



Family Handbook

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Welcome to Opportunity School

Our VISION:

Our vision is a community where today's young children become lifelong learners and tomorrow's responsible and contributing members of their families and society.

Our MISSION:

Through high-quality early childhood education (years 0-5) and caring family support, Opportunity School equips low-income children and their families to succeed in school and in life.

Dear Parents and Families,

Welcome! We are glad you are here! We know you are your child's most important teacher. We are here to assist you, not replace you. This booklet is prepared for your use, so that you may be as familiar as possible with the ways we help provide for your young child's needs.

We hope the information in the following pages will be helpful to you. If you have questions, please ask; if you have suggestions, please offer them to us. Only by working closely together may we provide the best for our children.

Sincerely,
Your Opportunity School Team



Charlie the Rooster is Opportunity School's mascot. Charlie symbolizes, "an early start" and pride in oneself. Charlie crows a lot, for he is enormously proud of our students and their accomplishments and of our parents and staff!

OUR PURPOSE:

- Provide high quality early education for young children aged 6 weeks up to kindergarten.
- Reduce the stresses of working families by providing a safe and nurturing environment for their children.
- Lessen the disruptions in children's lives by providing a consistent environment for the entire day.
- Form a partnership with families to provide excellent care and education for their children.
- Regular personal visits between families and teachers are required each month.

Commitment to High Quality Early Childhood Education

Opportunity School has a long history of excellence and a focus on high quality early education through using research-based approaches and best practices since its founding in 1969. We believe in providing the best possible learning and care for all children, but most especially for the children of low-income families in our community.

National Accreditation

Opportunity School was among the very first early childhood programs in the state of Texas to meet the high-quality standards and achieve accreditation beginning in 1986 from the **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**. Each year we submit an annual report and go through an onsite assessment and review every 5 years. During the 2023 review, Opportunity School received a 94% combined score over 10 categories. Our next renewal will be in 2028.



Texas Rising Star Program – Texas' Quality Rating System

Opportunity School's campuses are rated as 4-Star providers by the **Texas Rising Star program** by the Texas Workforce Commission. This is the quality rating system used by our state to determine quality for programs who serve low-income families and participate in the childcare subsidy through Texas Workforce.



Promoting Cradle to College

While we know that young children are not making decisions about their future as they are learning how to walk in a line and their letters and numbers, we do want to plant the seed for future education for children in a developmentally appropriate way and to encourage parents to pursue their education goals.

We are excited to help you create a brighter future for your children and your family!

Getting Started at Opportunity School

Opportunity School has two campuses to meet the needs of families. Both campuses serve children from ages 0-5. **The hours of operation are from 7:30 am – 5:45 pm.** We welcome you to visit each campus to decide which will best meet the needs of your family.

Central Campus – Located at 1100 S. Harrison Street within First Presbyterian Church.

Director: Vonda Grantham

Phone: 806-373-4245

Edwards Campus – Located at 406 S. Osage Street.

Director: Wanda McCowan

Phone: 806-381-0551

On enrollment, every parent will need to submit all admission information and review the family handbook. We will provide an opportunity for you to understand all aspects of our school and will review the parent handbook with each parent. Parent orientation meetings will be arranged by appointment or during **August** when we kick off the school year with a group meeting.

Security

The safety and security of our children, families and staff is of the utmost importance to us. We have a single-entry process which requires everyone to be verified through video and to be buzzed into the building. Please do not let anyone follow you into the building. Please notify the campus director if you see anything suspicious. In addition, the administration monitors the classrooms closely via a closed-circuit camera system.

Teachers and Staff

Our teachers are experienced professional educators, and many have been in the field for years. We provide extensive training and in-classroom learning experiences with new teachers so that they can learn best practices and our routines. To maintain a high-level of professionalism, we provide regular, ongoing training. All staff members complete mandatory pre-service training.

We encourage you to build a positive relationship with your child's teacher. The lead teacher in your child's classroom is responsible for communicating with you about your child's progress and needs. Likewise, your child's teacher is your first stop if there is specific information you need to share about your child's needs. You are encouraged to have regular conversations with your child's teacher and participate in home visits and conferences as requested by the teacher throughout the year.

Enrollment Procedures

Before enrollment, all families interested in attending the school must attend an orientation meeting and tour the facility.

We want to set all children and families up for success at Opportunity School. During orientation, families must disclose any expulsions from other programs or other needs or challenges the child faces, including medical, behavioral or other special circumstances. If the child has had expulsions, the parent must explain what they have done to help ensure their child’s success. If there are concerns, then the Director, Program Quality Specialist and Early Intervention Specialist will meet with the child and the family to determine how best to ensure the child’s success. Enrollment will be determined after this orientation meeting with the family has taken place.

Parents interested in enrolling their child must complete an application form, USDA Income Verification form, parent permissions and income verification documents, and give updated information to the school as soon as any information changes and when requested by the school. Admission is granted in the order that applications are received, with preference given to low-income families. In addition, to attend Opportunity School, a child must have completed immunizations required by law for the age level (**See Immunization Requirements on p. 23**) and **have had a doctor’s examination and wellness statement prior to entrance.**

All children attending Opportunity School must be fully immunized. The only exception is a valid Medical Exemption.

Opportunity School does not discriminate in enrollment because of race, gender, ethnicity, national origin, political belief, religion, or disability. If you feel you have been discriminated against you can call the Office of Civil Rights at (202) 720-5964 or write them at Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410.

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|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Central Campus/Gratitude House</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6 weeks to entry into kindergarten• Three years old by September 1st
Must be completely toilet trained.• 6 weeks to 2 years- Eligibility based on Early Head Start criteria |
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|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Edwards Campus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6 weeks to entry into kindergarten• Three years old by September 1st• Head Start class based on Head Start Program criteria• 6 weeks to 2 years- Eligibility based on Early Head Start criteria |
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Because the school’s mission is to serve primarily children from low-income families, household income is a factor in admissions, and preference is given to families who are low-income based on the USDA Food Program income guidelines for “Free” or “Reduced” categories. Ten percent of families served may be above these income levels.

Tuition

Fees are charged weekly and may be paid by the week, bi-weekly or by the month but must **always be paid in advance** of care. Fees are updated every Monday and statements are provided every Friday. Please sign up for the ProCare App and you will be able to access your account balance at any time. Upon enrolling your child, you will sign a fee payment agreement to determine your fee schedule. Parents may pay fees by the week on arrangement with the office, **but always in advance of care**. If paid by the week, payment is due by Friday for the week ahead and is past due if not paid by Monday. If fees become past due, parents will need to come to the office to make a fee resolution for their child to continue care. **There are no reductions in fees due to holidays, professional development days, school closings or absences unless determined by the School's Board of Trustees.**

Full Day Fees

Infant (0-17 mos)	Toddler (18-35 mos)	Preschool Age (36+ mos)
\$206/week	\$183/week	\$165/week

**** The first child is full fee, 2nd and subsequent children are at 25% discount.**

As a Workforce Solutions Panhandle - Child Care Services (PWSCCS) vendor, the school abides by PWSCCS fee policies for parents who utilize these services.

Failure to keep fee balances current and to make regular payments can result in losing your child's spot at Opportunity School. Please notify your director in advance of any circumstances that affect your ability to keep your balance current. If in good standing, scholarships may be available to help on an emergency basis. Please visit with the Campus Director about scholarship criteria, assistance with fees and other help.

We encourage all parents to set up automatic payments through the ProCare App upon enrollment so that you do not risk falling behind in your fees. We also can accept payments in the form of checks and money orders. **We DO NOT accept cash. Please do not hand payment to teaching staff. Please bring it to the office.** Receipts are issued after payment has been processed and placed in your child's box.

Note to bus families: Parents wishing to send monthly payments by bus may put a money order or check in an envelope and have the child's first name and last name on the envelope. **Please be sure to hand it directly to the bus driver.** Opportunity School is not responsible for money given to children to hand to the teacher, bus driver or bus rider for payment of tuition.

Scholarship Eligibility for Full-day Enrollment

The purpose of the Opportunity School Scholarship Program is to help provide consistency in learning and care when families have a financial need that cannot be met in other ways. Scholarship support helps maintain high-quality full-day, year-round learning for young children that is affordable for low- to moderate-income families who work, attend school, and need full-time children's learning and care. Scholarships are not intended to be long-term in nature and will not roll over from one program year to the next.

Scholarships are defined as tuition assistance that reduces the amount of weekly fees from full tuition for a defined period. Campus Directors are responsible for reviewing and approving scholarship amounts and ensuring the rates are updated as needed. If these duties are delegated to others on the admin team, then the Campus Directors must ensure accuracy.

The scholarship program is made possible through the benevolence of donations from individuals and grants from foundations. Scholarship awards are conditional upon there being sufficient funds available. Opportunity School does not have authority or control over the amount of funding available. If scholarship funds become unavailable, parents on scholarship will be notified in advance and will be required to pay the assigned tuition.

To be eligible for scholarship assistance, the family must:

- 1) Have children enrolled full-time, AND
- 2) Have household income that is in the low-income range according to CCS and living wage guidelines as determined by Opportunity School, AND
- 3) Be ineligible for Panhandle Workforce Child Care Services assistance (for reasons other than non-compliance with Panhandle Workforce procedures), AND
- 4) Parents/caregivers must be working or attending school or training full time. If not, scholarship assistance can only be provided if they are deemed a hardship case.
- 5) Families must be in good standing in other areas of partnership with Opportunity School regarding the child's attendance, home visits, monthly family visits, drop-off and pick-up times, etc.

Review Process

On a regular basis (at a minimum within 90 days), all scholarship awards will be reviewed:

- 1) When the scholarship is awarded, the school and the parent will agree to a time limit so that information can be updated. The review for hardship scholarships should be completed within 90 days of the beginning of the scholarship period.

- 2) Scholarship recipients are required to notify the school in the event of any change in income, family size or status regarding work or school.
- 3) Families receiving scholarship support must submit updated income information as requested by Opportunity School at each review period.

Hardship Assistance Criteria

To be eligible for scholarship based on hardship: Families who do not meet the above criteria but who have unusual hardships and could not afford to enroll their child without scholarship funding can be considered for scholarship assistance on a hardship basis.

- 1) As a rule, scholarships based on need or due to a family's unforeseen circumstances, will be awarded on a temporary basis (generally 2 weeks to one month) and reviewed before the time is extended beyond 1 month.
- 2) Hardship cases can have a variety of reasons and each family's circumstances are unique. The reasons could include but are not limited to:
 - a) unexpected medical bills
 - b) car breaking down
 - c) unexpected reduction in work hours or pay
 - d) unemployment beyond CCS grace period
 - e) temporarily between school and job
 - f) unexpected family tragedy or other hardship

Because of this hardship cases must be reviewed and approved by Opportunity School's two Campus Directors and Executive Director.

Opportunity School does not discriminate in enrollment or scholarship practices and policies because of race, color, gender, gender identity, genetic information, ethnicity, national origin, political belief, religion, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation.

Withdrawal

If you decide to withdraw your child, you must provide a two-week written notice to the office. A Notice of Withdrawal form is available from the Campus Director. If you notify the office that you will be withdrawing your child, we will begin working to fill the vacated spot. Please make sure you are certain on the withdrawal dates. No tuition will be reimbursed if withdrawal notice was not given to the office.

We require all families to keep a checking account or credit card on file to cover any fees or unpaid tuition left upon departure. We do our best to work with families and understand that financial burdens can be exceptionally stressful; therefore, the campus directors are happy to set up a payment plan and brainstorm ideas for assistance. If a family is asked to leave our school due to the conduct of the child or the family, all paid tuition is non-refundable.

Late Pick Up

Your child is excited to see you at the end of the day! Please make every effort to pick up your child on time. If you are delayed, please call the school to let us know.

Parents who are late picking up their children may be assessed additional fees of \$10.00 for every 5 minutes. **If you are charged a late fee, it is due the next day and must be paid for the child to attend.**

Repeated occurrences of late pick up may cause you to lose your place at Opportunity School.

If a child is at Opportunity School one hour after closing hours and no one can be located, the Department of Child Protective Services is notified.

Release of Children

Staff members release children from school ONLY to the parent or adults designated by the enrolling family member on the pickup form. **Children will only be released to persons at least 18 years of age.**

In an emergency when a family must ask someone else (who is not on the pickup list) to pick up the child, the parent MUST inform the school by phone. The person picking up the child MUST show his/her drivers' license to the staff member who is to release the child and a copy will be made. **Any other changes to the child's release list must be made in person and in writing at the school.** This must be done in person for security reasons. The school staff **WILL NOT** release a child to anyone not on the pickup list unless the family has followed these procedures. You may request a change of pickup form from the front office.

A parent who is included on the enrollment paperwork may not be removed from the pickup list without legal documentation or court order.

If you or any other person appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, you will be asked to have someone come and get you and your child. If you refuse a ride and leave with your child, we will notify the police department and child protective services with all information required. We reserve the right to refuse service to anyone, without warning, who violates this policy.

Legal Issues Regarding Conservatorship and Possession Orders

At Opportunity School, our first responsibility is to the children. When conservatorship and possession issues arise, we want to support your child and family, but we **cannot** become involved in disputes between parents, family members and/or legal guardians. A copy of any legal orders regarding conservatorship and possession of an enrolled child should be provided

to the school upon enrollment or as soon as available. We will need a copy of the court's instructions as they relate to your child. Opportunity School will abide by the courts designated time of possession and will not release a child to the parent outside of the designated time of possession unless there is agreement by both parents and documentation on the pick-up list is current.

Only parents listed on the enrollment paperwork will have access to the child's file, documents and belongings and access to the child's teachers. A parent who is included on the enrollment paperwork may not be removed from the pickup list without legal documentation or court order. Unless notified otherwise, the enrolling parent(s) are fully responsible for the full payment of tuition. If your family requires a special payment arrangement based on a court order with more than one payer, we need this documented in writing and signed by both parties.

Family members may not request copies of a child's legal documents related to conservatorship and possession from the school. Family members who need this information should access this information from their attorney or from the court.

Opportunity School reserves the right to seek the advice of legal counsel in interpreting legal documents. Parents may be asked to seek alternate care if disputes arise that cause disruption to a peaceful school environment.

Attendance

To assure children receive the maximum benefit of the Opportunity School program, regular attendance is necessary. Please make every effort to have your child attend. If your child will miss school, please notify the office.

Because of limited spots available at Opportunity School and with CCS scholarships, parents must leave their child in class for at least 4 hours. Parents will not be allowed to sign-in and sign-out for CCS attendance reasons without leaving their child for the minimum amount of time.

If a student misses ten days or more, during a month, the child can be dropped from the roster and placed at the end of the waiting list to be re-enrolled unless the parent has made special arrangements with the office. If your child must be absent, please call the school so we know the reason for the absence and date of expected return. If we do not hear from you, someone from Opportunity School will reach out.

Arrival

Your child must arrive at the school by **9 am daily**. If you have questions for the office that will delay you getting to the classroom, please take your child to the classroom first and then return to the office.

We do understand that sometimes there will be a need for you to drop off your child at a later time. Please notify us as soon as possible so that we can plan for meals and staffing. If you are having difficulty, please talk with the Campus Director.

Drop off after 9 am will not be allowed unless prior arrangements have been made with the Campus Director. If you arrive after 9 am, please speak with the Campus Director.

If your child has a doctor's appointment which will cause you to arrive past the cut-off time, please call the office and bring the doctor's note with you.

Children should not be dropped off between 11:00pm-2:30pm regardless of circumstance. Each class is napping during these times and dropping off disturbs the other children. **Children should not be left in care longer than 10 hours per day with our prior approval.** Please speak to your site director in advance if this situation arises.

When parents bring children to school, they must leave them **IN THE PRESENCE OF A STAFF MEMBER**. Please sign your child in using the ProCare App and sign him/her out when picked up. The ProCare App will have a way for you to record your signature and will note the time for drop off or pick up.

Please do not leave cars running or leave keys in the car when bringing children into the school. Only Park in designated parking areas.

Due to licensing and liability reasons, this policy is strictly enforced.

Closure for Holidays and Professional Development

Opportunity School programs will be closed for the following holidays and teacher professional development dates. We understand that this is a hardship for our parents, so we want to provide these dates well in advance. Parents will be reminded through classroom newsletters, posters and ProCare App reminders from the teachers and Campus Directors. These dates have been figured into the fee schedule and there is not a reduction in fees for these closures.

July 4 – 5 (4th of July holiday)	Closed – Student & Staff Holiday
August 8-9, 12-14	Closed – Student Holiday – Professional Development
September 2 (Labor Day)	Closed – Student & Staff Holiday

October 11	Closed – Student Holiday – Professional Development
November 27-29 (Thanksgiving)	Closed – Student & Staff Holiday
December 23 – 27 (Holiday Break) December 31 close at 3 pm	Closed – Student & Staff Holiday Early Closure for New Year’s Eve
January 1 (New Year Holiday)	Closed – Student & Staff Holiday
January 20 (MLK)	Closed – Student & Staff Holiday
February 17	Closed – Student Holiday - Professional Development
March 10-14 (Spring Break)	Closed – Student & Staff Holiday
April 18 (Good Friday)	Closed – Student & Staff Holiday
April 21	Closed – Student Holiday - Professional Development
May 26 (Memorial Day)	Closed – Student & Staff Holiday
May 27	Closed – Student Holiday - Professional Development
June 13	Closed – Student Holiday - Professional Development
June 19 (Juneteenth)	Closed – Student & Staff Holiday

Closures due to Weather or Unforeseen Circumstances

To protect the safety of parents, children and staff, the school may initiate early closings, late openings, or closures when weather makes road conditions hazardous. When Amarillo public schools close due to weather, Opportunity School will also close.

Note for bus students: There are occasions when ice or snow makes the roads too slick to get the buses out so the bus routes may be cancelled. In these instances, Opportunity School will be open to any parents who want to bring and pick up their children.

Other closures due to unforeseen events such as natural disasters, fire, disease outbreaks, etc., may happen when the school deems it necessary, and the school will notify parents by phone, email and posting information on social media and local news including the three local television network affiliates (KAMR Channel 4, KVII Channel 7, andKFDA Channel 10) and KGNC talk radio (AM 710).

Clothing, Bedding and Supplies Needed

Children are required to have three extra sets of clothing (including underwear if toilet training) and blanket marked with their names. If your child has an accident and no clothes are available, you will receive a phone call and be asked to pick up your child. When returning the next day, you need to bring extra clothing. Having adequate clothing for your child is required.

Parents of infants and toddlers not enrolled in Early Head Start are required to provide diapering supplies including diapers and wipes. Your child's teacher will let you know when they need more supplies.

During their time with us, your child will paint, color, play with sand, rice and even mud on some occasions. We will be going outdoors at least twice per day. Sometimes learning activities can be messy and we take precautions with bibs or smocks during our messiest learning experiences.

We will watch for daily weather advisories but if the weather is below 100 and above 32 degrees, we will be going outside, even if for a few minutes. Please dress your child appropriately in comfortable clothing for all activities and weather. **All outer wear and clothes left for changing must have the child's name inside. We are not responsible for lost coats, hats, gloves, mittens, or scarves.**

We also love active play at Opportunity School so for safety reasons, we cannot allow children to wear flip-flops or open sandals because they can easily slip off and can be a safety hazard. **Sandals with a back or closed shoe like tennis shoes are necessary. Closed toe shoes are preferred. There are no exceptions to this policy.** If your child is going on a field trip, they will need to wear tennis shoes, or they will not be able to go on the field trip.

If you need help with clothing, coats, or shoes, please speak with the Campus Director and we will help!

Contact Information for Families

If you move or if the phone numbers of any of the school's contacts for your family have changed, please let us know right away so that we can reach you. **Please come by and see the office** and we will update your child's information.

Personal Items

Please do not allow your child to bring toys from home, jewelry, or any other personal items. When this happens, the teacher will take these items and put them up for safekeeping. This can be very upsetting to the child, so we ask parents to monitor this and help avoid these issues. Opportunity School is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Audio/Video Recording & Photography

We want you and your child to have a wonderful experience at Opportunity School. To ensure the wellbeing and safety of our students, teachers, staff, and anyone related to the school, we make limited use of video surveillance systems within our school facilities. This is primarily video but also audio in some areas. Areas where audio is being recorded will be posted as such.

It is the policy of Opportunity School to be proactive in addressing issues of concern about

safety and security and quality of our program and the people within our campuses. Recorded video is not made directly available to employees, parents, outside entities, or the public. When an event is reported to the campus administrators (Campus Director, Assistant Campus Director, or Executive Director if those are not available), they will review the video to decide if any video relevant to the incident is available. At that time others may be invited to view the video. Parents are welcome to make an appointment to view recorded video segments relative to situations involving their child. As always, parents are welcome to visit our campus and observe our classrooms.

Also, parents will be asked to sign a release for use of your child's photo. Opportunity School uses photographs and video in its preparation of promotional materials. These promotional materials are used to educate the public about Opportunity School's marketing, charitable and educational programs and may be released for public viewing.

Health & Safety at Opportunity School

Dispensing Medications

We know that there are times when medicines may need to be given while at school. No medication will be given without a doctor's note specific to the treatment whether prescription or over the counter. To give your child over-the-counter medications with a doctor's note, you will need to sign an Authorization for Medication Administration form. If there is medicine that is reoccurring such as teething medicine, diaper rash cream or breathing treatments, a doctor's note will stay effective for six months after that a new doctor's note will be needed.

Only the lead teacher or campus leadership are authorized to administer medication per the doctor's notes and written instructions. Parents may not request other staff members to administer medication or otherwise divert from this process.

When a doctor has prescribed medication to be administered several times a day, the school asks the parent to schedule the administration times so that the medication is given at school as few times as possible, preferably just once. If a medication is prescribed to be given just once a day, the parent should not ask the school to administer the medication. Medication must come in the original container with the prescription label; parents must sign an authorization and include times to administer. Medication will not be administered after expiration date or if it has another child's name on the bottle.

Anything given or applied to a child will require you to sign an Authorization for Medication Administration form and provide a doctor's note. This does include teething tablets or Orajel, Neosporin, diaper rash creams and Benadryl, etc.

Emergency Preparedness and Evacuation Procedures

Injuries or Illnesses Requiring Medical or Dental Care:

Children: The Teacher, Assistant Teacher or other staff member who is with the child and who **has had pediatric first aid training** will provide first aid. If the child needs **immediate treatment by a medical professional**, staff will immediately **dial 911**, and the staff member with pediatric first aid/CPR training will provide first aid until Emergency Medical Services arrives and assumes treatment. Every effort will be made to **reach the parent** during a medical emergency. Unless picked up immediately for medical treatment by the parent, the **child will be transported by ambulance to the Emergency Room at Northwest Texas Hospital**. A **staff member will accompany the child** and remain with the child **until the parent or legal guardian assumes responsibility**. If for some reason ER staff refer the child to another receiving facility, Opportunity School staff accompanying the child will notify the school so that parents can be notified. **Child/staff ratios will always be maintained** for the **children remaining** in the facility.

An appropriately qualified staff member or substitute will take the place of the missing Teacher or Assistant Teacher in such emergencies.

Staff: The same procedures will be followed for cases of serious injury or illness of adult staff members, except that **the person designated as their emergency contact will be notified**. Staff emergency contact information is kept on file at the school and staff members are to notify the school when information changes.

For children's injuries or illnesses requiring medical treatment, the Teacher will complete an Incident/Illness Report form as soon after the incident as possible. See the school office for the current form. The parent or legal guardian will sign the form. Copies will be distributed to the parent or legal guardian, the child's file at the school, and to THHSC Child Care Regulation Staff if required. In any case of injury or illness where medical treatment is required, the Director must notify THHSC Child Care Regulation Staff and the Panhandle Work Source Child Care Services representative if the child is enrolled in Extended Care.

All parents must sign the medical treatment consent on the Opportunity School application and keep the school informed of any changes in their child's health care provider information.

Licensing Notification: The Opportunity School Director or Assistant Director will immediately notify the THHSC Child Care Regulation Division staff of any injury or illness that requires medical treatment, or results in hospitalization or death of a child or staff member that occurs related to childcare/preschool or during the childcare/preschool day. The Director will plan and conduct communication with staff, families, children, governing board, and the community as appropriate.

Media Inquiries: All media inquiries are to be referred to the Executive Director, or, if not immediately available, to the Opportunity School Board President. Staff members are not allowed access by the media to the facility during a crisis. Media access will be prearranged at times when staff and families have been informed and when such visits will cause the least amount of disruption to the program.

Evacuation Procedure: Evacuation procedures will be posted in each classroom, in the school office, in the business office and the kitchen.

- 1) Child: staff ratios will be maintained, and the children and staff will be evacuated to the South parking lot of the church for fire or related emergencies or to the church basement in the event of threatening weather/tornado. If an environmental disaster or security threat makes it necessary to leave the vicinity, then all children and staff will board the school's buses and/or vans, and will go to an alternate location, either a) as instructed by Emergency Management personnel, or, if there is no such instruction.
- 2) Children who cannot walk out of the building on their own will be evacuated as planned in consultation with a fire safety professional. For children with disabilities, a Teacher, Assistant Teacher, or other designated staff member will be assigned to get the child out safely during an emergency, either by wheelchair or other special assistance as needed to evacuate the child. Evacuation locations for each campus are listed below.

<u>Edwards Campus</u>	<u>Central Campus</u>	<u>Gratitude House</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open field behind Toot N Totum. • Opportunity School Central Campus- 1100 S. Harrison, Amarillo, 79101, (806) 373-4245 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West parking lot of the First Presbyterian Church that is directly across Van Buren. • Opportunity School Edwards Campus, 406 S Osage, Amarillo, 79104, (806) 381-0551 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking lot of Downtown Women’s Center in front of the center. • Opportunity School Central Campus- 1100 S. Harrison, Amarillo, 79101, (806) 373-4245

- 3) Staff will count the children in each group being evacuated and count the children again when they reach the evacuation destination.
- 4) Staff will give children clear, simple instructions for exiting the facility. Children will stop activities immediately at the sound of the alarm and proceed to the exit.
- 5) The Teacher in each classroom will carry attendance the emergency contact information from the facility to the evacuation destination and compare attendance at the evacuation destination to the attendance sheet to be sure no children or staff have been left behind.
- 6) The Assistant Teacher in each classroom will carry the classroom First Aid kit and the classroom flashlight from the facility to the evacuation destination. She will open the bathroom door and leave it open before exiting.
- 7) The Administrative Assistant will bring the following items to the evacuation destination: The Office First Aid kit and the yellow bus cell phone: She will also notify the church staff as soon as it is safe to do so.
- 8) To ensure a complete evacuation has occurred, the Director will conduct a final, thorough “sweep” of all areas accessible to children (whether children are allowed in those areas). The areas to be checked are:
 - a. **Edwards Campus:** The 12 classrooms, including bathrooms, the 5 offices, kitchen, Meet/Play, 2 therapy rooms, teacher work area, small meeting room and hallways.
 - b. **Central Campus:** The 4 classrooms including bathrooms, the office suite, the indoor playground, the kitchen, the adult bathrooms, the church nursery, and hallways
 - c. **Gratitude House:** The 2 classrooms including bathrooms, the kitchen and hallways, the office area including bathroom, and the storage room.
 - d. If a child who should have been evacuated with the group is located because of the final “sweep” during an evacuation drill, the Director will investigate the circumstances that led to the failure to evacuate that child and plan how to avoid such problems in the future.
- 9) The temporary shelter will be stocked with supplies and materials necessary for the program to take care of children until parents, legal guardians, or designated persons can take the children home.

- 10) Families will be notified by telephone or radio/television broadcast on KGNC AM Talk Radio 710, KVII Channel 7, KFDA Channel 10, and KAMR Channel 4.
- 11) Evacuation procedures and routes will be posted in the facility in each classroom, in the school office, in the business office, and the kitchen.
- 12) Evacuation drills for outside evacuation (fire and similar emergencies) will be held monthly. Tornado drills are held at least twice each school year. An off-site evacuation drill is held at least annually. The timing of the drills will be varied to include early morning, mealtimes, and nap times. Children will be appropriately educated and prepared for drills and reassured during drills. The Assistant Director will complete the Fire and Tornado drill logs at the end of each drill.
- 13) All new staff will receive pre-service training on the evacuation plan.

Fire or Risk of Explosion:

- 1) Anyone who discovers smoke, fire or risk of explosion will pull the fire alarm. This person will also notify the Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services by calling 911 from a safe location after being sure that evacuation of the building takes place.
- 2) Staff will follow the posted Evacuation procedures.
- 3) The last person to leave a room will close the doors of that room.
- 4) The Director, Secretary and Executive Director are authorized to use the fire extinguisher where necessary and safe.
- 5) The Director will report a fire or explosion to the childcare licensing agency within 24 hours.
- 6) Refer to "Media Inquiries" for procedures regarding any media questions or presence.

Power Failures:

- 1) Teachers/caregivers will comfort the children, explain the situation, and model for them how to remain calm.
- 2) The Director will discover if the power outage is confined to the facility or includes the neighborhood or surrounding areas.
- 3) Flashlights will be used to provide emergency lighting where needed. Flashlights are stored in each classroom and in the school office. Flashlights are checked at least monthly to be sure they work including that batteries work.
- 4) Unless the power failure is accompanied by an emergency requiring evacuation (e.g., fire, flood, etc.), children will be kept inside. Should it be necessary to leave the building, staff will follow emergency evacuation procedures. Staff will look for and avoid any downed power lines.
- 5) The Director will call the local power facility, Xcel Energy, on 1-800-895-1999, explain the situation, and request assistance.
- 6) If conditions do not permit the maintenance of safe temperatures within the facility, families will be notified by telephone, radio, or television broadcast on

KGNC AMTalk Radio 710, KVII CHANNEL 7 TV, KFDA CHANNEL 10 TV, and KAMR CHANNEL 4 TV.

Floods, Tornadoes, Earthquakes, Blizzards, or Other Catastrophes:

- 1) The Director/Administrative Assistant is responsible for contacting local Emergency Preparedness Authorities and obtaining written instructions for what to do in the event of an emergency that may occur in the region.
- 2) Anyone who learns about a significant health or safety hazard will notify the Director by calling 373-4245 or their home numbers if after school hours (staff phone lists are updated regularly and are to be kept off site by every staff member) so appropriate action can be taken.
- 3) Staff will follow the appropriate, posted Emergency Procedures for the catastrophe and wait for authorities to arrive.

Threatening Individual: In the event of admission of an individual who subsequently demonstrates threatening behavior, the staff member aware of the behavior will immediately notify another adult by quickest means possible to call the police, and all teachers & staff will be directed to avoid the area where the threatening individual is located either by following evacuation procedures or hiding in place if it's unsafe to leave.

Gang Free Zone

Please be aware that any area within 1000 feet of the child care center is a gang free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalties. We inform our families of this in written and verbal form upon enrollment.

Hand Washing and Diaper Checks

Good health habits are encouraged at Opportunity School. Children will wash their hands many, many times per day. Upon arrival, all children must wash their hands upon entering class. Parents may enter the class to assist their child in washing their hands. Throughout the day, all children will wash their hands before eating, after blowing their nose, before playing at water tables, after outdoor play and after using the bathroom.

For parents of Infants and Toddlers, when dropping off, we ask you to make sure to bring your child with a clean, dry diaper. If soiled on the way to the school, please change the diaper upon arrival.

Hearing, Vision, and Language Screening

Opportunity School wants the best start to your child's education. Each student will be evaluated for hearing, speech, and language development. Opportunity School will arrange for intervention services as needed for speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, or other developmental issues. Children are also screened for visual impairments. Whenever a child is suspected of having a visual impairment the teacher will discuss her concerns with the

parent and recommend appropriate action. Opportunity School works with children with special needs. We will work with you to help address your child's needs if they have an existing Individual Education Plan (IEP) or other developmental plans.

Health Policy

Opportunity School's health policy is to provide a clear understanding concerning the measures taken to protect the health of children. We are not licensed to provide care for sick children. Because children's immune systems are not fully developed, they are more subject to illness than adults.

Children exhibiting any of the following symptoms must be kept at home for at least 48 hours (this could increase if there is a health issue in the community or school) or until symptom-free without medication. If these symptoms develop during the school day, the parents will be notified so that the child can be picked up. Parents must come within 30 minutes or the next person on the pick-up list will be called.

Please do not give your child medications to mask their symptoms. Children and families should stay home if not feeling well. A child may not come to school if a health-care professional has diagnosed the child with a communicable disease; parents must have medical documentation letting us know the child is not contagious, to reenter care.

- Child has signs or symptoms of a suspected contagious illness including but not limited to:
 - Oral temperature (**101**), and by any other means (armpit/ear, temporal or touchless (**100**), or greater, that is accompanied by behavior changes and/or other signs of illness.
 - Nasal discharge that is not clear
 - Continuous, severe, or uncontrolled coughing or wheezing; difficulty breathing
 - Two or more episodes of diarrhea within 24 hours
 - Vomiting (2 or more episodes within 24 hours)
 - Inflamed eyes
 - Rash with fever, or skin lesions with drainage
 - Mouth sores with drooling
 - Live head lice or is a recurring issue
 - "Flu like," COVID, or similar symptoms
- The inability to participate in class.
- The child exhibits symptoms of possible severe illness such as extreme tiredness, abnormal breathing, behavior changes, or other signs that the child may be severely ill.
- When a child has been sent home twice for the same condition or a serious communicable disease, a parent must bring a doctor's release before the child returns.

Children should be free of fever, diarrhea or vomiting for 48 hours (without medication) before returning to school. An exception may be made if medical evaluation by a health care professional indicates that the condition is due to teething or other non-contagious condition. When children have been sent home because of head lice or ring worm, the parent must send documentation that treatment has been administered.

When a child has a diaper rash that has persisted for two weeks, the child must be seen by a doctor and instructions given to the school.

In all cases, Opportunity School staff reserve the right to use discretion and professional judgment to maintain a healthful environment for the children in care.

Illness

We want all our students, teachers, and families to stay well. If your child is not feeling good, please do not bring them to school. In case of illness, we will contact you and let you know to pick your child up. Children are excluded from care whenever they have symptoms of a communicable disease. (For a full explanation of the school's illness and exclusion policy, please see the Health Policy, in the previous section). **Parents are asked to read carefully and sign a copy of the health policy upon enrollment.** We will inform parents when there are cases of serious communicable diseases that have been identified at the school.

Immunization Requirements

To attend Opportunity School, children must be up to date on their immunizations, and we must obtain a copy of the shot record for our files. Through the year we will keep up with your child's record and inform you when it is time to obtain the next immunizations. Any delays in this will result in a delay in your child being allowed back to school. We must follow the Health Department's guidelines on Immunizations.

TAC 797.62 allows parents to exempt their children from vaccines required for entry into school and child-care facilities. For medical reasons, a doctor's note may be provided. For other reasons, you must apply in writing to the Texas Department of State Health Services. The form can be found online:

A person claiming exclusion for reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, from a required immunization may only obtain the affidavit form by submitting a request (via online form, mail, fax, or hand-delivery) to the department. The request must include following information:

- Full name of child or student
- Child's or student's date of birth (month/day/year)
- Complete mailing address, including telephone number
- Number of requested affidavit forms (not to exceed 5).

Affidavits may be requested via the Immunization Unit [Affidavit Request website](#). A written request for an affidavit may be sent through the United States Postal Service (or another commercial carrier) to:

Texas Department of State Health
Services/Immunization Branch, Mail
Code 1946
P.O. Box 149347
Austin, Texas 78714-9347

Fax written requests for affidavits to: (512) 776-7544. Upon completion, the form must then be notarized and submitted to school officials within 90 days of notarization. Opportunity School does not keep a record of staff immunizations. It is up to the staff to keep up with immunizations.

Inclusion of Children with Special Needs

In the case that an enrolled child has an identified special need by medical diagnosis, or a teacher has identified a possible concern about a child's developmental progress or behavior, the teacher will document their observation. The concerns will be discussed with parents and if necessary, the teacher, Director and parents will develop a plan for practical solutions. Depending on the situation, the school may suggest that a referral be made for further evaluation. If a child is receiving specialized services and has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) in place, the school will address the child's IEP in our services.

Medical Emergencies

In case of a serious medical emergency, a trained staff member will provide First Aid and/or CPR, and immediately call 911 if necessary. We then will make every effort to reach the parents. If the parents cannot be reached, we will call the designated emergency persons provided by the parents on the emergency medical release form.

If the parent cannot be contacted, we will call for an ambulance to transport the child or take your child to the doctor or clinic stated on your child's application. If your child needs to be transported to the hospital by ambulance, a staff member will accompany your child.

All parents are asked to be sure they or the persons they designate can be reached in case of an emergency by providing:

- 1) At least two working phone numbers where parents/ Guardian can be reached and two working numbers where alternative contact people may be reached during hours of operation at Opportunity School.
- 2) A class schedule and phone numbers if the parent/ Guardian attend school.
- 3) Complete phone numbers and addresses for hospital, and doctor's offices.

Therefore, it is important that you sign the medical release on the application in case of a medical emergency. If the phone numbers of any of the school's contacts for your family,

emergency contacts, doctors or hospital have changed, please let us know right away. You can easily update contact information for your child by filling out a change request, which is available near the payment box. **Return the changes to the office** and we will update your child's information.

Opportunity School cannot assume responsibility for payment of medical services. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to assume any cost incurred for emergency care.

Pest Control

Pesticides are periodically applied indoors in a manner that protects the safety of children. Information on the times and types is available upon request.

Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect

Opportunity School is committed to protecting the well-being of children, and therefore our staff is trained in recognizing and preventing child abuse and neglect. Additionally, we are under ethical and legal obligation in accordance with the Child Care Licensing Standards and the Family Code of the State of Texas to report instances of suspected abuse or neglect. All suspicious indicators will be documented and reported. The center is required by law to cooperate with any investigation of child abuse and neglect.

Signs of abuse and neglect include unusual physical marks or behavior. It is not our responsibility or intention to offer interpretation or explanation of our observations - the investigation is handled by the State. Failure of educators to report is a crime, and Texas law establishes immunity of any person reporting in good faith. State law assures strict confidentiality of reports and reporting persons.

Should an employee be under an investigation of child abuse, the school will take measures to protect children during the investigation, including preventing the employee from unsupervised contact with children or removing the employee from contact with children, as appropriate.

Should allegations be substantiated, the school will follow its policies regarding employee discipline and termination.

Safe Sleep for Infants

All staff, substitute staff, and volunteers at Opportunity School will follow these safe sleep recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) for infants to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome/Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS/SUIDS). We encourage you to use these safe sleep practices at home as well.

- Always put infants (Child Care Regulation defines infants from zero to 17 months) to sleep on their backs unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 3019 signed by the infant's health care professional [§746.2427].
- Place infants on a firm mattress, with a tight-fitting sheet, in a crib that meets the CPSC federal requirements for full size cribs and for non-full-size cribs [§746.2409].
- For infants who are younger than 12 months of age, cribs should be bare except for a tight-fitting sheet and a mattress cover or protector. Items that should not be placed in a crib include soft or loose bedding, such as blankets, quilts, or comforters; pillows; stuffed toys/animals; soft objects; bumper pads; liners; or sleep positioning devices [§746.2415]. Also, infants must not have their heads, faces, or cribs covered at any time by items such as blankets, linens, or clothing [§746.2429]. If an infant needs extra warmth, use sleep clothing such as sleepers or footed pajamas as an alternative to blankets.
- Place only one infant in a crib to sleep.
- Infants may use a pacifier during sleep. But the pacifier must not be attached to a stuffed animal or the infant's clothing by a string, cord, or other attaching mechanism that might be a suffocation or strangulation risk [§746.2415].
- If the infant falls asleep in a restrictive device other than a crib (such as a bouncy chair or swing or arrives to care asleep in a car seat), move the infant to a crib immediately, unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 3019 signed by the infant's health care professional [§746.2426].
- Our childcare program is smoke-free. Smoking is not allowed in Texas childcare operations (this includes e-cigarettes and any type of vaporizers) [§746.3703(d)].
- Awake infants will have supervised "tummy time" several times daily. This will help them strengthen their muscles and develop normally [§746.2417].
- Do not swaddle an infant for sleep or rest unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 3019 signed by the infant's health care professional [§746.2428].

Sunscreen and Insect Repellent

The playground provides shaded areas to help prevent sunburn. With written parental permission and parent-provided sunscreen, teachers may apply skin protection to exposed skin. We cannot apply sunscreen without written parental permission. Teachers help to ensure that when in the sun, children are wearing sun-protective clothing if available, applied skin protection, or both.

When public health authorities recommend use of insect repellents due to a high risk of insect-borne disease, only repellents containing DEET are used, and these are applied only on children older than two months. **Opportunity School will have appropriate insect repellent on hand, but staff may only apply insect repellent with written parental permission.**

Tuberculin Testing Requirements/ Immunizations

Opportunity School has no Tuberculin Testing requirements for enrolled children currently. We will be following any recommendations from the Health Department. All staff who come in contact with children are tested upon hire for tuberculosis. Opportunity School does not keep up with employee immunizations.

Family Involvement and Communication

Classroom Visits

We love to have families visit Opportunity School at any time during your child's day. You do not have to call and set an appointment to observe your child's classroom. You are always welcome. If you will be coming to have lunch, please let us know so we can let the cook know.

When visiting the classroom, please allow the teachers to handle any discipline issues. It's important that teachers are able to manage the classroom activities.

Would you like to help in the classroom at Opportunity School? Contact your child's teacher to see if there is a way you can help in the classroom.

If any situation arises with a visiting parent or family member that becomes disruptive to a peaceful classroom or school environment, that person will be asked to leave. If that person refuses to leave, we will contact law enforcement.

Communication Between Families and Staff

We know that your child's experience will be better with good communication between school and home. There are several ways to keep you informed. All parents will receive a handbook regarding school policies and procedures. A signed acknowledgment will be required for each child's file. A written notification will be given regarding any changes in policies and practices.

We will release information about the child's progress or any issues only with the enrolling parent(s) or others as legally required. It is our policy to maintain the confidentiality of the student and their family and will not speak with grandparents or other family members unless that person is named as the parent or legal guardian of the student. It is the responsibility of the enrolling parent to communicate relevant information, including family handbook information, to others involved in the child's care or who are on the pickup list. All parties on the pickup list are asked to abide by the Family Code of Conduct (see page 52).

Much of the communication can be sent by text. Parents can sign up for the ProCare App to receive information this way. Other forms of communication can include:

- Monthly newsletter of parent tips, coming events, highlights of classroom activities.
- Parent reminders to remind you of field trips, classroom celebrations or holidays.
- You may receive a behavior incident report if your child has repeated occurrences of behaviors that require attention. Refer to the behavior and guidance policy for more

information.

- Incident/Illness reports are provided if your child has a minor injury or becomes ill. If a child becomes ill at school, you may receive an exclusion notice stating what conditions must be met before your child can return to our care.
- Daily Communication Sheet for children ages 2 years and younger.

Other communication methods include but are not limited to: Family/Teacher conferences, signs/fliers posted by door, on the Family Information Board or sent home, lesson plans posted in the classrooms, menus, and Book Bag materials.

Copies of the most recent licensing reports are kept in the hallway for review. A copy of Minimum Standards is kept in the office for parents to review or can be found online.

Confidentiality

Some of the information shared between families, teachers and administrators is of a personal and private nature. We will share this information only with those school employees and professional consultants (for example, speech therapists, etc.) who have a “need to know.” We will not share this information with other parents at any time or with employees who do not “need to know.”

Student records including the application, income verifications and other information collected during enrollment are kept in a secure filing cabinet in the school office. Children’s assessment information is kept in a secure location by the school’s teacher. Only administrators, teachers or specialized professionals who work directly with your child (for example, the Speech Therapist), appropriate regulatory authorities, or persons to whom you the parent or legal guardian have given permission have access to this assessment information. Information about the usage, interpretation and representation of assessment and screening information are described in the handbook section entitled “Monitoring Children’s Progress.” The school values family and student privacy and follows all applicable regulations regarding confidentiality (not subject to the Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act).

Maintaining a Peaceful School Environment

Opportunity School strives to be a drama-free center. We desire to maintain a school environment that is supportive, respectful, and harmonious for every child, parent, and staff member. To support a peaceful school environment, staff members agree to follow the school’s professional conduct policies.

Similarly, parents are asked to demonstrate courtesy and respect in their interactions with other parents and family members, with staff, and with their own and other children while they are at Opportunity School.

Behavior that is inappropriate, illegal, threatening, vulgar, profane, or disrespectful in nature,

or language that is abusive is not acceptable. Everyone is expected to use language that is always suitable and appropriate for children's ears when on the school grounds, parking area, or inside the building. Language or behavior that appears threatening, disrespectful, or disruptive will not be tolerated, and appropriate measures will be taken.

If you or anyone associated with you bring drama into the center, you will be asked to seek alternate care. If parents (or other family members) are unable to accept Opportunity School's policies and procedures and follow the direction of the Campus Director, you will be asked to seek alternate care. If parents or family members continue to challenge the schools' policies and procedures, you will be asked to seek alternate care. **We reserve the right to refuse service to anyone, without warning, who violates this policy.**

Please do not be on your cell phone when coming to pick up your child. This is a time for teachers to communicate with you and for you to talk to them.

For conflicts or grievances, parents should follow the procedures described in the "Parent Questions and Concerns" section of this Handbook. We reserve the right to refuse service to anyone, without warning, who violates this policy.

Monthly Home/School Visits

Children will do best when there is good communication and partnership between parents and teachers. The school honors parents' concerns and preferences for their children. In turn, the school requires enrolling parents and/or guardians to participate in regular individual family visits and take part in school-family activities. We believe the most and best learning goes on in the home between parents and children. We work with families to provide a variety of activities for use at home.

There will be one individual visit required each month. Teachers will visit the homes of their students in August and February. Other monthly visits can take place at the school. Individual parent visits take place at a time agreed upon by parent and teacher. Teacher visits continue during June and July.

Individual parent visits with the child's teacher provide:

- Opportunities for parents and teachers to set learning goals for the child.
- Books and activities for use at home.
- Information on child development and needs.
- Review lesson plans, test results and have paperwork signed.

The group meetings provide:

- Information on topics of interest and help to parents.
- Opportunities to build relationships with other parents.

Parents are responsible for keeping their individual parent visit appointments, for

participating in the activities and returning the books and materials in good condition. Parents are financially responsible if materials are lost or damaged. Involving parents in their child's education is an important part of your child's learning. If you are unable to participate, please talk to your child's teacher.

Through monthly visits and Parent-Family involvement activities, Parents will:

- Understand the importance of reading with young children, experience pleasurable times reading with their children and enjoying a related activity and develop skills in evaluating books appropriate for and interesting to their children.
- Understand their child's cognitive, physical, emotional, and social developmental needs, and gain increased skills in supporting their child's healthy development.
- Build a strong, mutually satisfying relationship between the school and home.
- Learn how to use common materials found around the home for stimulating children's learning and form closer bonds with their children through play activities

Family Advisory Committee

The Family Advisory Committee is composed of one or more parent representatives from each classroom. The Committee and the Campus Director will schedule meetings, at least quarterly. If you are interested in serving on the Committee, please speak with your child's teacher or the Director. The Family Advisory Committee's purpose is to:

- Share ideas and concerns to promote high quality education for children and support for parents and families.
- Advise the school concerning school policies that affect parents and children.
- Plan events and activities involving parents and children.
- Assist in implementing school projects.

Parent-Family Questions and Concerns

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the policies and procedures of Opportunity School, we encourage you to first contact your child's teacher. If further consideration is needed, call, or visit the Campus Director. If the Campus Director does not address your concern, please contact the Executive Director at 373-4245 or 381-0551. Concerns not satisfactorily addressed by the Campus Director, or the Executive Director should be brought to the Board of Trustees by providing your concern in writing to the Executive Director who will present your concern to the appropriate person on the Board.

Both Opportunity School campuses are licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and follow their rules and regulations. Parents may review the licensing minimum standards at any time. Our most recent licensing inspections are always posted for parents to look at. Previous reports are available by request from the office. If you feel a grievance is not being addressed, parents may contact local licensing at:

Local number: 806-
358-6211TDFPS
abuse hot line is:
1-800-252-5400
Intake line: 354-5307
The TDFPS website is: www.dfps.state.tx.us

Prayer and Spirituality

Opportunity School was created by a Sunday School class in 1969 who believed God was calling them to serve their community in a larger way. Opportunity School' Central Campus shares space within First Presbyterian Church – where the school was started. Because of this history and our location, your child will be exposed to simple prayers before meals, Christian symbols within the church and may have the opportunity to take part in a chapel program (Central Campus only) with parent permission. While our curriculum is not religious in nature, these practices are part of our normal routines. No child will be required to participate in these activities but will be part of the normal daily routine. If you have a difference of belief system that prohibits your child's participation, please discuss it with your Campus Director. Please know that we will do our best to meet every child's emotional needs and families' individual beliefs. By enrolling your child in Opportunity School, you understand that your child will be exposed to these daily practices.

Resources for Families

We know that families struggle at times. Our staff is here to work with you and provide referrals to any services that may help you. We have resources for basic needs (food, clothing, housing, utilities) and a wide range of social services including mental wellness, stress management, parenting, legal aid, or other support. Please let your child's teacher or the Director or our Family Services Coordinator know if these resources might be helpful to you. Individual situations revealed to staff will be handled with confidentiality and respect.

Learning Experiences for your Child

Classroom Animals, Pets, and Service Dogs

Sometimes we have the opportunity to gain experience about real, live animals. Parents will be informed about animals that will be present at Opportunity School as classroom animals. Caregivers and staff will practice good hygiene whenever handling the classroom animals. Animals that require vaccinations will be vaccinated according to local animal health ordinances and a record of their vaccinations will be on hand at the center.

For all other animals, including pets and service dogs on campus at Opportunity School, this policy outlines the general prohibition of pets within the facility, with exceptions for service animals as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Additionally, this policy addresses the requirements of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TXDFPS) Minimum Standards regarding parent notification and documentation of vaccination and health statements for animals.

1. **Pets:** with the exception of ADA trained service canines, are not permitted at Opportunity School at any time. This policy ensures the safety and well-being of all children, staff, and visitors while complying with relevant legal requirements, including the TXDFPS Child Care Regulation.
 - a. No person, including parents, guardians, staff, or visitors, shall bring any pets onto Opportunity School's campus(es), including the indoor and outdoor areas, without special permission granted by the Campus Director.
 - b. Pets include, but are not limited to, dogs, cats, birds, reptiles, rodents, and any other animals that are not legally classified as service canines under the ADA.
2. **Parent Notification and Documentation Requirements:**
 - a. **Advance Notice:** In accordance with TXDFPS Child Care Regulation, parents or guardians of enrolled children will be provided with advance notice of any animals that are or will be present in the Opportunity School facility or during field trips.
 - b. **Vaccination Documentation:** Owners bringing dogs and cats onto the Opportunity School campus must provide documentation proving that their animals have been vaccinated as required by the Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 826. This documentation should be kept on file at the center.
 - c. **Statement of Health:** Owners must also provide a statement of health from a local veterinarian, indicating that the animals are in good health and free from contagious diseases. This statement should also be kept on file at the center.
 - d. This section does not apply to dogs that are legally classified as service canines under the ADA.

3. Special Permission:

a. Individuals seeking special permission to bring a pet onto the Opportunity School campus must make a written request to the Campus Director, explaining the specific circumstances and reasons for the request. This includes teachers requesting permission for a classroom animal and must follow the same notification and documentation requirements noted in #3.

b. The Campus Director will review each request on a case-by-case basis and determine whether to grant or deny permission based on the best interests and safety of the children, staff, and visitors. This section does not apply to ADA service animals.

4. **Non-Compliance:** Repeated violations by parents, guardians, or visitors may lead to restricted access to the Opportunity School's service, including asking the family to find alternate care.

Service Animals:

ADA Service Animal Definition: A service animal, as defined by the ADA, is a dog that is individually trained to perform tasks or provide assistance to an individual with a disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, are not recognized as service animals under the ADA. Emotional support animals, comfort animals and therapy dogs are not service animals under the ADA.

1. Permission for Service Animals:

Individuals with disabilities who require the assistance of a service animal are permitted to enter Opportunity School in compliance with the ADA.

2. Verification and Documentation:

The Campus Director has the authority to inquire regarding the service animal's purpose or training when it is not apparent that the animal is a service animal.

3. Responsibilities of Service Animal Handlers:

a. Service animal handlers are responsible for the control, behavior, and well-being of their service animals at all times.

b. Handlers must ensure that the service animal is properly harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless it interferes with the service animal's ability to perform tasks or the individual's disability prevents such use. In that event, the handler must still retain control over the service animal through the use of voice commands or other means.

c. Handlers are expected to promptly address any waste elimination by their service animal and clean up after them.

d. Any damage or disruption (barking, growling, etc.) caused by a service animal must be reported to the Campus Director immediately. A person who uses a service animal is responsible for any damages caused by the animal.

e. Service animals must be properly vaccinated in accordance with state and local laws.

Field Trips

Outings to interesting places in or near Amarillo are a part the curriculum for preschool-aged children (three- and four-year-old's) at Opportunity School. These trips expose children to new experiences and enhance the classroom curriculum. A teacher and an assistant teacher always supervise field trips. Parents are informed of field trips by given specific information at least two days in advance. The children are transported on field trips by Opportunity School's 23-passenger bus. We only transport children by bus on field trips. Parents are always welcome to accompany their child, but you will need to provide your own transportation.

If you allow your child to participate in field trips permission must be given by checking the appropriate area in the enrollment packet. If you check no, you will need to transport your child to the field trip destination or keep your child home the day of the field trip.

Water Activities

Opportunity School children participate in water play as appropriate to children's ages and developmental needs. Activities include water sprays and spouts and water tables. Water tables and classroom pouring activities that do not normally result in a child getting wet (except for hands) are included as a part of daily lesson plans. For activities where children or clothing may get wet, notices will be sent home in advance so that parents may prepare by providing bathing suits and towels. Parents who do not wish children to participate should provide written notice to their child's teacher.

Outdoor Play

Weather permitting, all children will go outside twice a day. Opportunity School may accommodate the weather, air quality, and seasonal changes by adjusting the schedules of outdoor time and the length of times outdoors. Please make sure that your child is dressed appropriately for the weather. Outdoor time is a wonderful time for children to play vigorous structured activities as well as have unstructured play. This is also a fun time for children to explore nature and observe the changes in the weather.

Screens, Technology

For children under the age of two there will be no media or screen time of any kind. For older children, some media may be incorporated appropriately into lesson plans or in technology centers. Media activities using TV / video, computer activities may be used as a supplement but will not replace hands-on activities for children. The use of screens such as TV or computers will be a planned activity, age appropriate.

Behavior and Guidance Policy

Children face many challenges throughout their lives including learning acceptable behaviors and being able to regulate their own behaviors in different social and emotional environments or when interacting with peers or adults.

The purpose of the Behavior/Guidance Policy is to encourage acceptable forms of behavior by using strategies that build children's confidence and self-esteem; and provide children with support, guidance, and opportunities to manage their own behavior. The goal of this policy is to limit and/or eliminate the use of suspension, expulsion, and exclusionary practices. This policy complies with all federal and state civil rights laws. This policy also applies to the entire Opportunity School community, including all children, teachers, staff, parents, guardians, and visitors.

We recognize that all behavior is a form of communication and has a purpose. We also understand that there are many things that can affect a child's behavior, including:

- Age and development, special or additional needs.
- General health, wellbeing, and disability.
- Relationships with their family.
- Play and learning environments, which includes the physical indoor/outdoor setting, the weather, the time of year, the time of day.
- Staff and teachers' caregiving strategies and practices, which includes how these strategies are implemented
- Relationships with other children, staff, and visitors.
- External factors, such as family, home life, school or peer group experiences, or media coverage of certain events.

While staff are aware and respect individual children's and families' backgrounds and beliefs, it may be necessary to balance the individuals needs with staff knowledge of developmentally appropriate practices and current best practice recommendations from recognized authorities.

The foundation of our behavior and guidance approach comes from Conscious Discipline by Becky Bailey. Conscious Discipline helps build schools based on safety, connection and problem-solving. With these components, everyday events and conflicts become opportunities to teach life skills. The approaches we use vary by age group, but have the following elements in common:

- **Adults model positive behavior.** We show that we can accept, control and express feelings in direct and non- aggressive ways; we let children know that we are not afraid of their intense emotions and will not punish, threaten, or withdraw from them. By showing children how to handle strong emotions by calming ourselves, asking what we need, and using positive problem-solving, we model what is acceptable behavior.
- **Teachers design the physical environment to minimize conflict.** We provide multiples of toys and materials for groups of children, define classroom and outdoor areas clearly to allow for both active and quiet play, and strive to maintain an appropriately calm level of stimulation. We use pictures and picture schedules to help children learn and follow classroom routines.

- **Teachers maintain age-appropriate expectations for children’s behavior.** We attempt to minimize unreasonable waiting and transition times and limit the length of large group and teacher directed activity ties according to children’s developmental levels. We give children large block of uninterrupted time during which to make their own activity choices.
- **Adults closely observe and supervise children’s activities and interactions.** With our low child/staff ratios and our emphasis on attentive observation, we can often intervene to guide children before situations escalate.
- **Adults help children verbalize their feelings, frustrations, and concerns.** The staff will help the children describe problems, generate practical solutions, and think through logical consequences of their actions. The adult role is to be a helper in positive problem solving. We want children to value cooperation and teamwork. We help them learn to peaceful approaches to interacting.
- **Children whose behavior endangers others will be guided away from other children** and encouraged to use the “Safe Place.” This is different from “time out” (the traditional chair in the corner) for a child. An adult will help the child move away from a group situation. The child will then process the problem verbally with the staff member and other concerned parties. An adult will stay close to any child who is emotionally out of control and needs private time to regain composure.
- **Discipline, i.e., guidance, will always be positive, productive, and immediate with behavior is inappropriate.** No child will be humiliated, shames, frightened or subjected to physical punishment or verbal or physical abuse by any staff member, student, or volunteer.

Challenging behavior is defined as any behavior that:

- Interferes with the children learning, development and success at play
- Is harmful to the child, other children, or adults
- Puts a child at substantial risk for later social problems or school failure.
- It can be direct (hitting, pushing, biting, or kicking) or indirect (teasing, ignoring rules or instructions, excluding others, name calling, destroying objects, having temper tantrums).

The Opportunity School staff sees working with children’s challenging behavior as an important part of our job. The word discipline has at its root meaning, “instruction” or “training.” This meaning rather than punishment is the foundation for our approach to guiding children’s behavior.

Staff may never use physical punishment, psychological abuse, or coercion when disciplining a child. There are no circumstances when it is permissible for teachers or staff to use any of the behaviors listed below. Examples of prohibited practices:

Examples of physical punishment: shaking, hitting, spanking, slapping, jerking, squeezing, kicking, biting, pinching excessive tickling and pulling of arms, hair, or ears; requiring child to remain inactive for an extended period of time.

Examples of psychological abuse: shaming, name calling, ridiculing, humiliation, sarcasm, cursing at, making threats, or frightening a child; ostracism, withholding affection, or seclusion.

Examples of coercion: rough handling (showing, pulling, pushing, grasping any body part); physical restraint (forcing a child to sit down, lie down, or stay down) except when necessary to protect the child or others from harm; physically forcing a child to perform an action (such as eating or cleaning up).

Note: *The use of physical escort is defined below and properly used when necessary to protect the child or others from harm is NOT coercion.*

Mechanical restraint: *“the use of devices as a means of restricting a student’s freedom of movement.*

Physical escort: *“the temporary touching or holding of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of inducing a student who is acting out to walk to a safe location.*

Physical restraint: *“a personal restriction that immobilizes or reduces the ability of an individual to move the individual’s arms, legs, torso or head freely, except that such term does not include a physical escort, mechanical restraint or chemical restraint.” (H.R. 7124, 2018)*

Seclusion: *“the involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area from which the student is physically prevented from leaving, except that such term does not include time out.” (H.R. 7124, 2018)*

In general, when an incident involving challenging behavior occurs, the staff member lets the child know that the behavior is not Ok as explained in detail below. They:

1. Acknowledge the act (what action has occurred),
2. Acknowledge the feel or hurt the behavior has caused the victim,
3. Move the offending child away from the situation,
4. Suggest an alternative way of behaving before returning to play, and
5. If the child continues to offend, a behavior strategy will be implemented.

When a pattern of behavior persists that endangers self, others or property or significantly disrupts the program, we will work with the family to find solutions, including referral for outside services. The cooperation and participation of the family in finding solutions is essential to continued care in the program. If these actions do not help in reducing or changing the behavior the following will take place:

1. Teacher will report behavior and what strategies have been attempted to the Director. (This should include conferencing with the parent)
2. Teacher/Director will determine if referral for a formal behavior observation is needed by the Early Intervention Specialist or Program Quality Specialist.
3. After reviewing observation results with the teacher and director, the appropriate team will work together to develop a behavior plan put into practice.
4. The Behavior Plan will be developed in collaboration with the family and updates regularly communicated by the Campus Director.

Minor Behavior Examples	Actions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not following directions 2. Talking back to teachers 3. Arguing/fighting with other children 4. Inappropriate language/swearing 5. Name calling/teasing 6. Temper tantrums 7. Not following classroom routines/schedules 8. Running in the classroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviors will be corrected immediately with appropriate redirection and following the Behavior and Guidance policy. • No behavior form is required unless these behaviors become persistent, then a conference with the parent may be scheduled by the teacher or director.
Moderate Behavior Examples	Actions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hitting, biting, pushing, kicking, or choking another child with no injury occurring (with children 3 and older). 2. Actions or language that is sexual in nature. 3. Climbing on furniture/jumping off furniture. 4. Running out the door or away from adults. 5. Throwing blocks, toys, chairs, etc. 6. Pushing over furniture—such as chairs or shelves. <p><i>(Biting is a normal part of child development. Babies and toddlers bite for a variety of reasons, such as teething or exploring a new object with their mouth. As they begin to understand “cause & effect,” they might bite to get a reaction. Biting can also be a way for toddlers to get attention or express feelings. Biting occurs most often between the 1st & 2nd birthday. Biting that continues past 2.5-3 years of age is not age or developmentally appropriate.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any exhibition of moderate level of challenging behavior requires a behavior form (Behavior Form 1) to be completed by teacher and signed by director and parent. These forms will be kept in a notebook in the office. • Repeated moderate incidents will lead to a parent conference with the teacher and director. If needed, the Teacher/Director will begin the referral process (Forms 2/3). • When previous attempts have been followed and no progress has been made towards solving the problem, the child may be suspended from Opportunity School. • More than 3 incidents of moderate behaviors a week, will result in child not being able to attend without a parent conference and plan in place.

Severe Behavior Examples	
1.	Pushing, shoving, kicking, hitting, or biting a child that results in injury (bleeding, bruising).
2.	Intentional aggression toward any staff member, which results in injury (bleeding, bruising)
3.	Sexual language or actions that are overly aggressive in nature and put other children at risk for exposure to inappropriate actions.
Severe Behavior Actions	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any exhibition of severe level of challenging behavior requires a behavior form (Behavior Form 1) to be completed by teacher and signed by director and parent. These forms will be kept in a notebook in the office. • The parent will be notified by phone by the director and the child will be sent home for the day anytime the child exhibits uncontrollable behavior that cannot be modified by the childcare staff. • If called, the child must be picked up within 30 minutes. • Repeated severe incidents will lead to a parent conference with the teacher and director. If needed, the Teacher/Director will begin the referral process (Behavior Form 2/3). • Additional conferences may be scheduled if needed. When previous attempts have been followed and no progress has been made towards solving the problem, the child may be suspended from Opportunity School. Failure to follow through with the conference or behavior plan will result in suspension of the child, until plans can be put into place. • Anytime a parent is called and asked to pick up a child, the Program/ Intervention Specialist will be notified. • A change in program schedule (going to ½ days) or suspension from the childcare center may be required for unresolved incidents. These suspensions may vary from a few hours (the rest of the day) to an indefinite period. • Any interruption in services or suspension from the program will be a joint decision between the Campus Director and Program Quality and Intervention Specialist after consulting with the Executive Director.

*** If a child's behavior becomes threatening to themselves, other children, staff or teachers, the child will be removed from the classroom and may be removed from the program for a period of time. If all efforts to correct the child's pattern of behavior fail, permanent removal from the program may result.*

Nutrition and Meals

Both of Opportunity School’s campuses provide meal service including breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack therefore families will not need to bring food from home. No outside meals will be allowed in the center without a health plan from your child’s doctor. This ensures all meals are healthy and safe for other children who may have allergies. Parents may not require menu substitutions unless there is a documented allergy, and the parent has provided an allergy plan by the child’s doctor.

Mealtimes

Edwards Campus Mealtimes

Breakfast 7:30-9:00

Lunch 11:00-12:30

Snack 2:30-3:30

Central Campus Mealtimes

Breakfast 8:30-9:30

Lunch 11:30-12:30

Snack 2:30-3:00

Menus

Opportunity School’s food service staff cook homemade foods at our central kitchen at the Edwards Campus under the requirements of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) which is administered by the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA). Menus are created by our Food Service Manager in accordance with CACFP guidelines. Monthly menus are posted in classrooms and on the parent information board. Your child will receive healthy, balanced meals. We will also introduce your child to new foods and encourage them to try a variety of foods.

If your child does not like what is being served for breakfast, please be sure to feed your child at home. We are still required to serve all meals, whether or not the child consumes them.

If your child has a food allergy or cannot have certain foods, you will need to have a doctor’s note to alter their diet. If you have suggestions for alternate foods that your child enjoys, please share that information with our Campus Directors or Food Service Manager so that our food service team can explore adding those things to the menu.

In the operation of the CACFP program and all of Opportunity School’s operations, there is no discrimination because of race, sex, color, national origin, age, political belief, religion, or disability. If you believe you have been discriminated against and wish to file a complaint, there are complaint forms posted on the parent information area at both locations. Or you can call 1-866-632-9992. You can also write immediately to:

US Dept of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Director for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington D.C. 20250-9410

Texas Health and Human Services Commission
Director, Civil Rights Department
P.O. Box 149030, MC W-206 Austin, Texas
78714-9030

Note for Parents of Infants: Parents of infants ages 6 weeks to 11 months have the options to bring the child's prepared bottles or expressed breast milk, extra formula, and instructions for the child's feeding. All bottles should be marked with the child's name. Parents of infants also have the option of having the school provide formula under USDA guidelines, if they wish to have their child receive the standard formula offered by the school (all parents of infants will be given specific information and authorization forms regarding infant feeding options). The school encourages and supports breast-feeding for infants and provides a comfortable and appropriate space in the infant room for nursing mothers. If a mother is having problems with breast feeding the following resources are available:

Women Infant & Children (WIC Program)
411 S Austin St
Amarillo, TX 79106
(806) 371-1119

Snacks from Home

Throughout the year, parents may bring healthy snacks (fruit snacks, apples/slices, fruit cups, celery sticks, cucumbers, pickles, sugar snap peas, cheese & crackers, muffins, bagels, Chex Mix, pretzels, graham crackers, fruit popsicles, etc.) from home for classroom celebrations, birthdays, or other occasions. **Due to the high sugar content, cupcakes, cookies, desserts, donuts, or other high- sugar snacks are not allowed. Save those for home!** Food for sharing among the children must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods or from a restaurant.

You may also bring non-food treats or activities. Think about fun, non-food ways to celebrate including party hats, stickers, goodie bags to take home, a craft or activity the children can work on together.

Bus Policies

General Rules

Opportunity School's bus policy is to ensure the safety of our students, teachers, bus driver and bus riders during regular bus routes and during field trips. When riding the bus, there are some key things everyone should know:

- Children must wear seat belts when riding the bus.
- Children must follow the directions of the bus rider.
- Children may not bring food or toys on the bus.
- Opportunity School does not transport children to or from other childcare centers or schools.

Bus Routes

To ensure that classes start on time, parents must have their children ready when the bus arrives. If the bus arrives to pick up your child 3 days in a row with no one home and no one has called the school, the bus will no longer pick up your child. Communication is especially important. Parents must be at the return address or have a designated adult at the return address to receive the child upon return from school.

Drivers honk to pick up and return children. When the child is returned, the adult at home is asked to wave to the driver so that the driver will know the adult is there. If no one is home to receive the child, or the person at the house is not on the release list, you will receive a Pink Slip and your child will be returned to the school. If you receive 3 pink slips your child will no longer be able to ride the bus. If your child is returned to the school, there will be a charge of \$10.00 for every 15 minutes the child is in extended care.

Please allow fifteen minutes' variance either side of the "usual" pick-up and delivery time. The school will notify parents when there are major changes in the bus schedule.

There can be no daily changes at the regular pick-up or return addresses. If your child cannot be at the designated address, or if a designated adult cannot be at the address for the child's return, please find other transportation or keep your child out of school that day. The bus drivers and riders cannot make route changes. Please do not ask them.

Unless it is a permanent change, no route changes will be made. All permanent changes to the pickup and/or delivery address must be made in person at the school for security reasons. Parents or designated guardians must be at the designated pick up or drop off location. Children may be removed from the bus routes when families do not follow these rules.

About Opportunity School

History

Opportunity School was begun in 1969 by the First Presbyterian Church by a Sunday School class led by Elaine Edwards. Opportunity School's purpose is to provide developmentally appropriate experiences for young children ages 0-5 and caring family support, primarily for low-income families. The Grand Street Campus opened in 2000 to expand services in Northeast Amarillo. Gratitude House, in partnership with the Downtown Women's Center, was opened in 2016. The new Edwards Campus was opened in September 2021 and the Grand Street program was relocated to the new building.

Funding

Opportunity School is a 501c3 nonprofit organization started in 1969. Churches support Opportunity School, as do individuals, organizations, foundations, and businesses in this area. We also contract with Region 16 for Head Start and Early Head Start as well as Workforce Solutions Panhandle to provide high quality early childhood education for children of low-income families. All families are asked to pay fees for tuition based on a sliding scale. Student fees cover about 10-15% of the cost of the school.

Future Scholarships

Opportunity School's interest in its students does not end when the student graduates from Opportunity School. We hope you will let us know of your child's whereabouts, progress, success, and problems throughout his school career. There are some specific scholarship opportunities for Opportunity School students. These scholarships are made available by generous donors who believe in the mission of Opportunity School.

- Every year St. Andrews provides a scholarship to an Opportunity School student from each campus to attend their K-8 program. Children are nominated by staff recommendation to the Program Quality Specialist. Together with St. Andrews staff, the students are selected, and their families are invited to visit St. Andrews to see if it would be a fit for them.
- When considering college, Amarillo College maintains a scholarship fund for former Opportunity School students. Please keep your child informed of this opportunity so that they can answer this question on the Amarillo College Scholarship Application available online or from the financial aid office at Amarillo College.

Opportunity School's Educational Philosophy

All children deserve early childhood experiences that help them achieve their fullest potential in life. Opportunity School families come from varied backgrounds; however, we exist primarily to ensure that children who are at risk of delays or from low-income families receive high quality early education and care at affordable costs to help them become lifelong learners.

To ensure a child's future success, we must fully meet each child's developmental needs today. Opportunity School students enjoy an enriched learning environment that meets the needs of the whole child at every stage from birth to age five, until kindergarten age.

While attending to each child's individual needs, we hold the following principles as "cornerstones" of Opportunity School's Educational Philosophy:

- **Respect**: We respect each child and value their dignity, their ideas, and their work.
- **Excellence**: We believe every child wants to succeed. Through quality interactions with their teachers, children build high self-esteem and enjoy many opportunities for achievement.
- **Safety**: We believe all children and adults deserve a peaceful and safe place for compassionate care and education.
- **Parent/School Partnership**: We believe that children's education is most successful when parents and school staff work together in a climate of mutual support and respect.
- **Diversity**: We nurture children's understanding that they are part of a diverse community. As an educational team coming from diverse backgrounds, we work together to help children appreciate and become effective citizens of their community and their world.
- **Readiness to Explore**: We believe children function at their highest levels when they are both nurtured and stimulated - when they are reassured and challenged.
- **Individuality**: We allow children to progress at their own pace, and we carefully observe and build on the strengths and interests of each child to individualize instruction.
- **Lifelong Learning**: We value experiences that foster children's curiosity, love of learning, and responsibility. Teachers work diligently to establish classrooms where children's sense of wonder, capability and independence is nurtured.

Curriculum

Opportunity School is committed to providing high quality classroom instructions. All classroom instruction supports the ***Texas Infant, Toddler and Three-Year-Old Early Learning Guidelines*** and the ***Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines***.

Our teachers primarily use The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Preschool to create developmentally appropriate lesson plans and expectations for the students in their classroom. Depending on the teacher, these resources can be used in total or in combination with other materials as a toolbox of ideas that allow the teacher the creativity and flexibility they need to meet every child's individual needs.

Our curriculum and supporting enrichment materials cover the whole child's developmental needs including social, emotional, gross, and fine motor skills, emerging literacy and language skills, math and scientific discovery concepts, creativity and artistic expression, music, self-help, and cultural and community awareness.

Daily schedules include learning time in individually chosen work centers and, for preschoolers, small- and large-group time as well as music and outdoor play for all ages.

Monthly Learning Units

Family members may wish to follow along and help contribute ideas, experiences, or materials as we go through our lesson plans. Each month's lesson plans generally fall within monthly learning units or themes for the infant & toddler classrooms and the PreK classrooms. Here is a list of the monthly units for both. Please talk with your child's teacher or the Campus Director if you would like to be involved or ways your family might contribute to the various lessons or share your family's traditions or experiences during any of these studies.

Infant/Toddler Studies Include:	Dramatic Play Ideas/Expansions
All About Me/Shoes	Shoe Store
Bags	Travel/Transportation/Bus/ Airplane
Balls	Pumpkin Patch/Apple/Fall
Animals	Pet store/Zoo
Nursery Rhymes	
Clothes/Winter	Laundry Mat
Brushes	Hair/Nail Salon
Lights	Weather/Rainbows
Rocks	Bugs
Containers	Garden/Greenhouse
On The Go/ Seats	Car Wash
Water	Ocean/Fish

PreK Studies/Themes Include:	Dramatic Play Ideas	Field Trip Ideas/Guest Ideas
First 6 Weeks of Year	Kitchen Center	Am-Tech, Around the School, Little Bees Playhouse
Simple Machines	Home Depot/Woodworking Shop	Home Depot, Fiesta Foods, Donut stop, Rosas Café, Amazon
Trees	Apple Orchard/Farmers Market	Botanical Gardens, Coulter Gardens, Leaf raking, Pumpkin Patch
Clothing	Laundromat/Clothing Store	Laundromat, Goodwill, JoAnn's Fabrics
Music	Rock Band	Nursing home to sing, Tarpley's Music, School Choir
Exercise	Smoothie Shop/Gym	Auto Shop, Fire Station
Pets	Pet Store/Vet Clinic	Petco, Zoo, Fish Pros, Vet Clinic
Roads/Buildings	Buildings out of paper/tape	Little Bees, Town Square, Home Depot, Airport, ANB, Chase Building
Recycling/Boxes	Boxes	Recycling Bins, U-Haul Amazon, International Paper
Gardening/Insects	Entomology Lab Flower Shop Farmers Market	Edwards Garden
Water/Wheels/Balls	Sports Store	Bowling Alley Fire Department Fish Pros

Family Support

We believe that children's parents and immediate caregivers are their most influential teachers, and that all families appreciate support from caring, informed professionals. Parents, teachers, and administrators form strong partnerships that help parents feel confident in their parenting roles long after their children leave Opportunity School. Teachers visit students' homes and conduct monthly parent-visit sessions to support parents in their role as their child's foremost teacher.

Program Goals

- Young children will receive high quality early education and care to meet their needstoday.
- Children will become lifelong learners and successful citizens.
- Parents will become skillful supporters of their children's achievement.
- Opportunity School will encourage parents to assist in making decisions to improve theprogram.
- Opportunity School will provide continuous improvement and

innovation using information from surveys to plan professional development.

- Opportunity School will monitor program quality and improve operations and policies so that goals and objectives are met.
- Results will be shared in orientation, handbook, memos, newsletters, and home visits.

Assessment Plan for Monitoring Children’s Progress

A variety of formal and informal assessment methods are used to help teachers meet the needs and interests of individual children and those of the class. All lead teachers are trained in the use of our curriculum and assessment tools upon hire and with ongoing professional development.

The following are the purposes for which Opportunity School uses assessment:

- identifying children’s interests and needs,
- improving curriculum and adapting teaching practices and the environment,
- arranging for developmental or other screenings when indicated,
- adapting curriculum for groups of children and to individualize for each child,
- communicating with families and allowing them to ask questions in order to meet children’s learning needs at home and at school,

For information regarding confidentiality of screening and assessments, see the handbook section entitled “Confidentiality.”

Teachers for all our classrooms will gather information about each child’s progress. Data is collected in several ways including gathering information about a child’s interests from the parents or other family members. That is done informally through our home visits and “All About Me” activity that we ask families to complete.

A more formal assessment tool that we use for monitoring child progress is called Teaching Strategies Gold. It includes different ways to collect information that is helpful in guiding your child. They include:

- Observations Year-round
- Checklists Year-round
- Anecdotal Notes Year-round
- Work Sampling Year-round

In addition, teachers gather information about children’s and families’ interests, values, and cultures to make learning meaningful for you and your child. Teachers gather information through observations, conversations, and other questionnaires during Home Visits, and by asking families to share information such as family photos with the class throughout the year. Please don’t hesitate to ask your teacher any questions you may have during your monthly family visits.

At least four times per year, your child's teacher will share a written Progress Report with you to help you understand your child's strengths and areas of emerging skills. Every child develops at his or her own pace, and your teacher will work with you to develop learning goals suited to your child's developmental path. This is also a wonderful time to ask any questions you have about your child's learning and development.

Goals for Children

Through daily activities designed to help your child prepare for kindergarten and beyond, your child will:

Social and Emotional Development - Self Concept:

- Begin to develop and express awareness of self in terms of his/her specific abilities, characteristics, and preferences.
- Develop growing independence in a range of activities, routines, and tasks.
- Demonstrate growing confidence in a range of abilities and express pride in her/his accomplishments.

Social and Emotional Development - Self Control:

- Show progress in expressing feelings, needs and opinions in difficult situations and conflicts without harming themselves, others, or property.
- Develop growing understanding of how his/her actions affect others and begin to understand and accept the consequences of her/his actions.
- Demonstrate increasing ability to follow rules and routines and use materials purposefully, safely, and respectfully.

Social and Emotional Development - Social Relationships:

- Demonstrate increasing comfort in talking with and accepting guidance and instructions from a range of familiar adults.
- Show progress in developing friendships with peers.
- Progress in responding sympathetically to peers who are in need, upset, hurt, or angry; and in expressing empathy or caring for others.

Approaches to Learning - Initiative and Curiosity:

- Participate in an increasing variety of new tasks and activities.
- Develop increased ability to make independent choices.
- Approach tasks and activities with increased flexibility, imagination, and inventiveness.
- Demonstrate an increasing eagerness to question and explore ideas independently or with the support of peers or teachers.

Approaches to Learning - Reflection and Recollection:

- Develop the ability to recall and reflect on his/her own activities; begin to assemble activities into meaningful experiences.

Science - Reasoning and Problem-solving:

- Increase ability to classify order, sort and compare objects, events, and experiences.
- Construct knowledge of the world through testing ideas, reasoning, and discussing relationships among objects, people, and events.

- Gain knowledge of the physical world, understanding of cause-and-effect.

Science – Time:

- Demonstrate increased awareness of rates of movement and time intervals, and be able to anticipate, remember and describe sequences of events.
- Gain an understanding of common time units including weekdays and months.

Early Math - Number Concepts:

- Show progress in his/her understanding of quantity including “more, fewer, and same amount,” number representations, and one-to-one correspondence.
- Gain an understanding of measurement and awareness of physical dimensions of objects

Early Math - Patterns, Geometry and Spatial Relations:

- Demonstrate increased ability to identify and describe shapes and patterns, to manipulate the shape of objects, and to describe positions and directions of objects in space.

Language - Communication Skills:

- Show progress in using spoken language and increased vocabulary to effectively communicate ideas, thoughts, feelings, and desires.
- Demonstrate increased attentiveness to and comprehension of spoken language including stories, songs, rhymes, instructions, and social conversations.

Language - Early Literacy:

- Gain an increasing appreciation of the many uses for printed language.
- Become familiar with basic written forms including letters, names, and words.
- Increase his/her enjoyment of reading for information and personal satisfaction in many forms including shared group reading, one-on-one reading with a teacher, reading to oneself and peer-to-peer reading.
- Demonstrate an increased interest in communicating through writing and drawing.
- Build proficiency in understanding the relationship between language in its written form and in its spoken form.

Creative Expression/Arts Appreciation - Dramatic Play:

- Participate in a variety of dramatic play activities that allow them to use expressive language, explore feelings, and apply skills across domains and foster imagination.

Creative Expression/Arts Appreciation - Music, Dance and Visual Representation:

- Gain enjoyment and confidence in creating and responding to music through multiple means including his/her own voice, musical instruments, dance and rhythmic movements and finger plays and gestures.
- Gain competency and enjoyment in creating visual representations through a multitude of open-ended media including paint, crayons, markers, play dough, clay, collage materials and other two- and three-dimensional media.

Health and Safety - Personal Responsibility:

- Gain knowledge about the care of his/her body and what is needed to maintain personal health and fitness.
- Become competent and independent in the management of her/his body and personal effects including clothing and other personal belongings.

Physical Development - Physical Fitness and Awareness:

- Gain enjoyment and mastery in a variety of large motor skills including running, throwing, jumping, balancing, riding, climbing, and moving fast and slow,
- Demonstrate increasing control and competence in fine motor skills including cutting, drawing, writing, gripping, and lacing, stacking, and nesting items.

Social Studies - Our Community:

- Build an understanding of the people, characteristics, cultures, and traditions of the surrounding community, including the people who serve the community.
- Gain awareness and respect for varied cultures found in our local community and the world.

Goals for Parents and Families

Through Home Visits and Parent Education Activities, Parents will:

- Better understand the importance of reading with young children, experience positive interactions while reading with children and enjoying a related activity and develop skills in evaluating books that are appropriate for and interesting to their children.
- Better understand their child's cognitive, physical, emotional, and social developmental needs, and gain increased skills in supporting their child's healthy development across all domains.
- Build a strong, mutually satisfying relationship between the school and home.
- Use common materials found around the home for stimulating their children's learning and form closer bonds with their children through.

Family Code of Conduct

Opportunity School strives to provide a consistent and peaceful learning environment for all children and families.

Our board, administrators, teachers and staff are responsible to help create an optimal learning environment and we need the help and commitment of families as well.

In addition to the policies outlined in the family handbook, we require all families to abide by the following Code of Conduct. Failure to adhere to the school policies, demonstrate and unwillingness to work in a collaborative way to support children's needs or disrupting a peaceful school environment, by you or your designees on the pickup list, will be grounds for your child to lose their spot at Opportunity School.

- **Cursing/Swearing** - Parents and visitors must understand young children are present in our building. Some adult language is not appropriate for young children and some adults. Opportunity School prohibits offensive words on our premises, this including but not limited to, swearing or cursing. Please also be mindful of music that may be heard from your vehicle when in our parking lot.
- **Disputes between family members** – Family members should not bring their family disputes into our building or onto our campuses. Opportunity School will not engage in disputes between family members and will not allow those disputes to occur on the school premises.
- **Threats and Confrontations** - From time to time, families may have questions about their child's care and education. Opportunity School encourages open communication and discussion. We expect parents to handle disagreements in a calm and respectful manner. Threats of any kind or threatening behavior towards staff, children, or other parents will not be tolerated. We have the right to terminate care in the event of disruptive behavior from any parent, guardian or visitor. In order to maintain safety, all threats will be taken seriously. In addition, all threats will be reported to the appropriate authorities and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.
- **Discipline and Guidance** – Opportunity School must follow particular rules on discipline and guidance as outlined in the Texas Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers. All adults, including parents, must follow these rules while on our property. Regardless of a parent's personal belief on corporal punishment, failure to follow our discipline and guidance rules will lead to immediate termination of care. Please refer to our policy on discipline and guidance for further explanation of our expectations.

- **Use of Tobacco Products** - Per the Texas Department of Health and Human Services, the use of tobacco products is strictly prohibited on our premises. This includes, but is not limited to, cigarettes, vapor devices and chewing tobacco.
- **Safety Practices** – Opportunity School has policies and procedures in place to maintain a safe environment for all children, staff and parents. Safety practices must be followed by all individuals on our premises. Violation of our safety policies will lead to immediate dismissal from our program. We ask that parents be mindful of safety practices at all times. This includes, but not limited to, allowing children to enter or exit the building unsupervised, allowing children to run in the hallways, opening the secured front door for individuals, and being mindful of personal belongings brought into the center during drop off and pick up time.
- **Appropriate Dress** - Parents must be mindful of appropriate dress attire when on our premises. Young children and families have different values on what is inappropriate or offensive. We want all families and visitors to feel comfortable when on our premises. Adults wearing offensive or inappropriate clothing, or lacking clothing will be asked to leave the property until appropriately dressed.
- **Violation of Confidentiality** – Opportunity School takes the responsibility of maintaining the confidentiality of all persons associated with our school very seriously. Parents need to be aware of the confidentiality of all children, families and employees, not just their own. Any parent who shares any information considered to be confidential, pressures employees or other parents for information, which is not necessary for them to know, will be considered a violation of the Confidentiality Policy and may be dismissed from the program.

Child / Children's Names: _____
(Please Print)

Parent or Enrolling family member's Name: _____
(Please Print)

Date: _____

Acknowledgements

Child / Children's Names: _____
(Please Print)

Parent's or Enrolling family member's Name: _____
(Please Print)

Family Handbook & Parent Code of Conduct

I _____ acknowledge that I have received and discussed with the Director or Assistant Director, the Family Handbook and Code of Conduct for Opportunity School.

I also acknowledge that it's my responsibility to share relevant information from the Family Handbook as needed with other family members on the pickup list.

If I have any questions about the policies or procedures, I will contact the Campus Director.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Behavior and Guidance Policy

I _____ have read and understand the Behavior and Guidance Policy.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Speech & Hearing

I give permission for my child _____ to be evaluated for speech, hearing, and vision. I understand that I will be informed as to any abnormal findings, and appropriate measures to correct the findings.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Health Policy

I, _____, have read and agree to abide by Opportunity School's health policy.

Signature _____ Date _____

Arrival and Departure Policy

I have read and understand the Arrival and Departure Policy. I further understand that my child should be dropped off by 9:00AM and picked up by 5:45PM or late fees will be added to my account.

Signature _____ Date _____

Withdrawal Policy

I, _____, have read and understand the Withdrawal Policy and provide a notice of withdrawal in writing. I understand that I'm responsible for any balances due when I leave. I will provide a checking account or credit card on file to cover any fees or unpaid tuition left upon departure. I understand if a family is asked to leave all paid tuition is non-refundable.

Signature _____ Date _____