

Employee Handbook



Donna Aupperle (Owner)

Updated April 2020

Welcome to Parents Preferred Child Care, LLC. This handbook contains information about what you can expect from Parents Preferred while employed with us.

About the Owner

Donna Aupperle has a passion for children and families that began when Donna operated a licensed home daycare business at her home. As Donna's children grew she was responsible for the formation of a church run after-school child care program which she directed for the first year while the program got established in the community. For the next four years Donna sat on the board of directors for the after-school program as the treasurer. Donna was also the founder of a non-profit organization designed to build and strengthen families called Families Forward of Central New York. Donna changed direction, when her two children entered school, and she worked as a full charge bookkeeper for various for profit and non-profit organizations for many years. After moving to Texas, Donna's passion for helping children moved her to take a position working for the state of Texas as a Family Based Safety Services caseworker with Child Protective Services (CPS). Donna is a Christian and places her trust and faith in Jesus Christ. Donna possesses a Bachelor's Degree in Children and Families: Program Development and Management. Donna has also completed a Director credentialing class and is certified to direct a child care program in Texas.

Mission Statement

Parents Preferred Child Care's mission is to provide families with the services they need; quality child care from educated, tenured staff and parent education programs to enhance family life.

Vision Statement

Available to enrich every child; one at a time

Goals and Philosophy

The goal of Parents Preferred Child Care is to provide a learning environment for the whole family. Children will receive care, attention, and learning activities in a loving, nurturing environment. Parents will be offered educational information to help them achieve life skills they may not already possess.

Parents Preferred staff recognizes the importance of balanced growth so they provide opportunities for mental (cognitive), physical, and emotional growth through a variety of creative experiences. Routine is important for all children and staff will ensure this by posting weekly lesson plans, for each age group of children, where parents can see what their child will be doing and when. We also recognize the fact that every child has their own specific personality, temperament, and speed of development. All staff will work with each child, as an individual, to help them grow and thrive at their individual pace and ability level. Every child will be treated with respect and offered a positive learning experience by role modeling and promoting self-esteem.

Licenses and Achievements

Parents Preferred Child Care adheres to all Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) Child Care Licensing Standards. Parents Preferred will strive to achieve a Texas Rising Star rating of 4 for Texas Workforce subsidized payments. Parents Preferred also seeks to achieve National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation.

At-will Employment

This handbook is prepared to provide you with information and guidelines. It is not a contract of employment. Since Texas is an at-will employment state, you are not under contract for employment. Thus, employment with Parents Preferred is not for a definite term. Parents Preferred or you may terminate employment at any time, for any reason or for no reason.

Statement of Policy

Parents Preferred strives for each employee to be treated with respect and in a fair and just manner. In keeping with this policy, all persons will be considered for employment, job assignment, compensation, promotion, discipline, termination and access to benefits and training on the basis of qualifications without regard to race, age, disability, color, creed, sex, or national origin. However, all employees must be physically able to safely supervise young children. In order to provide equal employment and advancement opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions will be based on merit, qualification and ability.

Parents Preferred is committed to maintaining a work environment in which all staff are free from harassment, and expressly prohibits any form of unlawful harassment of employees and co-workers. Anyone found to be engaging in any type of unlawful acts, discrimination, or gossip/slander will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Ethical conduct

All staff is expected to adhere to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) code of ethics at all times. The code is attached for review. Teachers must provide warm, nurturing interactions on the child's level. Such interactions should include guidance and developmentally appropriate early education. Direct supervision of every child is expected at all times. All records maintained must be completed honestly and ethically at all times. Respect and courtesy will be shown to everyone (children and adults) at all times. Proper language and use of language will be adhered to. For example; no cursing, name calling, belittling, or degrading; only positive, encouraging language at all times. No fighting, threatening or disruptive activities will be tolerated. Working under the influence of alcohol or drugs is prohibited. Failure to follow this code of ethics, at all times, will be subject to discipline up to termination.

From time to time things happen that cause us to be in a poor mood or upset and not in the proper frame of mind to care for children. If any caregiver is unable, due to physical or emotional issues, to properly care for the children in their classroom please speak to the director about assuming other duties around the center that day or being given the day off. Failure to notify the director of issues and not reporting to work, without notification, on a regular basis will be reason for disciplinary action up to termination.

All employees must report any arrests, for any reason, to the Director in charge for that day. All employee arrests must be reported to Child Care Licensing within 48 hours of the arrest.

Confidentiality

Due to the sensitive nature of information that you will know as a teacher of young children, it is imperative that you keep sensitive information confidential. Any information about children or their families must be shared on a ***“Need to Know”*** basis only. Thus, be very sensitive about discussing children's developmental needs and family information in front of other parents or visitors who may be in the building. This includes off premise discussions and/or conversations

including, but not limited to, Facebook posts, Twitter comments, or any other social media. Follow the Code of Ethical Conduct at all times. Protection of the interests of each child and family is vital in maintaining a standard of professionalism and privacy.

Also strive to be supportive of center efforts by avoiding negative or malicious discussions about center issues. Together we can achieve great child care and education for our parents and children. Stay positive and focus on the needs of the children in your care. If you have concerns or questions about center policies please bring them to the attention of the owner privately. Many potential problems can be avoided by open communication by all staff members.

Children's pictures should never leave the confines of the building without a parent's permission.

Curriculum

Full time teachers in each classroom are expected to develop and post their own lesson plans on a weekly basis. All lesson plans must be turned in to be reviewed by the director by Wednesday of the week prior to posting for parents to see. Texas minimum standards direct what must be included in a lesson plan as follows:

Section 746.2205

(a) The written activity plan must include at least the following:

- (1) The group the activity plan is designed for and dates the plan covers;
- (2) A variety of activities daily;
- (3) Outdoor play in which the children make use of both small and large muscles, both in the morning and afternoon;
- (4) A balance of active and quiet play including group and individual activities both indoors and outdoors;
- (5) Regular meal and snack times;
- (6) Supervised naptimes;
- (7) Both child-initiated and caregiver-initiated activities;
- (8) Sufficient time for activities and routines so that children can progress at their own developmental rate; and
- (9) No long waiting periods between activities or prolonged periods during which children stand or sit.

Planning daily activities ensures the children have a variety of activities that meet their developmental needs. A written plan helps to clarify for parents the services our center provides and also provides the caregiver with a guideline to follow.

All outdoor activities will ensure children are using large and small muscles and engaging in active play for most of the time they are outside. Staff are expected to be supervising children at all times, even when outside. Staff should never be sitting when outside. You are always moving around, among the children, supervising, encouraging, guiding, and suggesting ideas for both group and individual play.

If a child requires a special toy or blanket for naptime and a parent includes these items in the child's bag each day, please ensure the child has the item (infants excluded).

Pacifiers are not given to any child older than 18 months of age, at any time during the day, including naptime.

Infants will be weaned off bottles between 12 months and 18 months of age and will be required

to drink from a child cup with a lid. If a child prefers a specific type of cup parents are welcome to provide this for their child otherwise Parents Preferred will provide cups for all children.

Daily Schedule

All children will receive a Health Check upon their arrival to child care every morning and will be greeted by their classroom teacher in a friendly, inviting manor. This Health Check ensures accurate records are maintained regarding children's health and injuries they may receive during the time they are at the center. This will also ensure children do not enter with sickness that could contaminate other children. Any marks, bruises, or rashes should be noted on the Health Check form in each classroom. If nothing is noticeable on a child, after their first diaper change, put an "x" in the box on the Daily Sign-In sheet indicating a Health Check was completed.

All children receive daily opportunities to participate in activities to enrich their social, emotional, and physical needs.

Infant 1: (6wks-11mo) have flexibility to eat and nap as needed based on their individual desires and parent requests. Scheduled activities are offered to infants as part of their daily curriculum. Infants will be held, cuddled, played with, read to, sang to, diapers changed as needed, and fed (infants unable to hold a bottle or under the age of 6 months will be held during feeding time and the bottle will be held by the caregiver, not propped). Infants will not be swaddled (even if parents request it) based on the Texas minimum standards Section 746.2428.

Parents will provide an authorization form that will include a feeding schedule signed by every parent/guardian and updated as needed (minimum of every 30 days).
Parents will be provided with a daily report for every infant.

Infant 2: (12mo-17mo)

- Teachers will be working on getting babies off bottles and drinking from a sippy cup
- Teachers will be working on getting babies off pacifiers
- Teachers will be working on getting babies to eat solid food with silverware
- Teachers will be working with babies to walk, not crawl, and begin to talk
- Teachers will follow the schedule posted in the classroom
- Teachers will complete a daily sheet for each child from the time they arrive to departure
- Children must be seated at the table if they are drinking or eating (no exceptions)

Toddlers: (18mo-35mo)

- Teachers will take children to the potty every hour to encourage potty training
- Teachers will follow the schedule posted in the classroom
- Teachers will complete a daily sheet for each child from the time they arrive to departure
- Teachers will offer "Rewards" to children for good behavior (Positive Discipline)
- Children must be seated at the table if they are drinking or eating (no exceptions)
- Children must pick up before transitioning to another activity, going outside, or coming back inside after being outside
- Only give children books assigned to them, not teacher's books to read (hard cardboard)

Preschoolers (3 year olds – 5 year olds)

- Teachers will follow the schedule posted in the classroom
- Teachers will offer "Rewards" to children for good behavior (Positive Discipline)
- Children must be seated at the table if they are drinking or eating (no exceptions)

- Children must pick up before transitioning to another activity, going outside, or coming back inside after being outside
- Encourage the use of the hand dryer, instead of paper towels

Discipline and Guidance Policy

Only positive, encouraging guidance will be used for discipline purposes with any child. Children will be given Positive Reinforcement to assist in learning Positive Behavior Changes. All staff will use Role Modeling and Shadowing to ensure children know what is expected of them and how to act when in the classroom and at the center.

Children will not be put in “time-out” but may be allowed to be by themselves for short periods of time to regain their “self-control” during a temper tantrum or other outburst. Children need consistent guidance, not punishment, and this is what they will receive at Parents Preferred.

It is expected that parents will also follow these guidance principles while with their child/children at our center. Physical punishment, name calling, belittling, yelling, or any other negative punishment is not allowed within the boundaries of the property of Parents Preferred by parents or by staff members.

Donations and Volunteering

Parents Preferred welcomes recyclable items for crafts and special activities. We will post specific needs for donated items in our monthly newsletter so parents are aware of what items the classroom teachers could use. Parents are required to check with their child’s teacher or the director before leaving recyclable items at the center. We want to avoid having “trash” left off.

Volunteers must meet minimum guidelines to be in the presence of children at the center. All volunteers must pass a criminal background check and have no restrictions in regard to being in the presence of children. Volunteers must also be free of active tuberculosis.

Accidents/Injuries

All accidents/injuries must be reported immediately to the Director. Accident reports must be written, signed by an administrator, given to parents, and copied for the child’s file (all in the same day). Close supervision of children is the best anecdote to accidents. Use risk management to keep the environment safe and hazard free. Safety is a joint effort of all staff and employees requiring all of us to become risk managers.

If a child receives a serious injury or requires medical attention, the staff member in charge will take immediate action to address the needs of the child (calling EMS if necessary) and calling the person in charge to notify parents of the incident. Parents have the final say as to what needs to happen for their child.

All staff must provide Parents Preferred with an emergency contact person’s name and phone number to contact if there is an emergency with an employee.

State Licensing Rules and Regulations

ALL staff is expected to be knowledgeable in The Minimum Standards for Child Care. Failure to adhere to these policies may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Except as otherwise provided in this division, each employee counted in the child/caregiver ratio must comply with minimum standards for employees and must:

- (1) Be at least 18 years of age;
- (2) Have a:
 - (A) High school diploma;
 - (B) High school equivalent; or
 - (C) High school certificate of coursework completion as defined in Texas Education Code, §28.025(d); and
- (3) Complete eight hours of pre-service training, as specified in Division 4 of this subchapter (relating to Professional Development) before being counted in the child/caregiver ratio

In addition to the responsibilities for employees specified in this division, **caregivers** counted in the child/caregiver ratio must:

- (1) Know and comply with the minimum standards for child-care centers;
 - (2) Know which children they are responsible for;
 - (3) Know each child's name and have information showing each child's age;
 - (4) Supervise children at all times, as specified in §746.1205 of this title (relating to What does Licensing mean by "supervise children at all times?");
 - (5) Ensure the children are not out of control;
 - (6) Be free from activities not directly involving the teaching, care, and supervision of children, such as:
 - (A) Administrative and clerical functions that take the caregiver's attention away from the children;
 - (B) Meal preparation, except when 12 or fewer children are in care; and
 - (C) Janitorial duties, such as mopping, vacuuming, and cleaning restrooms.
- (Sweeping up after an activity or mopping up spills may be necessary for the children's safety and are **not** considered janitorial duties);
- (D) Personal use of electronic devices, such as cell phones, MP3 players, and video games;
 - (7) Interact routinely with children in a positive manner;
 - (8) Foster developmentally appropriate independence in children through planned but flexible program activities;
 - (9) Foster a cooperative rather than a competitive atmosphere;
 - (10) Show appreciation of children's efforts and accomplishments; and
 - (11) Ensure continuity of care for children by sharing with incoming caregivers information about each child's activities during the previous shift and any verbal or written instructions given by the parent.

Each staff member must have current training in Pediatric first aid and CPR.

Each staff member in our facility must execute and submit a completed Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) Affidavit for applicants for employment.

Each staff member must pass appropriate background checks based on the DFPS Licensing Background Check Rules. All employees are required to complete a background check prior to being hired. Some employee candidates will be required to obtain an FBI Fingerprint check as part of that background check. It is expected that all employee candidates will pay for this Fingerprint check at the time of processing and will be reimbursed after 30 days of employment. If the results of the fingerprint check deny Parents Preferred from hiring the employee candidate or the results are not favorable and Parents Preferred decides not to hire the employee based on the results of the fingerprint results; the employee will not receive reimbursement. If the employee candidate changes their mind about accepting an offer of employment they will not be reimbursed. If Parents Preferred sends an employee candidate for fingerprinting then changes

our mind about hiring the candidate, after a successful background check result is obtained, the employee candidate will be reimbursed for the cost of the base price of the fingerprint test.

Employee Training

Each caregiver must obtain at least 24 clock hours of training each year relevant to the age of the children for whom the caregiver provides care. The 24 clock hours of annual training are exclusive of orientation, pre-service training requirements, CPR and first aid, transportation safety training, and high school child-care work-study classes. Also, Parents Preferred requires all staff to obtain at least **One** additional hour of training **Each Month**.

At least six clock hours of annual training must be in one or more of the following topics:

- (1) Child growth and development;
- (2) Guidance and discipline;
- (3) Age-appropriate curriculum; and
- (4) Teacher-child interaction.

At least one clock hour of annual training must focus on prevention, recognition, and reporting of child abuse and neglect,

The remaining clock hours of annual training must be in one or more of the following topics:

- (1) Care of children with special needs;
- (2) Child health (for example, nutrition and activity);
- (3) Safety;
- (4) Risk management;
- (5) Identification and care of ill children;
- (6) Cultural diversity for children and families;
- (7) Professional development (for example, effective communication with families, time and stress management);
- (8) Preventing the spread of communicable diseases;
- (9) Topics relevant to the particular age group the caregiver is assigned (for example, caregivers assigned to an infant or toddler group should receive training on biting and toilet training);
- (10) Planning developmentally appropriate learning activities;
- (11) Observation and assessment;
- (12) Attachment and responsive care giving; and
- (13) Minimum standards and how they apply to the caregiver.

If a caregiver provides care for children younger than 24 months of age; one hour of that caregiver's annual training must cover the following topics:

- (1) Recognizing and preventing shaken baby syndrome;
- (2) Preventing sudden infant death syndrome; and
- (3) Understanding early childhood brain development.

The Original Certificate of Completion must be kept in the employee's file at the child care center. Training certificates will not be given to employees if they leave employment because they are the property of Parents Preferred Child Care.

Both the employee and the employer must have an original copy of the CPR certificate. Employees are responsible for the cost of obtaining a current CPR certificate because it is the property of the employee.

Parents Preferred will pay the entire cost of all mandatory training and will pay employees a training wage equal to the state minimum wage for the length of the training hours incurred. Employees are encouraged to obtain more than the required minimum amount of training but will not be reimbursed for optional, additional training each year. If optional trainings are obtained by the employee and paid for by the employee the training certificate is also the property of the employee.

Child Abuse Prevention Policy

The mission of Parents Preferred is to provide families with quality child care. The goal is to provide a loving, nurturing learning environment for all children. In keeping with that purpose, this policy seeks to assure that our center is continually working toward providing an environment safe from physical and sexual abuse. We will operate with an open door policy allowing parent access to programs at any time. All employees shall seek to provide open lines of communication with parents to rule out any concerns of abuse or neglect suspected outside of the center. All center staff is mandated reporters and must report any suspected child abuse or neglect to the Child Protective Services (CPS) hotline. Any and all types of child abuse, sexual exploitation, or sexual harassment by an employee will violate the terms of their employment and they will be let go.

If a child is left at the center, after closing hours, and neither a parent or an emergency contact can be reached by phone, center personnel should notify Child Protective Services (CPS) and local law enforcement.

No Smoking Policy

No smoking is allowed in the building or on the property of Parents Preferred.

We strive to be the best role model we can be for the children and parents we serve. Second hand cigarette smoke is dangerous to young children in any form or level of exposure.

- In children, secondhand smoke can cause severe asthma attacks, respiratory infections, ear infections and sudden infant death syndrome. There is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke and even short-term exposure potentially can increase the risk of heart attacks.
- Secondhand smoke contains hundreds of chemicals known to be toxic or carcinogenic, including formaldehyde, benzene, vinyl chloride, arsenic ammonia and hydrogen cyanide.
- Secondhand smoke exposure may cause buildup of fluid in the middle ear, resulting in 790,000 doctor's office visits per year, as well as more than 202,000 asthma flare-ups among children each year. (www.lung.org/stop-smoking)

If an employee continually exposes children to secondhand smoke on their clothing, in their hair, on their breath, or any other means, during their scheduled shift with Parents Preferred, they will be dismissed due to the risk to the children.

Staff hours and schedules

Parents Preferred employs both full and part-time employees. It may be necessary to adjust work

schedules from week to week to accommodate parent work schedules. All employees need to be flexible with their work hours whenever possible. All employees at Parents Preferred work together, as a team, to make the work experience as accommodating for everyone as possible.

All staff must punch in to the timeclock when they arrive at the beginning of their shift and punch out on the time clock when they complete their shift for the day. This includes any time an employee is going on the clock or off the clock. Accurate record keeping is a must and it is an employee's responsibility to ensure they are signing in when they arrive and signing out when they leave. Every employee is only responsible for them and is not allowed to sign in or out another employee.

Full time employees work an eight (8) hour day. Overtime is not allowed unless previously authorized by the director.

Do not punch in more than 5-minutes before your scheduled shift or 5-minutes after the end of your scheduled shift unless you are waiting for a replacement to arrive that makes you late.

The center will be in operation Monday through Friday, 5:30am to 6:30pm, January thru December.

All newly hired employees are placed on a one month probationary period. Employees are not provided any benefits until successful completion of the probation period.

Paid Time Off (PTO)

Children are not allowed at the center when they are sick to prevent the spread of disease and, likewise, staff is expected to stay at home when they have contracted a contagious disease or illness. All staff are given paid leave time each year to be utilized, at employee discretion, when they are not able to be at work for any reason.

PTO days are based on the average hours worked by each employee. Full time employees who work an 8 hour day will be provided with a full day off as a PTO day. Part time staff will be provided with a day off equal to their average number of hours worked per day. For example; an employee works 4 hours per day, five days a week and would be paid for 4 hours of PTO time as their "day off".

Five (PTO) days will be given after the first three months of employment with Parents Preferred up till September 1st of that year. If you are hired after September 1st you will receive your five PTO days on January 2nd.

Ten PTO days will be given after the first year of employment with Parents Preferred provided your one year anniversary falls on or before August 1st. After August 1st of your first year employed, your additional PTO time will be prorated at 2 days per month. This will be based on your hire date and the amount of time left in the year. For example: your hire date is Oct. 1st. You hit your one year anniversary on Oct. 1st and have 3 months to work till the end of the year. You would receive 6 PTO days to use from Oct. 1st-Dec. 31st or you would receive a bonus check for the unused days for the entire calendar year.

Any PTO days not used by an employee by the end of the calendar year in which it was earned

will receive a bonus equal to the amount owed for those days at the current minimum wage rate.

If an employee is terminated, for any reason, or leaves voluntarily they are not entitled to receive payment for PTO days earned but not used. These days are a benefit for working employees who need a break or become sick and unable to work.

Employees, who must call in sick at the last minute, should follow the following process:

- 1) Send a **text message** to the work cell phone (830-305-3528) as soon as you know you can't come in (regardless of the time)
- 2) If after 5:30am call the center phone (830-463-5433) and tell the person in charge you won't be in
- 3) Make sure you give a valid reason for not coming in (you are sick, injured, etc.)
- 4) If you are out because you are too sick to come to work you must see a doctor if you know you're going to miss more than one day due to illness and bring in a note stating why you were out and when you may return.

The more advance notice given the quicker a substitute can be located for that staff member for the day. If you must leave a message or a text, please leave a detailed message stating what is going on and when you anticipate being at work. Do not leave a message asking someone to call back without a detailed explanation of what you are calling about. ***If you call, leave a message.***

If an employee wants to schedule a day off, for any reason;

- 1) Two weeks' notice must be given to allow time to secure a substitute for that staff member.
- 2) A written time off request must be completed by an employee requesting scheduled time off.
- 3) The request must be approved by the director before the staff takes the time off. Approvals will be based on employment schedules and needs of children. A copy of the approved form will be in your folder on the wall.

The center cannot operate effectively or efficiently unless its employees can be depended upon to show up for work on a timely and consistent basis. We depend upon each employee, and when one person is absent, a replacement must be hired for the day. Thus, absenteeism has a particularly disruptive effect on both the Center and the Children. Employees, who take excessive time off, or abuse the benefits of Paid Time Off (PTO) are subject to discipline, up to and including discharge.

Another person is not allowed to call for the employee unless the employee is unable to call due to hospitalization or imprisonment.

Protecting Children from Vaccine-preventable Diseases in Employees: (Section: 746.3611)

- 1) All employees are required to receive a flu vaccine, once per year, between the months of September and November and this will be paid for by Parents Preferred Child Care, LLC.
- 2) Even employees who do not provide direct care to children are exposing children to the risk of getting the flu just by being in the building where the children are. The flu virus is contagious even before a person feels sick and knows they have the flu so prevention of the flu virus is the best means of preventing the spread of the virus.
- 3) Employees should bring in a receipt indicating they have received their flu vaccine to be placed in their employee file and receive reimbursement for the vaccine.
- 4) Employees may be exempt from having the flu vaccine for one of the following reasons:
 - a. Medical conditions identified as contraindications or precautions by the CDC; or
 - i. Acceptable documentation includes a note from the employee's health care professional providing a statement that the required vaccine is medically

- contraindicated or poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the individual.
- b. Reasons of conscience, including a religious belief.
 - i. Acceptable documentation includes a signed and dated statement from the employee that states the employee is exempt for reasons of conscience, including the person's religious beliefs.
- 5) All employees must ensure the following protective procedures are maintained;
 - a. Wearing gloves when handling or cleaning body fluids.
 - b. Employees with open wounds and/or any injury that inhibits hand washing must not prepare food and must wear disposable gloves when having close contact with children in care;
 - c. Employees may wear masks when the employee or a child has respiratory symptoms;
 - d. Removing gloves and washing hands immediately after each task to prevent cross-contamination to other children;
 - e. An employee with the following symptoms of illness must not come to work:
 - i. An oral temperature above 101 degrees and other signs of illness
 - ii. Lethargy
 - iii. Uncontrolled diarrhea
 - iv. Vomiting
 - v. Rash with fever
 - vi. A health care professional has diagnosed a communicable disease.
- 6) No employee will be discriminated against for claiming an exemption from vaccination.
- 7) The employee file will contain a log indicating whether;
 - a. an employee received the flu vaccine,
 - b. provided a note from a doctor indicating it would be contrary to the health of the employee to receive the vaccine, or
 - c. a statement from the employee is received indicating their reason for not complying with the vaccine policy.
- 8) If the employee has not provided one of the above listed requirements by November 30th of each year the employee will be placed on unpaid leave until acceptable documentation is received, as listed in item 7 above.

All full time employees will be paid (8 hours pay) for the following 9 holidays: New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve Day, and Christmas Day. We will be closed on these holidays. All employees must be at work the day before and the day after the holiday to be paid for the holiday unless previous arrangements have been made with the director in advance. You must work for three months before holiday pay will be given.

Employee Payroll

All work hours must be accurately entered by Friday of each week and employees will be paid **every other Friday** on a bi-weekly pay cycle. Employees can be paid by paper check or thru direct deposit into their personal bank account. If direct deposit is chosen as the preferred method each employee must complete the appropriate paperwork providing bank account number and routing number. Employees must also designate if they want the payment to go into checking or savings (or both).

Under section 61.014 of the Texas Payday Law, an employer is required to issue an employee's final check within six (6) calendar days of discharge if the employee is terminated from

employment. However, if an employee voluntarily leaves his/her employment, the final pay check is due on the next regularly scheduled payday following the employee's resignation.

The Texas Payday Law provides limitations on deductions employers may take from an employee's pay. An employer may not deduct from an employee's pay unless the employer: (1) is ordered by a court to do so; (2) is authorized to do so by state or federal law; or (3) has written authorization from the employee to deduct part of the wages for a lawful purpose. Employers may not take deductions that cause an employee's pay to fall below the minimum wage.

Other Benefits to Employees

Parents Preferred will provide any Pre-service training required for new employees plus the required Orientation of the facility and policies. Parents Preferred will also pay for all other state-required training (24 hours per year). Parents Preferred requires all employees to receive at least one additional hour of training, each month, above and beyond what is required by the state. The employee will be paid (training wages) for all time required for training plus Parents Preferred will pay for the cost of the training. Because Parents Preferred will pay for the cost of all training; all training certificates will become the property of Parents Preferred and will not be released upon separation from Parents Preferred.

All children of employees are welcome, if space allows, but full tuition must be paid for each child in care. Parents have the benefit of having their children close to them while they are at work but Parents Preferred cannot offer a discount for staff children greater than a 10% discount. Parents Preferred is willing to make a payroll deduction for the tuition fees required to have staff children in our program.

All full time employees are eligible to enroll in Insurance benefits from Aflac after completing their one-month probationary period. These are employee paid only.

All full time employees are eligible to receive health benefits thru Redirect Health after completing their one-month probationary period. The monthly premium is paid by Parents Preferred Child Care but a \$25 savings contribution is required by each employee per pay period to go into a Health Savings Account so money is available if the employee needs to see a doctor that requires payment. Any money contributed belongs to the employee and will be reimbursed upon separation from Parents Preferred Child Care. If an employee desires to put more than the minimum \$25 requirement into the savings account they may contribute any amount. This will be done by payroll deduction.

Staff is encouraged to submit information to be included in the monthly parent newsletter. Let's share our great ideas and accomplishments with the parents we serve.

Every employee will be issued a pair of headphones and assigned a two-way radio to use while they are on duty each day. You are responsible for the safety and protection of this equipment. Every employee will sign an agreement when issued their headphones requiring payment in full for the radio and/or the headphones if they are lost, stolen, or damaged in any way. Be sure and return the radio to the charger at the end of your shift and put your headphones in your folder.

Outside Employment

An employee may hold a job with another organization as long as he or she satisfactorily performs his or her job responsibilities with Parents Preferred. Employee's will not be provided special rights when work schedules are created for Parents Preferred but will be treated fairly and

will work with employee special requests when it does not interfere with another employees work schedule and requirements.

There are no restrictions on the type of work an employee may perform for another employer as long as it does not interfere with their work at Parents Preferred and does not break any laws governed by the state of Texas. After hours babysitting is allowed as long as it does not interfere with or compete with Parents Preferred. Any babysitting arrangement made with Parents Preferred clients is totally separate from any and all rules and requirements of Parents Preferred and Parents Preferred has no liability or responsibility toward the employee or the client.

Any babysitting arrangement conducted between a parent and employee of Parents Preferred, independent of center operations, must be reported to the director and sign a "Hold Harmless" agreement. This agreement will clearly state who the employee is that is being paid, by the parent, to babysit and when this care will be occurring. The agreement will also clearly state that Parents Preferred is not responsible for any actions of the employee or any injury to a child while an employee is providing care to a child, outside of the employment period of Parents Preferred.

Personal Appearance

Appropriate dress, good grooming and personal cleanliness are the standards Parents Preferred is looking for in each employee. Even though we are working with children and some will be expected to sit on the floor and go outside; these standards still apply.

- Employees are required to appear at work with a neat and clean appearance, including combed or brushed hair, bathed, and wearing clean clothes with no holes or tears.
- Comfortable, **closed toe** shoes should be worn for safety of each employee (no sandals or flip flops).
- Clothing should not be revealing but should be comfortable and allow the employee to be able to move around, bend, squat, and sit on the floor when needed.
- Jewelry should be restricted to a watch, rings (must fit in a glove), earrings that cannot be easily grabbed or removed by a child, or medical alert items. **No other jewelry is allowed.**
- Hair must be above shoulder length or pulled back in a ponytail or in a bun. Anyone working in the kitchen, preparing food, must wear a hat or hair net, and ensure hair is contained on your head.
- Aprons will be provided by Parents Preferred and should be worn when working with children. Aprons should be placed in the laundry area each day after your shift to be washed, if dirty. If employees do not want to wear the apron they must wear a Royal Blue shirt in place of the apron to designate them as an employee.
- Employees should not wear perfume or any other strong smelling lotion to avoid allergic reactions in those who are allergic.
- All employees are issued a name badge upon hire and must wear this name badge at all times so parents know who is caring for their child.

All staff is required to wear appropriate footwear at all times to be prepared for Emergency Evacuation and be a good role model to children who must wear shoes at all times. If you are entering the baby room for just a few minutes and prefer not to put on a shoe cover; you may take off your shoes. Regular staff is not allowed to remove shoes. Infant room staff should bring a pair of shoes, not worn outside, to leave in the room while they are there.

Your friendly demeanor is as important as your cleanliness to Parents Preferred. Every employee should greet a child and family member with a smile. Be mindful of good body language and maintain pleasant gestures when working with families. Do not roll your eyes, shrug your shoulders, or refuse to communicate with a family member.

Performance Evaluation

Every employee will be provided with regular performance evaluations.

- The employee will have the opportunity to evaluate themselves first and then the director will evaluate the employee.
- Staff will be expected to discuss training needs presently and in the future.
- Staff will make suggestions as to what would make the center a better place for children and families.
- Staff is encouraged to offer ideas for increasing revenues, additional fringe benefits, etc.
- Evaluations will be conducted at One month, 3 months, 6 months, and at the annual anniversary date.

If an employee is lacking in a skill area, as noted on the evaluation, a plan will be created to improve upon that skill area.

If an employee is unable or unwilling to improve in a needed area, as noted on their evaluation, disciplinary action may need to be taken including termination.

Telephone and Equipment Policy

Parents Preferred land line phone is available for:

- Anyone who has a need to contact Parents Preferred or its employees.
- Any emergency situation in which someone outside of Parents Preferred must be contacted.
- Contacting parents, vendors, licensing, or any business related calls.

Employees must turn off their personal cell phones and place them in the file cabinet drawer, marked "Employee Phones" when they sign in for work each day. You may only access your cell phone when on a personal break or leaving for the day.

Employees may access their personal cell phones on their breaks, in an emergency evacuation, or when they have signed out for the day. An employee should never be on their personal cell phone while they are caring for children.

If an employee needs to be contacted for personal reasons (emergencies) please provide the business land line number for all urgent calls. The phone will be brought to the employee and relieved of duty while the employee takes the call.

Personal use of the business phone for long distance calls or personal needs that are not considered an emergency are prohibited.

Personal use of the copier or any other business machine owned by Parents Preferred is prohibited. All office equipment is for Parents Preferred business only.

When an employee is speaking to a parent or other professional, on the phone, the conversation should always be courteous and professional. Always wait until the person you are speaking to has hung up the phone before you hang up.

Drug Free Workplace

See attached Drug Free Workplace Policy.

Meals

Employees are welcome to bring food to consume on their break times however; they may not bring food into the classroom. It must be consumed in the break room only. Do not bring food back from your break to eat after your break is over. You must eat during your break time.

Beverages should only be consumed during breaks or away from the children in their care. There is water in the room that may be accessed by children or caregivers at any time. Only water may be consumed in the classroom with children unless it is in a plain, dark colored container so it is not visible as to the contents.

Parents may make arrangements with center staff to bring in special food for a birthday party or holiday celebration but arrangements must be made in advance and prepackaged foods should be used, not homemade foods.

Children will not be allowed to carry around a bottle or a cup throughout the day so it would be unfair to the children for the caregiver to be drinking a beverage, in front of them, throughout the day. It is not unreasonable to only consume food and beverages during breaks and snack/lunch time. Caregivers must be the example for the children. If a caregiver has a health issue that requires more constant consumption of water or another healthy beverage exceptions may be made.

All staff must be sure and supervise children while they are eating to prevent choking. Staff should not attend to other duties while children are eating.

Miscellaneous

The Texas Penal Code states any area within 1000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.

Weapons of any kind are prohibited in the building or on the premises unless they are in the possession of a Texas law enforcement officer.

Call-ins

- Five late-shows or leave early (over 15 minutes) or sick days in a year are allowed.
 - Consecutive sick days with a doctor's note count as one
- Anymore will result in a write-up for each additional call in or late-show.
- No Call No Show is grounds for termination.
- Sick days count for you and other family members.
- If more time off is needed for you or a family member, and you can provide documentation of that need, please let us know as quickly as possible so we can work something out.

Tardiness

- Tardiness will not be tolerated. Everyone has an occasional reason for being late but these reasons should be rare.

- Someone should be notified when staff is going to be late for any reason.
- The following has been put in place for all employees
 1. Any staff member who is more than five minutes late will have their paycheck reverted back to minimum wage (\$7.25/hr) for their entire shift for that day. This will occur every time the employee is late regardless of how often this occurs.
 2. Any employee who is late more than two times a month will receive a “Warning” unless you have reached the maximum of 5/year then it will be a “Write Up”
 3. At the Director’s discretion, the employee may be offered a change in work schedule in an attempt to alleviate the issue causing the tardiness.

Time Off Request

- Time off requests must be submitted at least 14 days prior to the date requested.
- Submitting a time-off request is not a guarantee of time-off. The request must be approved (signed off by a person in charge).

Licensing Rules and Regulations

- Following Licensing Rules and regulations is a must. Failure to do so is grounds for termination.
- Any employee to cause a licensing violation will receive a Write Up (see Write Up policy) in their file.
- Any employee who causes the same licensing violation more than once will be terminated.
- Any employee who causes more than three licensing violations will be terminated.

Cell Phones

- If your cell phone is found in the classroom, you will receive a write up.
- There will be NO EXCEPTIONS!

Mandatory Meetings/ Trainings

- Mandatory staff meetings are held the third Monday of each month.
- These are scheduled work days. If you cannot attend the meeting you must call in or submit a time off request. (see Call-in and Time Off Request policies)
- Mandatory staff meetings and trainings will be paid \$7.25 per hour (minimum wage).

Write Ups

- Three write-ups (for any reason, not just those listed here) in a year from your start date is grounds for termination.
- There will be NO EXCEPTIONS!

Other Concerns

- Nothing except toilet paper should be thrown in the toilets. If an employee is found to be responsible for anything other than toilet paper in the toilets, they will receive a Write Up. (see Write Up policy) This includes Baby wipes, paper towels, feminine products, etc.
- Employees are only to work 8 hours a day, clocking in and out, unless it is approved in advance.

Reimbursement Policy:

IF YOU SHOULD QUIT FOR ANY REASON WITHIN YOUR FIRST 30 DAYS OF CONTINUOUS EMPLOYMENT (Days actually worked):

You must reimburse Parents Preferred Child Care, LLC for the entire cost of all training provided by Parents Preferred and paid for by Parents Preferred on the employee's behalf. The employee may reimburse Parents Preferred themselves or Parents Preferred will deduct the amount from the employee's final pay check. These costs will include:

- All background check fees (\$2 each)
- All training wages paid to the employee during that initial 30 day period
- Fees paid to outside organizations for training received by the employee
(ie: Food Handlers, first aid, etc)

You must return your Name Badge to Parents Preferred upon leaving employment or you will have \$10, for the cost of the badge, deducted from your final pay check.

You must return your 2-way radio and earpieces, in good working order, upon separation from employment or be responsible for the cost of replacing the items. This must be paid upon separation or the amount will be deducted from your final pay check.

Attachments to this document:

- Drug-Free Workplace Policy
- Employee Agreement and Consent to Drug and/or Alcohol Testing
- Conflict in the Workplace
- Acknowledgement of Receipt of Employee Handbook form (2 copies)
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethics
- Time off request form
- Employee Direct Deposit Authorization Form
- Time Badge Agreement
- 2-way Radio and Earpiece Agreement
- Training Agreement