violate the Parent Code of Conduct may be dis-enrolled.

SWEARING/CURSING: No parent or adult is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language in the earshot of children, including one's own. Such language is considered offensive by many people and is not part of what we want to teach in our program. If a parent or adult feels frustrated or angry, it is more appropriate to verbally express the frustration or anger using non-offensive language. At no time shall inappropriate language be directed toward members of the staff, their own child, or another child in the Center.

THREATENING OF EMPLOYEES, CHILDREN OTHER PARENTS OR ADULTS: Threats of any kind will not be tolerated. Making threats is not an appropriate means of negotiation and will not be allowed.

INSTRUCTION OF OTHER CHILDREN: Parents are prohibited from addressing, for correction or discipline, a child that is not their own. Of course, no parent or other adult may physically punish another parent's child. If a parent should witness another parent's child behaving in an inappropriate manner or is concerned about behavior reported to them by their own child, it is most appropriate for the parent to direct their concern to the classroom teacher and/or Center Director. Furthermore, it is wholly inappropriate for one parent to seek out another parent to discuss their child's inappropriate behavior. All behavior concerns should be brought to the classroom teacher or director's attention. Parents may only ask for help with empowering their own child to successfully negotiate situations that may arise in a diverse classroom. We strive to meet the needs of all children and to help children learn how to interact in an appropriate manner with each other. Although you may be curious about other children, teachers and/or the Center Director are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you. All children enrolled in our center have privacy rights and are further protected by our Confidentiality Policy. You may be assured that we will not discuss anything about your child with another parent or adult visiting the center.

SAFETY: Parents are required to always follow all safety procedures. These procedures are designed to protect the welfare and best interest of the employees, children and associates of Abiding Love Lutheran Children's Center. Please be particularly mindful of entrance procedures. We all like to be polite. However, we need to be careful to not allow unauthorized individuals into the Center. Holding the door open for the person following you may, in fact, be polite; however, that person may not be authorized to enter the premises. Be alert and mindful. Immediately report any concerns to the Center Director. Children should not be allowed to enter parking areas without being within arm's length of an adult. In addition, as an extra precaution, parents must drive cautiously and slowly in our parking areas.

CONFRONTATIONAL INTERACTIONS WITH EMPLOYEES, OTHER PARENTS OR ASSOCIATES: While it is understood that parents will not always agree with the staff or the parents of the other children, it is expected that all disagreements be handled in a calm and respectful manner. Confrontational interactions are not an appropriate means by which to communicate a point and are strictly prohibited.

VIOLATIONS OF THE CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY: Abiding Love Lutheran Children's Center takes very seriously the responsibility of maintaining the confidentiality of all persons associated with the center. Parents must understand the implications of this responsibility. Parents need to recognize that the Confidentiality Policy not only applies to their child or family, but all children, families and employees associated with the Children's Center. Any parent who shares any information considered to be confidential, pressures employees or other parents for information, which is not necessary for them to know, will be in violation of the Confidentiality Policy.

27 HEALTH AND SAFETY

27.1 Pre-Enrollment Requirements

Parents are required to provide us with the most up to date health and immunization related information. Information is kept confidential and is only shared on a "need to know" basis. Classroom teachers are always given copies of emergency contacts, emergency releases, and allergy information.

All children are required to have a health statement signed by a licensed medical professional to attend Abiding Love. The health statement, indicating the child's fitness to attend the Children's Center, must be completed by a licensed healthcare professional and returned to the Center before enrollment.

27.2 Vision and Hearing Screening

All children who are 4 years old by September 1st of the school year must provide documentation, signed and dated by the physician, of vision and hearing screening within 90 days of the beginning of the school year. If the child refuses to cooperate with the test, the physician must provide documentation to that effect.

27.3 Children with Severe Allergies

For the safety of your child, parents are required to provide a signed statement, detailing any allergies, food or otherwise, from which their child suffers, at the time of enrollment or when the allergy is discovered. This form must be signed by the child's physician and parent(s) or legal guardian(s), and must be updated every twelve months, or more frequently, as needed. In addition to this form, parents must provide a copy of any additional physician's orders and procedural guidelines relating to the prevention and treatment of the child's allergy.

Any medication required to treat an allergic reaction must be provided in accordance with the Medication Policy detailed herein.

27.4 Communicable Diseases

The Center follows all health/communicable disease policies as outlined by the Texas Childcare Licensing and the Texas Administrative Code.

Children will be excluded from participation in the program if they exhibit symptoms of any communicable disease. They will not be permitted to return to the program until they are no longer contagious. Guidelines for determining the contagious period for a specific illness are based on the recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics and The Texas Administrative Code. Abiding Love Lutheran Children's Center reserves the right to refuse to allow a child to return if the Director or designee believes the child to be too ill to participate in the program. If a parent is called to pick up a child who is exhibiting symptoms, the child must stay home a minimum of the next three school day, regardless of the reason the parent thinks the child is exhibiting symptoms.

Children excluded from the program due to a fever may not return to the program until they are fever free, without fever reducing medication, for 72 hours. A fever is defined as a temperature reading on a thermometer of at least 100 degrees Fahrenheit or more.

Children are required to be excluded from the program for loose bowels or diarrhea, which occur three or more times in a 24-hour period. Children may return to the program when normal bowel movements resume and have been diarrhea free for 72-hours. Children are required to be excluded from the program for vomiting more than twice in a 24-hour period. They must be vomit free for 72-hours and eating normally before returning.

If a child exhibits signs of illness, parents will be called to pick up their child. Parents are required to pick up an ill child within 30 minutes of notification by phone. If a parent is reached but cannot pick his or her child up within 30 minutes, it becomes the parent's responsibility to arrange for alternate pick up with someone listed on the child's emergency contact form. The staff will not continue to call those listed on the emergency contact list once a parent is reached. If a parent cannot be reached, the staff will begin to call the people listed on the emergency contact form, until arrangements can be made for the child to be picked up.

If there is a positive case of COVID-19 within the household of a staff member or child, the staff member or child must stay home until readmittance requirements are met. If there is a positive case of COVID-19 amongst staff or children, all families will be notified as soon as test results are in, and we will follow the closure instructions as given by Austin Public Health. Staff members and children who are being tested due to possible exposure or symptoms may not be in attendance until test results are in and they meet all readmittance criteria. Austin Public Health readmittance criteria change frequently, so please contact the director if you are unsure of a specific situation.

If your child will be absent due to illness, we request that you notify the Children's Center. This enables our faculty to keep track of any illnesses, which may occur at our school. This information will only be shared with staff on a "need to know" basis. If

your child has a communicable disease, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the Center, so that the parents of the children in the preschool may be notified that a communicable disease is present. Once again, only the communicable disease information will be shared. Abiding Love will take all measures necessary to protect your child's confidentiality. You are not required to disclose this information by law, and your continued enrollment will not be based whatsoever on your decision to share, (or not) the reason for your child's absence from school.

27.5 Biting

Children sometimes bite other children. Although not all toddlers bite, biting is considered a normal stage in a child's development. Children may bite for a variety of reasons, rarely with the intent to hurt another child. Karen Miller, author of *Things to Do with Toddlers and Twos*, suggests toddlers may bite for any of the following reasons:

- **Teething:** Toddlers are often cutting teeth and it hurts. Chewing on something relieves the itch and stops the pain for a moment.
- **Sensory Exploration:** Toddlers are very good at using all their senses to learn about the world. The "oral mode," an important style of learning for infants, continues into toddlerhood. They bite everything, not just their playmates.
- **Cause and Effect:** Toddlers are eager explorers. They are constantly studying cause and effect. Biting produces a predictable response. Often, the response is dramatic: there is a lot of noise and attention from adults.
- **Self-Assertion:** This is probably the most common reason toddlers bite. It is a way to express frustration when they do not yet have the language skills to do so.

Our staff acts to reduce the number of biting incidents, including providing access to teething toys, providing numerous sensory exploration activities, providing opportunity to explore cause and effect, and offering toddler's options and alternatives to reduce frustrations.

When a child receives a bite, that child is immediately comforted, and the bite is washed with soap and a Band-Aid applied if the skin is broken. The teacher says firmly, "It is not okay to bite. Biting hurts very much." If possible, the teacher will try to encourage the bitten child to express his/her feelings. "It hurts" or "Don't bite me" are sentences teachers will model for the child to repeat. The teacher redirects the child to another area of the classroom.

Consistent with the Abiding Love policy, parents are not told the name of the child who bit their child. Parents of the biter are informed and work together with the teachers in hopes of preventing further incidents of biting. We recognize how upset parents may be when they learn their child received a bite; however, we also recognize that biting is a normal component of child development. Despite our many concerted efforts to prevent biting incidents, they are bound to occur. Our program does not exclude children because of biting alone.

Please feel free to ask the staff any questions about toddlers and biting. Parents should understand and take comfort in knowing that biting is a normal stage during a child's development, and, like all stages, he/she will quickly outgrow it.

For more information in biting, parents may want to read *Things to Do with Toddlers and Twos* by Karen Miller.

27.6 Dispensing of Medication

Abiding Love Lutheran Children's Center will only dispense over the counter and/or prescription medication that is in original, labeled containers. For over-the-counter medications that state "See medical professional" or similar phrasing, we cannot legally administer the medication without a doctor's note containing child's name, medication name, dosage, and exact dates of administration.

Parents are required to complete a Medication Form the first day that medication is to be dispensed. Medication Forms may be obtained from the office or your child's teacher. Medication Forms, doctor's notes, and medication are to be turned into the teacher. Medications will be stored in appropriate places and refrigerated if necessary. **It is not safe to keep medications in a child's cubby or bag.**

If your child has an allergy that has been diagnosed by a medical professional, you must obtain an Allergy Emergency Plan from your child's physician, stating what your child is allergic to, symptoms of an allergic reaction, and what steps to take in the event of an allergic reaction.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that all prescription medication is properly labeled by a pharmacist and replaced prior to the expiration date.

Parents and teachers are not allowed to administer any kind of vitamins or medications by adding them to the child's bottle, cup, or thermos. In addition, you may not send vitamins in children's lunches.

27.7 Insect Repellant and Sunscreen

Parents are to apply insect repellant and sunscreen to children before arrival. Teachers may apply more, as needed, throughout the day. Your child's teacher will either ask you to provide individual repellant and sunscreen with your child's name on it, or they will ask you to sign a permission form for your child to have both applied from a "community pool". For those classes you will need to contribute PABA free sunscreen and insect repellant with DEET.

27.8 Fire Drills

Abiding Love Lutheran Children's Center conducts monthly fire and emergency/evacuation drills. Parents, staff, and children will not be made aware of drill dates or times, as this is the most effective way to assess the effectiveness of fire and emergency/evacuation plans.

27.9 Alternate Safe Location

Should the administration of Abiding Love or any emergency services personnel determine that any of the buildings that houses the Children's Center to be too dangerous to be occupied, the staff and children will be taken to the main church building or St. Catherine of Siena Catholic church. Once the children are assembled there, the staff will begin contacting parents or emergency contact persons for pick up. As stated before, children must be picked up within 45 minutes of the telephone call.

27.10 Medical Emergencies

In case of critical illness or injury during school hours, appropriate first aid or CPR will be given immediately, and the appropriate emergency personnel will be contacted. Parents will also be notified immediately.

27.11 Surgery

Children may not attend school the same day that they have surgery. Young children recover quickly, but there is always a risk of reactions to anesthetics. The Center does not have the materials or staff to react to such emergencies.

27.12 SIDS Prevention

In accordance with commonly recognized SIDS prevention techniques and TPRS requirements, we put all infants under one year of age to sleep on their backs. We will only make exceptions if you provide us with documentation from your pediatrician.

In accordance with best practices and the law, children must sleep in a "naked crib"; they may only have a flat, firm fitting crib mattress and a well-fitting crib sheet. Nothing else may be in or on the crib. If children need to have a wedge put under the mattress, the pediatrician must provide formal documentation and a waiver must be granted by Childcare Licensing.

27.13 Incident/Accident Reports

Should your child be involved in an incident/accident during the school day, a staff member will complete an Incident/Accident Report. The Incident/Accident Report will be put in the child's classroom folder.

27.14 Food Policy

The children eat together at lunchtime. The teacher sits with the children to model table manners and converse with the children. Children are encouraged to get their own lunch boxes, open containers, and eat independently, as they are ready. Older infants and toddlers use sippy cups at lunch. Children transition to a regular cup, as they are ready; for most children, this is the spring before they move to a two-year-old class.

We are committed to good nutrition as an integral part of the early childhood experience. Not only do children benefit physically, but they are also learning the principles of good nutrition.

The following is a guideline to help assist you in planning a healthy lunch for your child. These patterns are from the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program. You may access the complete USDA CACFP meal pattern packet online at www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/blocks2.pdf.

Infant Meal Patterns

| | <u>Lunch or Supper</u> | <u>Snack</u> |
|---------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Birth through 3 months | 4-6 fl. Oz. breast milk or formula | 4-6 fl. Oz. breast milk or formula |
| 4 months through 7 months | 4-8 fl. Oz. breast milk or formula 0-3 Tbsp. infant cereal 0-3 Tbsp. fruit and/or vegetable | 4-6 fl. Oz. breast milk or formula |

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| | | |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| 8 months through 11 months | 6-8 fl. Oz. breast milk or formula 2-4 Tbsp. infant cereal; and/or 1-4 Tbsp. meat, fish, poultry, egg yolk, cooked dry beans or peas; or ½-2 oz. cheese; or 1-4 oz. cottage cheese, cheese food, or cheese spread 1-4 Tbsp. fruit and/or vegetable | 2-4 fl. Oz. breast milk or formula or fruit juice 0-1/2 slice bread or 0-2 crackers |
|----------------------------|--|--|

Toddler & Preschool Lunch or Supper Meal Patterns

| <u>Components</u> | <u>Ages 1-2</u> | <u>Ages 3-5</u> |
|------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Milk, fluid | ½ cup | ¾ cup |
| Meat and Meat Alternative: | | |
| Lean meat | 1 oz. | 1 ½ oz. |
| Cheese | 1 oz. slice | 1 ½ oz. |
| Eggs | ½ | ¾ |
| Beans/Peas | ¼ cup | 3/8 cup |
| Nut Butters | 2 Tbsp. | 3 Tbsp. |
| Yogurt | 4 oz. | 6 oz. |
| Vegetables & Fruit | ¼ cup total | ½ cup total |
| Bread and Bread Alternative: | | |
| Bread | ½ slice | ½ slice |
| Cereal/Grain | ¼ cup | ¼ cup |
| Pasta/Noodles | ¼ cup | ¼ cup |

All age groups:

All food items must be labeled with your child's name. Abiding Love Lutheran Children's Center does not permit children to share or exchange food items.

Parents are required to provide written notification of any food/dietary restrictions (i.e. lactose intolerance, vegetarian diets, wheat free/gluten free diets).

Abiding Love never uses food as a punishment. Children will never be denied participation in lunch or snack time for behavior reasons. Nor will food be used to reward good behavior, as this sends an unhealthy message about the role of food in our lives.

Teachers can use food for classroom lessons.

Infant Classroom:

Children enrolled in the Caterpillar classroom must have all food items for consumption prepared and labeled each day the child is in attendance. This includes formula/breast milk bottles, baby food, snacks, and juice bottles. Be sure to prepare one more bottle than you think your child will consume in a day to assure that your child will not run out. Prepared bottles must be stored in the designated refrigerator and will be warmed in a water bath prior to feeding. No bottles will be microwaved. All bottles must be taken home by the parents each night to be washed.

Parents are required to complete a feeding schedule for their child monthly, or as the child's feeding requirements change. Staff will complete a daily chart for each child detailing for the parent what the child ate, when, and how much.

Breastfeeding mothers are welcome to come to the center during the day to feed their child. Please discuss your desire to come to the center to breastfeed your child with the classroom teacher.

Toddler and Preschool Classrooms:

Abiding Love does not allow candy bars or candy treats such as Skittles, Starbursts or gum, in a child's lunch. We are also not allowed to serve any beverages other than water, milk, and 100% juice in your child's lunch. If you wish for these foods to be a part of your child's diet, please give them to your child at home.

All food items provided in your child's lunch must be labeled with your child's name. Simply labeling the child's lunch box/bag is not sufficient. Children will not be permitted to consume any food item not labeled with his/her name.

Abiding Love will provide a healthy morning and afternoon snack for all children except infants. A list of the daily snacks available to the children will be posted in the classroom monthly.

27.15 Pizza Days

Pizza cards are sold in the office as a fund-raiser. The Children's Center has pizza days every Friday. Children may have as much cheese pizza as they want, but we strongly encourage families to send "healthy snacks" such as yogurt, fruit, and/or vegetables to go with the pizza.

Each pizza card is worth five pizza days, so each family purchases cards at a different time, based on program and attendance. Teachers give the family either a note or the old card when they need a new one. At that time, you can come by the office to write a check. Because this is a fundraiser, NO REFUNDS will be given on the balance of the card when the child withdraws.

27.16 Gang-Free Zone / Firearms and Weapons

Any area within 1000 feet of the Center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.

At no time is any person permitted to carry any type of firearm, ammunition, and/or weapon on Abiding Love Children's Center property for any reason. Violation of this policy will result in immediate dismissal from the program.

28 POLICY CHANGES

The Abiding Love Lutheran Children's Center reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to change any policies through written communication with families. Due to the high cost of postage, most communication is passed out "in-house" using the classroom folders. Parents are responsible for gathering information and making sure that it is shared within each family regardless of who picks up the child on any day.

29 CENTER INFORMATION

For Your Child Related Needs:

Director

Debbie Tonne

Mailing Address

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Austin, TX 78749

Phone

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E-mail

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For Your Spiritual Needs:

Pastor

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