



## PARENT HANDBOOK

Center phone: (318) 429-6890

Center fax: (318) 429-6894

[www.firstshreveport.org/firstbeginnings](http://www.firstshreveport.org/firstbeginnings)

# Mission Statement

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**Our mission is to provide children, and their families, with a secure, enriching environment to foster individual development, self-esteem, creativity, and spiritual growth.**

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Dear parent:

More and more, research tells us that our children's healthy development depends on safe and positive experiences during the first few years of life. If you are a parent who works during these early years, choosing good child care is one of the most important decisions you will ever make for your child. First Beginnings Child Development Center offers every child a loving and nurturing environment; a place that is stimulating, a place where every day has something special in store.

First Beginnings is a ministry of First United Methodist Church. Starting in 1970 as a Mother's Day Out program, First Beginnings has, through the years, evolved into a full day preschool and early education center. We serve children 2 months through 4 years of age operating as a weekday, paid tuition program. While First Beginnings is a First United Methodist Ministry, our program is nondenominational and open to families of all faiths throughout the community.

This handbook will explain our philosophy, policies and procedures, activities, class structure, and a basic schedule. We have tried to cover as much information as possible. However, with the ever-changing rules and regulations in the Early Childhood Education field, we find it difficult to keep our printed information current. We want to encourage you to bring all of your concerns and questions to our attention. Never hesitate to come to our office or call us if you have any questions. Tuition costs are explained on our Tuition Agreement Form, separate from this handbook. If you have any questions after reviewing it, please give us a call.

This First Beginnings Child Development Center looks forward to a year filled with new opportunities and experiences. If you should ever need to speak with someone regarding your child's care, please contact the office at **429-6890**.

Sincerely,

Charlotte Rogers

Director

***First Beginnings is a Class "A" "Type III" Child Development Center, Participating in The Louisiana Quality Start Star Rating System and, "CLASS" through The Louisiana Department of Education***

***For more information go to: <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/early-childhood>***

## **Child Development Philosophy**

The First Beginnings Child Development Center's program emphasizes interrelated areas important for the growth of the whole child; intellectually, socially, physically, emotionally and creatively. We seek to meet the needs of the individual child in a group setting. We strive for a daily positive feeling of success and self-worth at his or her level of maturity. A love of learning, fostered through a Christian environment provides rich opportunities for growth. We strive to inspire the children's natural curiosity as they investigate, discover, and solve problems in their daily experiences. While we realize the value of the parent's role with their child, we must set some common goals to assist you with the task of providing a nurturing, secure, fun, and challenging environment for your child while they are in our care.

### **Our Goals for Your Child:**

- Become aware that each person is worthy of God's love and the love of other human beings.
- Develop an ability to communicate effectively with teachers, and classmates; to hear and initiate sounds, form words, and to understand and follow instructions.
- Develop a growing concept of the relationships of numbers, time, space, and form.
- Have opportunities for observing and investigating the basic phenomena of weather, and seasonal changes.
- To experience and explore the growth cycle of plants and animals.
- Cultivate and encourage music appreciation awareness and participation.
- Build an understanding of self and others through informal role-play.
- Provide "hands on" art opportunities through various mediums, increasing recognition of shape, colors, and textures.
- Stimulate personal responsibility growth for self and others.
- Develop understandings, attitudes, and skills appropriate for the child's particular age.
- Experience the loving care of adults whose own lives demonstrate commitment to the Christian community.
- Develop a healthy body and promote wellness through practice of good hygiene.
- Enhance physical development through opportunities to exercise both gross, and fine motor skills.

### **Parent Expectations:**

Please read the information contained in this handbook and make sure you understand all of the policies and procedures of the center before committing to partner with us. If you have any questions regarding stated policy, please refer them to the office personnel.

- **All children's hands must be washed, and taken to the restroom before entering the classroom. Infants must also have their hands washed, and have a clean diaper before entering the classroom.** Shoe covers are provided for parents of infant children. They should be put over footwear before entering the classroom. Shoe covers are kept in a container outside of your child's classroom.
- Children will not be received prior to 7:30 a.m. The teachers will be preparing for the day. Limited spaces are available for early care at 7:00am, for an additional charge. Inquire in the office.
- Always speak to your child's teacher when you drop your child off and pick them up, acknowledging you have arrived or that you are leaving with your child. In the classroom, the teachers are focused on all of the children. Do not try to discuss individual concerns or particular issues you may have at drop-off /pick-up time. If you would like to discuss your child performance with their teacher, an appointment can be made.
- We ask that all pre-school age children be dropped off by 9:00 a.m. Scheduled activities begin at this time, unnecessary interruptions are discouraged. Children enrolled in our Infant Program may be dropped off up to 11:30.

- We will not accept children or visitors between the hours of **11:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**: This is a time when the children are settling down from the morning activities, preparing for lunch, and naptime.
- Our doors will be locked from 9:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Ring our doorbell if you arrive during this time. Security personnel will be in the lobby at all times to monitor entry. All visitors must sign in and produce a photo ID.
- Your child's safety is of utmost importance: Please end your phone calls before pulling on to Sprague Street. We want to eliminate any distractions. Excited children are unpredictable and may pull away from a parent. You may parallel park on Sprague Street. Do not leave your car running or leave a child in your vehicle. Lock your vehicle.
- A \$5.00 per minute late fee will be charged for children who are left beyond 5:30 p.m.
- For the safety and wellbeing of the children, parents are expected to maintain accurate records regarding their address, phone numbers, emergency information, immunizations, etc. Parents should notify the office immediately of any changes that need to be made.
- Parents are expected to inform the child's teacher of any special circumstances that may contribute to their child's behavior.
- Please do not send your child to class with personal items except at the teachers' request.
- Parents should inspect their child's cubby daily. Upcoming events, schedule or policy changes are communicated in this way.

### **Staff Requirements:**

Staff members at First Beginnings are required to display the following personal and professional qualifications:

- Good physical and mental health.
- Experience working with young children.
- Demonstrate enthusiasm for working with young children.
- Respect for children and adults.
- Promote positive relationships with children and adults.
- Child Development Associate Certification is recommended
- Continuing education hours and a minimum of 15 clock hours of training per year are required.
- Red Cross CPR, First Aid, and AED Certification is required.

### **Children's Admission Requirements:**

The following records are required by the Louisiana State Licensing Department and/or First Beginnings Child Development Center to be completed and on file prior to the first day of your child's attendance.

- |   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| *Tuition Agreement                            | * Health Policy               |
| * Registration /Supply fee                    | * Master Record               |
| * Record of Immunizations (must be current)   | * Health and Personal Records |
| * Permission to Participate in Gym Activities | * Emergency Plan              |

The last page in our Parent Handbook is confirmation you understand we have video surveillance cameras monitoring the center, allergy information on your child and that you have read the handbook.

This form is to be signed and returned to the office.

A complete list of our School Closing, Special Event, and Holiday Schedule is detailed on a separate page. However, we want to remind you of our Christmas Break: First Beginnings is closed for the Christmas Holiday the same dates Caddo Schools are closed, which is approximately 2 weeks.

## General Operational Policies and Procedures

### **Health Policy:**

As a Louisiana licensed childcare center, we are required to follow state guidelines regarding illnesses, medication administration, and notification of communicable diseases. In accordance with those guidelines, we have established policies for our center to help us manage the overall wellness of the children in our care. A separate, detailed health policy will require your signature before admission. Some of our health regulations are highlighted below.

**Parent Notification:** Parents will be notified if a child becomes ill at the center. Immediate response is expected of you to come for your child. All children sent home with a contagious illness are required to stay out for 24 hours and should remain out until fever-free for 24 hours without any fever reducing medication. If a communicable disease is developing in the classroom, parents will be notified. If a child develops a contagious disease at home, please notify the center. Fever is considered 100.2° axillary.

**Medication Administration:** Because of the great responsibility of giving medication to children, we ask that parents give any necessary medication to their children when possible. If a child is well enough to be in school but needs to finish a prescription to avoid re-infection, we will dispense it. An authorization form must be completed daily by the parent or guardian for as long as the medicine is dispensed. Only medication with the original label and container will be administered.

**Soiled Clothing:** It is common for children under age four to have a wetting or soiling accident. We make every attempt to assist you and your child with toilet training, but sometimes a child is not quite ready. After two occasions of wetting or soiling accidents in one day, the teachers will put the child in a diaper. Teachers must also dispose of any soiled clothing (by law) for sanitary reasons and regulations. The teachers are not allowed to wash soiled garments and return them to you. Please make sure a change of clothing is always available for your child and that it is seasonally appropriate. Occasionally donated clothing is available for borrowing, should your child ever need to borrow clothing, please make sure it is returned promptly.

### **Discipline Policy:**

We believe that discipline is a form of constructive guidance. Our discipline will be fair and consistent with encouragement and praise being offered for expected behavior. Our purpose in disciplining a child is to help the child learn acceptable behavior through understanding. The child's age, intelligence, emotional make-up, and past experiences will be considered when re-directing and guiding the child's behavior. At the center, no one will ever shout at, shame, or hit your child. Time-out may be used if redirecting is unsuccessful. Time-out takes the child away from friends or an activity, giving him or her chance to start over or calm down. One minute for every year in age will determine the length of time the child may sit at the table away from the group. A separate, more detailed discipline policy is in the enrollment package.

### **Safety:**

We ensure in every way possible that your child has safe places to play throughout the day. Security cameras are located throughout our center and the activity is recorded. Panic buttons and telephones are located in each of the classrooms and throughout the center. We utilize cabinet locks, outlet plug covers, padded floor spaces, soft material underneath climbing equipment and other items made for accident prevention. We also utilize the expertise of security personnel to monitor the entryways of the center on a full-time basis. **Please do not ask them to leave their post** unless there is an emergency or perceived threat.

### **Emergency Plan for Safe Haven and Evacuation:**

Our staff has been trained in Disaster Relief. In the event of an emergency, we fall under The Office of Homeland Security. They will advise us to “Shelter in Place” or “Evacuate to a Safe Haven”. If the situation requires us to transport the children to an alternate location, we will make every effort to contact you by phone to keep you informed. If we are unable to contact you, we are prepared to care for your child until Homeland Security notifies us. A copy of our Homeland Security Disaster Plan is in the office and at the front desk. A summary of our plan is included in this handbook on page

### **Arrival/Departure:**

Children are expected to arrive in their classroom, dressed and ready for the day. All children must be taken to the restroom to potty and their hands must be washed prior to entering the class. Infants must have a clean diaper and clean hands. Planned learning begins at 9:00 a.m. for our Toddler and Pre-k classes; you are encouraged to have your child in the classroom no later than 9:00 a.m. Our teachers have a set schedule planned for the children each day. Please make sure your child’s teacher is aware of your child’s arrival and departure before you leave the center.

### **Who May Pick Up Your Child?**

Please note that the master card form has a space for you to list the names of persons authorized to take your child from the center. Those you list are the ONLY individuals, other than you who will have permission to take your child. They may also be contacted in an emergency if we cannot locate you. Picture ID and fingerprint scanning is required on all individuals you list on record associated with your children. You must contact the office in the event of any change on your child’s record.

### **Weather Closings:**

It is possible that we may have to close the center due to bad weather. On days when closing might be questionable, you are advised to observe channels of the news media. We will follow the Caddo Parish School Board decisions regarding school closure due to inclement weather. Typically, if Caddo schools are closed due to inclement weather, we will also be closed.

### **Clothing:**

Children should wear washable play clothes and shoes that are not slick (preferably rubber-soles). No boots of any kind are allowed. Please send extra clothes for anticipated needs. Some children will need to change more often than others. Place your child’s name on clothing and other belongings to avoid confusion and loss. Groups play outside all winter, which may require warm clothing, including hats and mittens. Do not send special items or toys with your child unless requested by your teacher.

### **Meals and Snacks:**

First Beginnings will provide breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack for all children beginning when a child is able to eat table food. Because of licensing requirements, we cannot allow any food or drinks to be brought into the center. A nutritious lunch and drink will be provided for your child (100% fruit juice or milk). Please notify us of any allergies. Never bring any nut products or foods that contain nuts into the center.

### **Birthdays:**

We understand the significance of a birthday for both the parent and child. Traditional celebrations often enjoyed in the home are not always appropriate for our environment at the center. You may bring treats for the class. Plans must be made in advance, and coordinated with your child’s teacher. Please keep the celebration simple. **First Beginnings is a “Nut-Free” center.**

### **Suggestion/Payment Box:**

There is a suggestion/payment box hanging on the wall outside of the office door in the hallway. Please feel free to use it; we love your feedback.

## Program Philosophy and Practices

Play is learning. Little hands are encouraged to explore. First Beginnings has a balanced of teacher-directed and child-initiated opportunities to excel. Our Curriculum Coordinator designs the curriculum and program activities based on regulations set forth through the Louisiana Department of Education. Learning spaces are designed to be fun, color-filled and enticing, it includes activities in language and literacy along with science and math filled with age-appropriate equipment and learning materials with respect given to each child's individuality. Each child is built with an internal clock, progressing in motor skills and language development according to his or her own timetable. Teachers encourage, not push. Learning is important; developing a love for learning is even better. Your child's teacher will provide you with specific information that has been carefully planned for your child's class.

### **Preschoolers:**

Children learn most effectively through a concrete play-oriented approach. The classroom environment is organized in learning centers. The centers may rotate depending on the theme or the lesson plan. Typically, you will see areas such as a science, housekeeping and reading center, manipulative toys, blocks, and art materials. Working closely with our Curriculum Coordinator, the teachers plan daily experiences to identify the range of appropriate behaviors, activities, and materials for specific levels of development. Topics for unit studies are recognized as those that hold meaning for the child in his/her daily living. These studies are planned to incorporate our program's philosophy and goals for each child.

### **Infants and Toddlers:**

Our infants and toddlers will explore their world and learn to get along with one another through age appropriate activities geared toward preparing them for the more challenging curriculum found in our upper level classrooms. They will learn to master appropriate tasks of growth and development through personalized loving care. As warm, positive relationships develop, our youngest students will gain a sense of trusting the world and a feeling of competence. Allowing them to use self-initiated repetition to practice newly acquired skills, they gain experience of autonomy and success.

### **OUR DAY:**

Classes begin at 7:30 a.m. and end at 5:30 p.m. Class schedules will vary according to children's age and level of development.

A typical daily routine is as follows:

#### **Morning:**

7:00 a.m. – 7:30 a.m.	Early Care available (contact the office)
7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.	Children begin arriving. Informal activities
9:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.	Breakfast snack
9:15 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Individual, small and large group activities, outdoor play, gym time ( <i>schedule determined by age and weather</i> )

#### **Afternoon:**

11:00 a.m.	Lunch and naptime
11:30 a.m.	Cut off for school arrival of children
2:00 p.m.	Outdoor play, supervised informal activities (schedule determined by age)
3:00 p.m.	Half day classes end (half-day schedule, Pre-K only)
3:15 p.m.	Afternoon curriculum activities, snack, outdoor/gym activities ( <i>determined by age</i> )
5:30 p.m.	Classes end

**\*Drop off is not allowed between 11:30am-2:00pm**

## **Classes:**

Full Day:                    7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.                    Five days per week  
Half Day:                    8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. ♦                    Five days per week

♦ Not available for Infant class

Early Care beginning at 7:00am is available for an additional fee. See office for details.

## **Age Groups and Staff Ratios:**

First Beginnings is licensed for 134 children. Age groups range from 8 weeks through 4 years. There are a maximum number of four infants placed with one adult. The student/teacher ratios in other age groups are developmentally appropriate to provide a quality environment.

## **Parent / Teacher Conferences:**

Whenever necessary, you may ask for a conference with your child's teacher and/or office personnel. Our pre-school teachers will be happy to provide you with information on your child's progress. Special problems or occurrences affecting a child will be brought to the attention of the parents as needed. Our staff would like to give you their undivided attention when addressing specific issues about your child; please do not ask the teachers to discuss this type of information during drop off/pick up time. You may schedule a meeting by calling the center office, 318 429 6890.

## **Visiting the Center**

First Beginnings has an "open door" policy. Parents are welcome to visit their child's classroom at any time unless this proves to be upsetting to the children. Please do not wake your child from a nap unless you are picking them up for the day. Let the teacher know if you need to pick your child up during naptime. Parents cannot drop children off between **11:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.**

## **Parent Resources**

The center has a resource library and welcomes the opportunity to share it with families to assist them with parenting issues. We have extensive community resources available in many areas of need.

## **Enrichment:**

The 2, 3, and 4-year olds are provided additional enrichment activities throughout their day. These activities vary throughout the school year and take place in our small gym. They require an extra fee. For more information on our enrichment events, come by the office.

**Chapel:** Our preschool children join together weekly to sing and give glory to God through song and brief meditation led by one of our Church's Christian Education Minister.

**Church Services:** First United Methodist Church offers many opportunities available for adults and children of all ages to take part. If you are looking for a Church home, please contact the office for a list of activities.

## **Parent Volunteers**

Our goal is to include parents in the program whenever possible, and by what works best for each family. Some families are able to spend time in the center helping with various activities and tasks; others are more able to contribute specific resources. There is no limit to the possibilities! Some ideas are listed below. New ideas are welcome!

- Provide classroom materials
- Basic building projects, painting and repairs.
- Fundraising activities
- Provide relief for a teacher to attend a meeting or a luncheon during naptime.
- Teacher Appreciation Week

Financial contributions are always welcome! Ask about the Louisiana Quality Start Tax Credit if you are considering a monetary donation.







First Beginnings Child Development Center  
First United Methodist Church  
Head of Texas Street – Post Office Box 1567  
Shreveport, Louisiana 71165

Telephone: (318) 429 – 6890  
Fax: (318) 429 – 6894  
Charlotte's Cell: (318) 347 - 8571  
Church Office: (318) 424 – 7771

<http://firstshreveport.org/>

If you need to speak with your child's teacher, you may call and leave a message anytime during the day and someone will return your call. You can be transferred directly to your child's classroom if the call is urgent.

Hours of operation: Monday – Friday 7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

**PLEASE DETACH THIS PAGE FROM THE HANDBOOK  
AND RETURN IT TO THE FIRST BEGINNINGS OFFICE WITHIN THE FIRST WEEK OF  
ENROLLMENT**

Allergy Information

My child \_\_\_\_\_ is allergic to the following  
\_\_\_\_\_.

**OR**

My child \_\_\_\_\_ has no known allergies.

List any dietary restrictions due to religious beliefs:

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I have read and understand the parent handbook:

First Beginnings operates with video surveillance cameras monitoring all areas of the facility. I understand the recordings are private and will not be viewed outside of the First United Methodist Church campus.

I understand my child may participate in activities located on our playground and in our Gym, across the street.

Parent's Signature:

Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

