



GALENA PARK I.S.D.
CHILDCARE CENTER

Family Handbook

2024 – 2025

Note: Program policies are reviewed annually and updated if necessary.

Childcare Services provided at:

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Accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

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Galena Park I.S.D. Childcare Center

I. INTRODUCTION

Galena Park I. S.D. Mission

The mission of the

Galena Park Independent School District

is to prepare students to become productive citizens and lifelong learners.

Our motto is...

Galena Park I.S.D... A Great Place To Be

Our vision is...

Excellence In All, For All, By All

Galena Park I.S.D. Childcare Center

Vision

To provide a safe, developmentally appropriate environment, for the children of students and employees, that supports the parent's role as the child's first teacher.

Mission

The mission of the Galena Park I.S.D. Childcare Center is to provide a positive learning experience for all children. In our childcare center, health and safety practices are assured, and age-appropriate sensory motor skills are developed using a variety of indoor and outdoor activities. Language development is enhanced through the child's interaction in everyday experiences and language arts activities. Pro-social behavior is promoted through interaction with peers and adults in a caring and loving environment which respects the uniqueness of each child and sets the stage for the child to become an active participant in their education and an eager lifelong learner.

Non-Discrimination:

At the Galena Park I.S.D. Childcare Center, equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, disability, or parent/guardian political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation, or special needs or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state, or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all children.

II. ABOUT THE CENTER

A. STAFF

Location: South Campus	1906 2nd Street, Galena Park, Tx. 77547
Position:	Name
Director	Diane Sharp
Childcare Services Clerk	Traci Casiano
Nurse	TBA
Location: North Campus	325 Barbara Mae St., Houston, Tx. 77015
Director	Barbara Garrett
Childcare Services Clerk	Elva Juarez
Nurse	Teresa Rainer

B. INCLUSION

The Galena Park I.S.D Childcare Center believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in early childhood programs. Every reasonable accommodation is made to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on his/her individual capability and needs.

C. CENTER CERTIFICATIONS

Both Galena Park I.S.D. Childcare Centers are licensed by the Texas Department of Health and Human Services Childcare Regulation Division. The South Campus is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and is a four-star certified childcare center awarded by the Workforce Solutions Texas Rising Star Certification Program. Texas Rising Star is a quality rating and improvement system for Texas early childhood programs. Programs that participate in Texas Rising Star meet higher quality standards than many other child care programs.

D. CURRICULUM GOALS AND PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The Galena Park I.S.D. Childcare Center uses the Frog Street Press Continuum Curriculum, which focuses on age-appropriate learning as well as social-emotional development, including Conscious Discipline. Inherent in our beliefs and values is a conviction that as citizens of a community, children and their families have a right to high-quality educational programs. A child enters the world as a curious, capable human being who seeks relationships and connection with others. A childcare center should be a place where innate strengths of young children are nurtured. Centers should be places where children are supported in growing to their full potential within an environment that is interesting, engaging, and responsive. Centers should be places where professional educators are happy, receive satisfaction from their jobs, and are viewed as valuable contributing members of the community in which they work. Centers should be places where families feel welcomed, involved, and respected for their individuality and unique points of view.

E. STAFF QUALIFICATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

When hiring educators, GPISD will take a variety of traits into consideration such as educational background, experience and dedication to the profession and willingness to participate in the mission, vision, and values of the Galena Park I.S.D. Childcare Center. In order to support educators at the Galena Park I.S.D. Childcare Center in their continuing evolution as professionals, GPISD will make a strong commitment to ongoing professional development for all of our staff; professional development that exceeds the requirements of minimum standards.

Please be aware that this type of professional development requires occasional absences of educators from the classroom. In all cases, well-trained substitute educators work in the absence of your child's classroom teacher. We hope that the strength and the nature of the experiences for your child and you while at the center is evidence of the power of our strong commitment to regular professional development.

III. GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A. REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION AND ENROLLMENT

1. WHO DO WE ACCEPT?

- Children of GPISD students
- Children of full-time district employees (may include guardianship situations and/or CPS placements)
- Grandchildren of full-time district employees

We do not accept children of substitutes or children with another family connection to a full-time GPISD employee (other than child or grandchild).

2. INITIAL ACCEPTANCE (DISTRICT EMPLOYEE CHILDREN ONLY)

We will prioritize acceptance as follows

1. Returning families
2. Siblings of currently enrolled students
3. Newly enrolling children of full-time GPISD employees (may include guardianship situations)
4. Newly enrolling grandchildren of full-time GPISD employees

3. WAITLIST (DISTRICT EMPLOYEE CHILDREN ONLY)

In order to be put on the GPISD Childcare waitlist parents must:

- Fill out the online Interest form
- Pay the non-refundable Registration Fee

Your child's waitlist position will be determined by:

- The date you turned in completed Enrollment Packet/Interest Form and fees
- Whether your child's age matches GPISD Childcare Center's available spot
- Whether your child is a sibling of a currently enrolled student
- Whether you are a returning family or alumni family
- Child's relationship to district employee
- Whether your child's schedule request matches GPISD Childcare Center's availability

When the GPISD Childcare Center office contacts a waitlisted family to let them know a spot has become available, that family has twenty-four (24) hours to either accept or decline the spot. After that twenty-four (24) hour period has lapsed, GPISD Childcare Center staff will contact the next family on the waitlist, based on the priority criteria detailed above.

B. RATES (DISTRICT EMPLOYEE CHILDREN ONLY)

The tuition fee charged maintains a place for your child in the program. There will be no credit on tuition for any reason, e.g. bad weather, vacation, illness, maternity leave or family medical leave. Childcare costs are based upon 187-day contract calendar. **All tuition payments will be payroll deducted.** If the child is to withdraw, a two-week notice is required.

- Infants 6 weeks to 17 months old -- \$160.00 per week
- Children 18 months to 35 months old -- \$150.00 per week
- Children 3 to 5 years old -- \$130.00 per week

Multiple child discounts available

The program schedule follows the GPISD calendar, and on scheduled holidays the school will be closed. There is no reduction in tuition for the weeks containing holidays or absences by the child.

C. CHILDCARE SUBSIDIES

Galena Park I.S.D. Childcare center accepts subsidies. If a family needs help applying for financial assistance, please contact the front office. Center staff will be happy to assist you with submitting an application or any other questions you may have.

D. STUDENT PARENTS ONLY – CALENDAR AND HOURS

The center is open Monday through Friday except for scheduled school closings, staff development, and school holidays as noted on the school calendar. **Childcare Services are only offered when the student is in attendance at school.**

Hours: 6:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

All students must sign an enrollment form and acknowledgment agreement which will outline the student responsibilities to the center and the center's responsibility to the student.

E. DISTRICT EMPLOYEE PARENTS ONLY – CALENDAR AND HOURS

The Galena Park I.S.D. Childcare Center is open from the first day of the standard teacher work calendar (not including the New Teacher Academy) until the last day of school.

The center is open Monday through Friday except for scheduled school closings and school holidays as noted on the school calendar.

Normal Operation Hours: 6:30 a.m. – 5:15 p.m.

Early Dismissal Hours: 6:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Staff Development Hours: 7:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

F. REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION

A child enrolling in the Galena Park I.S.D. Childcare Center must be between the ages of 6 weeks and 4 years of age as of September 1st. Upon enrollment to the center, it is the responsibility of the parent to keep the center informed of any changes in personal information, including but not limited to phone numbers and addresses. Children are placed in classrooms according to age and development. Children are transitioned to new rooms as their ability develops. Transitions for the children are minimized as much as possible.

The Galena Park I.S.D. Childcare Center will operate according to the GPISD school calendar.

(Please refer to the current school calendar.)

All admission and enrollment forms must be completed at least 48 hours prior to your child's first day of attendance and/or the first day of the school year.

**** It is highly recommended that a child attends daily and by 8:00 a.m.***

Regular attendance and a consistent arrival time are important for your child. Arriving by 8:00 a.m. each day will ensure that your child doesn't miss educational activities and will limit disruption of planned activities. Consistent routines also help children to adjust to childcare and prepare them for the transition to kindergarten.

G. LATE PICK UP FEE

Because late pick up negatively impacts the children and staff, it is heavily fined. If you realize you are unable to pick up your child on time, please notify the center as soon as possible. **A late pick up fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged if a child is picked up after scheduled hours.** The late fee must be paid at the time of pick up or by the start of the next business day via Revtrak®.

H. WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES

For G.P.I.S.D. employees: If a parent chooses to withdraw his/her child from the program they must inform the center Director so the form can be completed and signed in their presence. A copy will be issued to the parent and another will be placed in the child's file.

A two-week notice is required to discontinue payroll deductions.

For G.P.I.S.D. students: If you decide to terminate your Childcare benefits at any time due to change of school or residence, your child is admitted in to Early Head Start or Pre-K, you graduate from High School, or any other reason that you foresee your child not being able to attend the Galena Park I.S.D. Childcare Center, you are required to fill out a Withdrawal Form.

Please inform the center Director so the form can be completed and signed in your presence. A copy will be issued to you and another will be placed in your child's file.

The Galena Park I.S.D. Childcare Center reserves the right to deny services or withdraw a child due to aggressive and/or unsafe behaviors of a parent or adult visitor without prior approval.

I. CONFIDENTIALITY

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released with the exception of that required by our regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children in our Childcare Center are confidential. No information will be released over the phone concerning the child.

J. TRANSFER RECORDS

A written request from the parent with instructions will be required to transfer a child's records internally or externally.

K. PHOTOGRAPHIC RELEASE

Photographs of enrolled children will be used in the center, classroom, and/or added to the presentation for the Galena Park ISD Board of Trustees and any other organizations that request it from the Galena Park I.S.D. Childcare Center. **Photographs will not be taken without the express written consent of a child's parent or guardian.**

IV. ASSESSMENT AND CLASSROOM PROCEDURES

A. ASSESSMENT METHODS

Teachers use developmental checklists on an ongoing basis; to design goals for individual children as well as to guide curriculum planning and monitor progress.

Assessment Methods and Supportive Systems:

- Baseline checklist
- Family intake and feedback
- Language assessment
- Cultural and Family observations with translation
- Observations
- Anecdotal notes
- Learning stories
- Child's work samples

B. FORMAL CHILD ASSESSMENT

Child assessments are used to monitor children's learning, inform lesson plans and identify children who would benefit from special services. The assessment is a development continuum which means the assessment tracks the progress of each child's development from zero to five years old. Teachers oversee and assess your child's developmental growth on a daily basis in small/large groups and individually. Your child is assessed in his/her natural

environment throughout the day. Information from the child assessment is gathered by using teacher anecdotal notes and children’s work samples. The results of the assessment will show where your child is on the continuum and teachers then plan new goals for your child’s future development.

Staff is trained twice a year and as needed on how to use the assessment tool to observe and assess children and use the assessment. Formal parent conferences are offered each semester. Once the teacher has completed your child’s formal assessment we will communicate the results of the assessment to the families in a private parent/guardian conference in a sensitive understanding manner. Our goal also, is to provide a translation during the parent conference and/or the assessment translated in writing.

C. USING ASSESSMENTS TO INFORM INSTRUCTION

Formal child assessments are used by teachers to select appropriate and beneficial activities for children. When an area of need is identified by an assessment, strategies are provided to the parent to support the child’s development in that area. Teachers also incorporate those strategies into daily activities as well as focus on curriculum activities that address the specific needs of the children in their class.

D. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Our learning environment reflects our belief that children are inherently curious, seek relationships with others, and construct their knowledge and understanding of the world through active engagement in their environment, other individuals, materials, and various experiences.

Our educational belief is to provide a learning environment rich in materials and possibilities. A child’s active exploration in the environment is of the utmost importance. Children’s formation of ideas through experiences and processes of inquiries are of value. Children are challenged to research their theories of how things work and are encouraged to engage in a wide variety of experiences. Children are frequently engaged in small group interactions where each voice can be heard and various ideas explored and results negotiated. Each child builds skills not only in traditional cognitive, gross motor and social categories, but also in the areas of problem-solving, original ideas, and strength of conviction.

A primary task of the educator is to provide an environment that is filled with unlimited possibilities—possibilities that encourage children to make discoveries, to experiment with their own ideas, and to interact in meaningful ways with other people. **This includes supporting families and children who may need special accommodations.** Educators are constantly engaged in a process of observation and documentation in order to develop the best possible educational environment for children. The environment is intended to be responsive to the interests and needs of children while simultaneously encouraging children to develop in ways that are projected by educators.

GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A. PERSONAL BELONGINGS

All items including food from home must be labeled with a permanent marker with your child's first and last name. The center is not responsible for lost items.

It is strongly suggested that jewelry such as earrings, bracelets and chains not to be worn due to safety concerns.

Please do not bring toys from home as they are not approved to used or housed at the Childcare Center. If a stuffed animal/sleep aide is needed it will be placed in your child's cubby until naptime.

1. WHAT TO BRING FOR INFANTS (6 WEEKS -11 MONTHS)

- Enough disposable diapers to last throughout the day.
- Wipes and any creams used on baby's bottom. All diapering creams are considered to be a medication; therefore, a doctor's authorization will be required in order for the GPISD Childcare staff to apply diapering creams during diapering.
- Two extra sets of clothing for your baby. This includes: Shirts, skirts, jeans, dresses, socks, etc. All these items must be in your child's diaper bag.
- Enough clean empty bottles and formula so that teachers can prepare bottles for your child's feedings. Bottles brought to the center must have a top to protect the nipple.
- **No glass bottles permitted.**
- Enough baby food for lunch and afternoon snacks for older infants. These foods should be nutritious, easy to serve, and appropriate for the child's eating ability.

2. WHAT TO BRING FOR TODDLERS (12 -36 MONTHS)

- Enough disposable diapers to last throughout the day.
- Wipes and any creams used on baby's bottom. All diapering creams are considered to be a medication; therefore, a doctor's authorization will be required in order for the GPISD Childcare staff to apply diapering creams during diapering.
- Two extra sets of clothing for your baby. This includes: shirts, skirts, jeans, dresses, socks, undergarments, etc. All these items must be in your child's diaper bag.
- **Closed-toe shoes are required for all toddlers.**
- A sippy cup that can be left at the center for water only, labeled with your child's first and last name.
- A diaper bag large enough to hold all the above items.

3. WHAT TO BRING FOR PRESCHOOL (3-5 YEARS)

- Enough disposable diapers to last throughout the day if your child is not potty-trained.

- Wipes and any creams used on child (if applicable). All creams are considered to be a medication; therefore, a doctor’s authorization will be required in order for the GPISD Childcare staff to apply any types of cream or ointment.
- Two extra sets of clothing for your child. This includes: shirts, skirts, jeans, dresses, socks, undergarments, etc. All these items must be in your child’s backpack.
- **Closed-toe shoes are required for all preschoolers.**
- A cup/water bottle that can be left at the center for water only, labeled with your child’s first and last name.
- A backpack large enough to hold all the above items.

B. ABSENCES

Absence notes must be submitted upon arrival at the center when your child has been absent the previous day. Notes must include the child’s name, reason for absence, and a doctor’s release if it is required for your child’s return.

C. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE/ABSENCES – STUDENT PARENTS ONLY

Childcare services are provided only during the time you attend school. If you leave school, you must notify the center immediately that you are on your way to pick up your child. Alternate childcare arrangements with the director must be made for your child if you are unable to pick up your child at 3 pm. * The center MUST be notified when your child will not be in attendance.

- Excessive absences may result in forfeiting your slot.
- Failure to contact the center after three days may result in withdrawal of the child.

D. BIRTHDAYS

Parents are welcome to bring a **store-bought** birthday cake (cookies, cupcakes) to their child’s classroom to celebrate his/her birthday at the center. The center will not allow elements such as balloons or gifts to be brought to the classroom or center. Notify the front office and teacher prior to celebrating a birthday.

E. NAP TIME

Infants under 12 months sleep according to their own schedule and are put to sleep on their backs, without the use of infant sleep positioners, unless ordered by a physician.

If infants arrive to the program asleep, or fall asleep, in equipment not specifically designed for infant sleep, the infant is removed and placed in appropriate infant sleep equipment.

Soft items are not allowed in cribs or infant sleep equipment for infants younger than 12 months.

Nap time is structured to be a pleasant experience for every child. Children are encouraged to rest their bodies during a day of active learning.

1. Lights are dimmed and relaxing music is played.
2. Older children are assigned cots that are separated by at least 3 feet when possible.
3. Teachers position themselves where each child can be supervised by sight and sound at all times.
4. Once the children are asleep, a teacher will stay positioned where all children can be seen from their location.
5. Children at no time should be forced to sleep.
6. In all areas a soft light is on to ensure that the teacher can see all the children.

1. BLANKETS

According to Texas Licensing, blankets are identified as unsafe for infants and must not be used in the childcare center for children younger than 12 months of age. Blankets for nap time for children over 12 months of age will be provided by the center.

F. DIAPERING/TOILET TRAINING:

Diapering is an important process in the daily life of infant and toddler classrooms. Diapering is a time for one-on-one interaction between the child and teacher. The process of changing diapers is always done in a comfortable and respectful manner. The Galena Park I.S.D. Childcare Center will follow all guidelines for cleanliness and hygiene as outlined by minimum standards. Diapering procedures are posted near each changing area.

1. TODDLER TOILETING AND DIAPERING PROCEDURES

Staff Responsibilities:

- Respect the fact that not all children learn to use the toilet at the same time;
- Exercise patience as the child learns how to use the toilet;
- Never humiliate a child who continues to use diapers although other children of the same age may not;
- Work with the parent to help them understand developmental readiness for using the toilet;
- Share information with parents on how to support their children in learning independence in using the toilet.
- Wear gloves when changing a child's diaper and dispose of all diapers, gloves, etc., in a covered container.

Parent Responsibilities:

- Inform the infant/toddler teacher when your child seems ready to learn how to use the toilet;
- Share what is successful at home when your child tries to use the toilet;
- Provide a change of clothes, including shoes and socks and extra underwear during the transition from diapers in case of an accident in the classroom.

2. CLOTH DIAPERS

- 1) Disposable liners (provided by the parent) must be used on each diaper each time.
- 2) Once the liner is disposed of each insert/diaper must be sealed in a separate bag
- 3) The bagged insert/diaper must be placed in a wet/dry bag provided by the parent
- 4) The wet/dry bag must be picked up every day (daily removal of soiled material).

Diapers worn by children should be able to contain urine and stool and minimize exposure to human waste in the childcare setting.

Children should use disposable diapers with absorbent material (e.g., polymers) or cloth diapers.

Cloth diapers should have an absorbent inner layer that is completely covered with an outer waterproof layer that has a waist closure (i.e., not pull-on waterproof pants). The cloth diaper and waterproof layer should be changed at the same time

Whichever diapering system is used in the facility, clothes should be worn over diapers while the child is in the facility.

No rinsing or dumping of the contents of cloth diapers will be performed at the childcare facility.

Soiled cloth diapers will be sealed in wet/dry bag for removal from the facility by an individual child's family, stored in a location inaccessible to children, and given directly to the parent/guardian daily upon discharge of the child.

Children of all ages who are incontinent of urine or stool should wear a barrier method, such as a disposable diaper or a cloth diaper that is completely covered with an outer waterproof layer and a waist closure.

While single unit reusable diaper systems, with an inner cloth lining attached to an outer waterproof covering, and reusable cloth diapers, worn with a front closure waterproof cover, meet the physical criteria of this standard (if used as described), they have not been evaluated for their ability to reduce fecal contamination, or for their association with diaper dermatitis (rash). Moreover, it has not been demonstrated that the waterproof covering materials remain waterproof with repeated cleaning and disinfecting. Therefore, single-use disposable diapers should be encouraged for use in childcare facilities.

G. GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE

We have a fundamental belief that children are powerful, competent, and capable. We also believe that children grow and develop through rich and meaningful relationships with others. We embrace respect as one of our core values. Our philosophy of guidance reflects these beliefs.

We believe that children are born with the desire and ability to be in relation with others. The adults in a child's life—especially family members and educators have a responsibility to support children in developing positive social skills.

At the Galena Park I.S.D. Childcare Center, we employ several strategies of guidance, including effective communication, acknowledgement of children's feelings, praise for positive behaviors and interactions, redirection from challenging situations, and natural consequences.

Staff may never use physical punishment, psychological abuse, or coercion when disciplining a child. Under no circumstances will any of the following methods of discipline be allowed at the Galena Park I.S.D. Childcare Center:

- 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 of time for the child's age;
- Retaliating, or doing to the child what he/she did to someone else; and
- Labeling the child (i.e. indicating a child is a “bad” boy or girl).

VI. COMMUNICATION & FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

A. ROLE AND INFLUENCE OF FAMILIES

We respect parents as their children’s first teachers and the ones who know them best. Parents have the opportunity and ability to nurture their children’s growth and development and to advocate for their education. From this perspective, we strive to have frequent, open, purposeful communication with parents and to work together as partners in your child’s care.

B. DAILY REPORTS

Each day, notes from center staff keep you informed about your child’s daily activities and experiences at the center. Depending upon the preferences of individual families, notes and other communication are made available in written and/or electronic form.

C. FAMILY INFORMATION BULLETIN BOARDS

There are several bulletin boards in the center. One bulletin board is located in the center’s main hallway and provides center news, upcoming events, faculty changes, holiday closing dates, announcements, etc. The remaining bulletin boards display photographs of activities done in the classroom and each educator has the opportunity to showcase their class.

D. FAMILY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

The Galena Park I.S.D. Childcare Center conducts family engagement events throughout the year. These include general meetings and new family orientation. These events will be held throughout the year at the Galena Park I.S.D. Childcare Center as well as the high schools. Parents and educators meet as a group to discuss classroom experiences, children’s development, as well as participating in hands-on activities with the child, etc.

E. OPEN-DOOR POLICY

Parents/guardians are welcome to visit the center at any time to observe their child. Parents/guardians are encouraged to observe or volunteer to help with activities in their child’s classroom. Contact your child’s teacher or the director if you would like to volunteer.

F. FAMILY COMMUNICATION

The Galena Park I.S.D. Childcare Center uses the Brightwheel Family Communication app for regular ongoing communication with families. In addition to classroom pictures, it features news and information pertaining to your

child and to you as a parent. Important dates such as parent meetings and library days are posted in Messages or Classroom Feed.

G. PARENT CONTACT INFORMATION

If your contact information changes, please call and let us know as soon as possible. If it is after hours, you may leave the information in a voicemail, send an email to the director, or send a message through Brightwheel.

G. BUILDING SECURITY AND ACCESS

Because we are concerned with the safety of children and staff, there is a Constable Deputy assigned to our center. Additionally, all entry doors to the building are kept locked. Parents and visitors must ring the doorbell to be buzzed into the lobby area. Once inside the lobby, you will be buzzed into the program area only after being positively identified. With the exception of drop-off and pick-up time, classroom doors will also be kept locked.

H. DROP OFF AND PICK-UP PROCEDURES

- Park in one of the designated parent parking spots. Do not park in the bus ramp. Also, please do not leave your car engine idling, except if necessary in extreme heat or cold to maintain interior or engine temperatures.
 - **Parents, when entering the center, please turn off cell phones.** If you must take or make a phone call, please step outside to do so. Transitions are made easier when your child has your full attention at drop off and pick up, and your full attention allows for clearer communication between teachers and parents.
 - Parents must sign their children in and out daily in the front lobby using the Brightwheel app. Each parent/adult must use their own individually assigned 4-digit code.
 - The center must be notified in writing if someone other than yourself designated on the pick-up list is picking up your child. A valid I.D. will be required.
 - It is recommended that children are dropped off no later than 8:00 a.m.

I. AUTHORIZED & UNAUTHORIZED PICK-UP

Your child is released only to you and those persons you have listed as emergency and released contacts. **If you want a person who is not identified as an emergency and released contact to pick up your child, you must notify us in advance, in writing. Your child will not be released without prior written authorization.** The person picking up your child is required to show a picture ID (current and not expired) as verification. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy.

If a child is not picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and the contacts listed as emergency and released contacts. Provisions are made for someone to stay with your child as long as possible, but if after two hours we are not to be able to reach you or a person listed as emergency and released contacts, we will call the local Child Protective Services Agency (CPS). Late pickup fee will apply.

J. PARENT CONCERN POLICY

The purpose of the policy is to provide a process for a prompt solution to any complaint. Your satisfaction is very important to us. If you have a complaint, please bring it to our attention as soon as possible using the following procedure.

- Bring your concern to the attention of your child’s teacher. Ask to schedule a meeting if it cannot be addressed adequately in the classroom.
- If the concern is not addressed or resolved, please complete the **Solution and Resolution Form** and give it to the director or clerk. Extra copies of this form are located at the front by the sign in and sign out table. All concerns will be addressed within 48 hours.

K. PROGRAM SURVEY

Parents are invited to participate in an annual program evaluation via a survey conducted each spring. This process allows the center to measure the progress toward program goals and objectives. The results are used as a basis for continuing successful activities and for changing those that need improvement.

L. PARENT ACCESS TO MINIMUM STANDARDS (STATE LICENSING REGULATIONS)

The Galena Park I.S.D. Childcare Center operates under a set of rules and regulations specified by the Texas State Licensing Board.

- A copy of the Minimum Standards is available for parent review upon request or in the center entrance hallway. It can also be found by visiting the following website:
<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/doing-business-with-hhs/provider-portal/protective-services/ccl/min-standards/chapter-746-centers.pdf>
- All Licensing Inspection Reports are placed on the Galena Park I.S.D. Childcare Center bulletin board located near the front entrance.

VII. HEALTH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

***THE GALENA PARK I.S.D. CHILDCARE CENTER DOES NOT PROVIDE SICK CHILDCARE.**

A. WHEN MY CHILD IS SICK

If your child exhibits any symptoms below he/she should not be brought to the center.

Fever	The child should be fever-free for 24 hours without medication before coming back to the center. This rule is from the Texas Minimum Standards. (See Appendix for Communicable Disease Chart for Schools and Childcare centers). If oral temperature is above 101 degrees or a tympanic (ear) temperature above 100 degrees the center will notify parent and will have to pick child up from the center.
Pinkeye	Child may return to the center with a note from the doctor or when symptom-free.

Strep Throat	The child should be on antibiotics for at least 24 hours before returning to the center. The child must be showing signs of improvement and be willing to eat and drink. Child should be fever free for at least 24 hours without medication before returning to the center, and a note is required from the doctor stating the child is no longer contagious.
Diarrhea and/or vomiting	The child should not come to the center until he/she is deemed non-contagious by a physician or has had no diarrhea (2 episodes or more) in the past 24 hours or vomiting (more than once) for 24 hours without medication.
Chickenpox	The child should not return to the center until all poxes are scabbed over Child should be symptom free for at least 24 hours without medication, and a note is required from the doctor stating the child is no longer contagious.
Runny noses/Coughs	If your child's runny nose will require frequent attention from the teacher or if the child is irritable or running a fever or if mucus is any color other than clear he/she should not be at the center.
Head Lice	Children should be free of live lice and nits (eggs) to be at the center. Should a child be sent home with lice, they will need to be checked upon returning to the center.
Hand, Foot And Mouth	The child may return to the center when the blisters are healed and/or scabbed over and they are fever free for 24 hours without medication.
Scabies	Child should have received 1 st treatment prior to returning to the center. Rash should be scabbed over, and a note from the doctor must be turned in stating the child is clear to return to the center.
Rash	Any type of unidentified rash (open sores, fluid-filled bumps/blisters, etc.) should be scabbed over and requires a note from the doctor stating the child is not contagious and can return to the center.
Ring Worm	Child can continue to attend the center if the affected area can be completely covered by clothing or a bandage. Otherwise, the child will be excluded until treatment has begun.
Thrush	A release from the doctor is required for the child to return to the center.

Note: Please provide a copy of the doctor's release if it is required for your child's return.

By keeping children home when they are ill, the spread of illness among our Center is greatly reduced. This means fewer illnesses for other children, teachers, parents, and other family members, fewer visits to the doctor, and fewer absences from school.

When your child is absent or has received any medical care, including hospitalization or medical procedures, a release note by your physician must be provided to the center. **It also must include any special instructions given by the physician in order for any special care to be provided.**

If your child becomes sick while in the center you will be called to take him/her home. If we cannot reach you or if it is impossible for you to come immediately, we will notify emergency contact persons(s) listed on your enrollment application.

B. MEDICATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

It is the Galena Park I.S.D. Childcare Center policy to dispense medication according to the following guidelines:

1. All medication will be given only by trained staff.
2. Specific training will be provided by the center's nurse using prescribed medication administration:
 - a. Verifying the right child receives
 - b. Right medication
 - c. The right dose
 - d. The right time
 - e. By the method with documentation of each time the medication is given.
 - f. Meds will only be given if needed at least every 6 hours or 4 times daily.
3. The parent will complete a Medication form which includes the name of the child, name of the medication, dosage, time and method of delivery.
4. Medication must be labeled with child's first and last name, the date the medication was filled, the date of expiration, the name of the licensed health provider, the manufacturer's instructions and the original prescription label that details the name and strength of the medication, and instructions on how to administer and store it.
5. Medications will be kept in a locked container, except for everyday medications required to be readily available at all times.

C. IMMUNIZATIONS

Each child enrolled or admitted to child-care centers must meet and continue to meet applicable immunization requirements specified by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS). This requirement applies to all children in care.

A child may be exempt from immunization requirements for a medical reason or reason of conscience, including a religious belief. To claim an exemption, the person applying for the child's admission must meet criteria specified by the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) rule at 25 TAC §97.62 (relating to Exclusions from Compliance).

Any under-immunized child will be promptly excluded from attendance if a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs in the program.

D. HEARING AND VISION SCREENING REQUIREMENTS

The Department of Health and Human Services requires that children who will be 4 years by September 1st participate in vision and hearing screening. The purpose of this process is to identify problems early and link to appropriate services.

E. NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS

Only prescribed medication will be administered.

F. NON-PRESCRIPTION TOPICAL OINTMENTS

Before dispensing any non-prescription topical ointments, including diaper cream, sunscreen, and insect repellent, the center requires a written order from the child's physician.

G. BREASTFEEDING

Our program supports breastfeeding by accepting, storing, and serving expressed milk for feedings. Mothers are provided a private area for breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding Resources:

- US Department of Health & Human Services: Office of Women's Health:
<https://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/breastfeeding-resources>
- La Leche League, International: <https://www.llli.org/resources/>

1. BREAST MILK BOTTLE PROCEDURES

- Human milk from a mother will be only used with mother's child.
- Expressed breast milk may be brought from home in bottles or breast milk bags. Breast milk will be refrigerated or frozen as soon as it arrives at the childcare center.
- Child's full name and date prepared and expiration date is written on every bottle.
- Frozen breast milk will be thawed under cold water or in refrigerator.
- If heated, all breast milk will be placed in hot water (not boiling) for five minutes and temperature tested before giving to infant. Microwaves are prohibited in the classroom.

Safe Handling of Breast Milk

Refrigerated breast milk must be used within 48 hours. Breast milk first frozen then thawed in the refrigerator must be used within 24 hours of thawing.

H. FEEDING

- Any contents remaining in a bottle after feeding will be discarded. If the feeding has taken over 1 hour to complete or the bottle has been un-refrigerated for 1 hour, the milk shall be discarded.
- Only cleaned and sterilized bottles and nipples will be used.
- All bottles, nipples and other equipment for bottle preparation will be cleaned and sterilized by the parent before bringing them to the center.
- Infants will be held or fed sitting up. Bottle propping, feeding in cribs, car seats, or swings, or carrying of bottles by children will not be permitted.
- Infants will be fed “on demand” as much as possible, but at least every 4 hours and usually no more than hourly.
- Formula or breast milk will be the only milk product served to children younger than 12 months of age unless medically indicated by the child’s health care provider.
- No medication or cereal will be added to the bottle unless medically indicated by the child’s health care provider.

I. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & SCREEN TIME

Physical Activity: In order to help children develop healthy habits and to comply with state standards, we will offer moderate to vigorous play for at least 60 minutes per day for toddlers (12 months – 35 months) and 90 minutes per day for preschoolers (3 years – 5 years). This will include free play as well as teacher-led activities to promote movement.

Screen Time: Children under 2 years of age will have no screen time. Older children will be offered less than 1 hour per day, and it must be educational content. No screen time is allowed during nap, meals, or snack time.

J. SAFETY POLICIES

1. CLOTHING

Dress your child for the center in clothing that is washable and allows for freedom of movement. Children in diapers should wear clothing that is easily removed for changes. Please do not send children to the center in clothing that you would not want to get soiled or stained as your child will be engaged in “messy” activities such as painting, outdoor play, sand, water play, clay, gardening, etc.

Outfits that the child can manage alone will make the day go more smoothly. Heavy leather boots, complicated belts, and buttons often pose problems for children at the center. Shoes that facilitate climbing and running will help eliminate injuries during the center’s day. Please do not send children to the center with “flip flops” or other backless shoes.

2. EXTREME WEATHER & OUTDOOR PLAY:

Every effort is given to providing children with the recommended amount of safe and fun outdoor activity; however, sometimes weather conditions affect this goal. For example, outdoor play does not occur if there is an ozone watch or heavy rain. If the temperature is below 40°F or the heat index is above 100°F, children do not play outdoors. In these situations, the children will utilize the indoor soft playroom in the center or participate in active play indoors.

3. CLOSING DUE TO EXTREME WEATHER

In case of extreme weather, the center follows GPISD policy regarding school closings due to inclement weather or emergency conditions. For information about school closing, please check the district's website - www.galenaparkisd.com, the district's social media platforms, or monitor the local television or radio stations.

IF GPISD SCHOOLS ARE CLOSED DUE TO EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS, THE GALENA PARK I.S.D. CHILDCARE CENTER IS ALSO CLOSED.

4. INJURIES

Safety is a major concern in childcare and so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. First aid is administered by a trained caregiver or Center nurse in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an incident report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Each classroom is equipped with a First-Aid kit meeting state regulations.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, 911 will be contacted at once and the child will be transported immediately by ambulance to the nearest hospital. Parents and/or emergency contacts will be notified at once. If an authorized person cannot be contacted or arrive before the ambulance, a proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or contact arrives.

5. A SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT BITING

As upsetting as it can be for children and an adult, biting is a normal stage of development that is common among young children. Most young children bite and/or are bitten by another child at least once when they are in group care settings. Often, whether their child was the child who bit or the child who was bitten, parents experience strong emotional reactions to biting. Again, please be assured that biting is developmentally normal in children who are experiencing discomfort due to teething, do not have the verbal skills to communicate their frustrations, and are unable to exhibit self-control that would limit their reactions in frustrating situations.

When biting happens, our first response is to take action immediately to provide appropriate care for the child who was bitten. We also respond to the child who has bitten with strategies designed to help him/her learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus is not on punishment, but on developing effective behaviors that address the reasons for biting.

Notification of a biting incident is given in written form to both the family of the child who was bitten and the child who bit. We work together with families to keep them informed and to develop strategies to address the situation. The following steps will be administered after an incident. (See next page.)

1st bite – Verbal/written notification to parents

2nd bite – Teacher Conference with parent

3rd bite - Written notification to parents with strategies and next steps

4th bite – In-person meeting with parent and Director to review and adjust strategies if needed (If the parent is a teen, their parent will be included.) At the time of this meeting the parent must agree to have their child observed and assessed by a trained district staff member (i.e. counselor, LSSP, or Specialist).

5th bite – In-person meeting to discuss next steps or proper placement/referral if strategies are not being implemented

6th bite – Possible expulsion - An appeal may be made to the Assistant Superintendent for Student Support Services.

For further information on our approach to biting, we recommend the excellent article entitled “Play Right—Don’t Bite!” which is available online at <https://illinoisearlylearning.org/tipsheets/biting/>.

6. CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR

Challenging behaviors that are disruptive or harmful will be addressed by the teacher according to the guidance and discipline policy (p. 18). If the behavior continues without improvement, the following steps will be implemented.

1st incident – Verbal/written notification to parents

2nd incident Teacher conference with parent to assess the function and possible causes of the behavior

3rd incident –Written notification to parents with positive behavior support strategies, and next steps

4th incident– In-person meeting with parent and Director to review and adjust strategies if needed (If the parent is a teen, their parent will be included.) and develop an individualized plan to address the behavior. At the time of this meeting the parent must agree to have their child observed and assessed by a trained district staff member (i.e. counselor, LSSP, or Specialist).

5th incident – In-person meeting to discuss next steps or proper placement/referral if strategies are not being implemented

6th incident – Possible expulsion - An appeal may be made to the Assistant Superintendent for Student Support Services.

7. SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION OF CHILDREN

Our goal is to limit or eliminate the use of suspension, expulsion and other exclusionary measures. Exclusionary measures are not considered until all other possible interventions have been exhausted, and there is agreement that exclusion is in the best interest of the child and complies with federal and state civil rights laws. Suspension and expulsion of children may be considered after completion of the above steps. A determination will be made in collaboration with the assigned district childcare team and assigned mental health consultant. If exclusionary measures must be taken, the program will offer assistance to the family in accessing services and an alternative placement.

8. EVACUATION OF SCHOOL

In the event of an emergency at the school, such as fire, gas leak or other emergency requiring evacuation of the premises, evacuation of students and staff would occur in the following manner:

- Director gives evacuation order or alarm is sounded.
- Director contacts authorities by calling 911.
- Teachers in each class evacuate students from building according to procedures practiced in monthly drills.
- In the event that the Galena Park I.S.D. Childcare Center must be evacuated, your child may be picked up at alternate sites:
 - Southside – Evacuation
 - Location 1 - Galena Park Elementary, 401 N. Main St. Galena Park, TX 77547, 832-386-1670
 - Location 2 - Joyce Zotz Center, 13801 Holly Park St. Houston, TX 77015, 832-386-3670.
 - Northside – Evacuation
 - Location - Joyce Zotz Center, 13801 Holly Park St. Houston, TX 77015, 832-386-3670.

You will be notified of our location.

- Director takes contact information from the school files.
- If possible, Director places message on school number indicating evacuation and location of evacuation.
- Director calls each family and/or emergency contacts to let them know of the situation and the location of the evacuation.
- Children are kept at the evacuation site until an adult from their contact list picks them up.
- Children are signed out by parents as they are picked up.
- Staff members will remain until all students in their class have been collected.

K. REQUIREMENTS REGARDING GANG-FREE ZONES

As a result of House Bill 2086 that passed during the 81st Legislature, Regular Session, Chapter 42 of the Human Resource Code includes section 42.064, effective September 1, 2009. This statute requires that information about gang-free zones be distributed to parents and guardians of children in care at licensed childcare centers. The following is a tip sheet to assist in complying with the law. This information may be posted at your childcare operation or copies may be provided to parents.

What is a gang-free zone?

A gang-free zone is a designated area around a specific location where prohibited gang related activity is subject to increased penalty under Texas law. The specific locations include day care centers. The gang-free zone is within 1000 feet of your childcare center. For more information about what constitutes a gang-free zone, please consult sections 71.028 And 71.029 of the Texas Penal Code.

How do parents know where the gang-free zone ends?

The area that falls within a gang-free zone can vary depending on the type of location. The local municipal or county engineer may produce and update maps for the purposes of prosecution. Parents may contact their local municipality or court house for information about obtaining a copy of a map if they choose to do so.

What is the purpose of gang-free zones?

Similar to the motivation behind establishing drug-free zones, the purpose of gang-free zones is to deter certain types of criminal activity in areas where children gather by enforcing tougher penalties.

What does this mean for my day care center?

A childcare center must inform parents or guardians of children attending the center about the new gang-free zone designation. This means parents or guardians need to be informed that certain gang-related criminal activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of your center is a violation of this law and is therefore subject to increased penalty under state law.

L. SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The Child Protective Service (CPS) agency determines appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our Center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

TO REPORT ABUSE OR NEGLECT CALL

1-800-252-5400

OR

VISIT THE CPS IN HARRIS COUNTY WEBSITE AT: [HTTPS://WWW.TXABUSEHOTLINE.ORG/LOGIN/DEFAULT.ASPX](https://www.txabusehotline.org/login/default.aspx)

M. FIRE SAFETY

The Galena Park I.S.D. Childcare Center is fully equipped with all fire safety equipment required by Galena Park Fire Marshal including fire alarms, pull stations, emergency lighting and an evacuation crib for all appropriate ages in the center. The Galena Park I.S.D. Childcare Center conducts a monthly fire drill and reviews fire evacuation plans with children and staff on a monthly basis.

N. CAR SEAT POLICY

Parents will not be allowed to leave the premises unless the child has an appropriate safety restraint. Any caregiver in violation will be reported promptly to the authorities.

Texas Transportation Code: 545.414

Injuries suffered while riding in cars are the number one preventable cause of death in young children. Here are the guidelines to follow to keep a child safe in the car.

The rear seat is the best seat for children 12 years or younger.

- All children must use an age appropriate car seat or booster seat.
- Never hold a child in your arms or lap while traveling in the car.
- Children should ride in a car seat made for their size and age.
- The car seat should be buckled tightly in the car and not move more than one inch when pulled.

O. USING GALENA PARK BUS TRANSPORTATION – STUDENTS ONLY

You must arrange with the center Director if you are planning to use district provided bus transportation.

- **Transportation must be notified by 5:30 am if you are NOT using transportation services that day. When calling transportation after hours and before 5:30 am, you are to call 832-642-0695.** If you wake up late and will not ride the bus, have other transportation arranged for that day, or your child is ill, you must call transportation at **832-386-2720**. Failure to notify transportation could result in removal of bus riding privileges.
- If you ride the bus in the morning, you will be required to use bus services throughout the day.
- **Eating or drinking on the bus is not permitted.**
- Parents are responsible for cleaning infant car seats. Annual car seat cleaning days will be scheduled each semester and parents will be expected to clean the seat that their child uses.
- The following rules apply while using bus transportation services:
 - Be courteous: use no profane language.
 - Do not eat or drink on the bus.
 - Keep the bus and car seats clean.
 - Cooperate with the driver.
 - Do not be destructive.
 - Stay in your seat while bus is on route.
 - Bus driver is allowed to assign seats.
 - **NO** display or **USE** of **CELL PHONES** is permitted.

P. NUTRITION POLICIES

The Galena Park I.S.D. Childcare Center offers a full food program of quality meals and snacks for children 12 months and older. Food prepared at the center meets or exceeds guidelines described in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp>) and the state requirements for food service. The school's food program includes the following: (See next page.)

- *Breakfast*- Served at 8:00 a.m. to children 12 months and older
- *Lunch*– served at 11:00 am to children who are 12 months and older. The school works with each child to introduce new foods as well as to ensure nutritious and pleasant dining.
- *Snacks*– provided daily after nap time. Snacks include fruit/vegetables, grains and proteins.

Foods not allowed are chocolate/strawberry milk, candy or any other foods that do not comply with nutrition guidelines.

1. *FOOD FROM HOME*

If parents choose to provide their child’s meals and/or snacks from home, the parent must understand the childcare center is not responsible for its nutritional value or for meeting the child’s daily food needs. Food from home will be stored at the center in each child’s assigned cubbies. Please do not bring items that require refrigeration or heating.

2. *INFANT FEEDING PLAN*

Infants (children between 1 and 12 months) must bring all formula and age-appropriate baby food. The teacher works closely with each family to create and maintain an infant feeding plan and introduce new foods according to each child’s developmental stage. **All bottles and baby food jars and/or containers must be clearly marked with the child’s name and date.**

3. *FOOD ALLERGIES*

If your child has a food allergy, you must notify us and submit the G.P.I.S.D. “Physician’s Request for Dietary Accommodations” or “Physician’s Request for Special Accommodations for Formula and Infant Food” so that we can make appropriate substitutions. The form should list appropriate food substitutions and must be updated at least annually. **Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy should also have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician.** You may request a copy of either of these documents from your center director.

***Please contact the center director with any questions about the content of this handbook.*

Thank you for trusting us to care for your children.