

Building Rainbows Day School

A Terrific Place for Children to Grow and Play!

Parent Handbook

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Table of Contents

Welcome to Building Rainbows Day School!	3
About Our Staff	3
Operational Policies and Procedures	4
Hours of Operation	4
Registration and Enrollment	4
Tuition and Fees Policies	4
Tuition and Fees	4
Payment methods and procedures	5
Returned Checks	5
Holidays	5
Vacation Credit Policy	6
Withdrawal Policy	6
Procedure for Arrival and Release of Children	6
Drop Off and Pick Up	6
Parking Lot Safety	7
Late Pick-Up of Child	7
Emergency Closings	7
Transportation To and From Area Schools	8
Health and Medical Records	8
Medical Records	8
Health Policies	8
Medication Policies	9
Health Alerts	10
Accidents, Bumps, and Bruises	10
Program Policies	10
Discipline	10
Communication	11
Curriculum	11
Rest Time	12
Potty Training	12
Toys From Home	12
Biting	13
What to Wear	13
Babysitting Requests	13
Child Custody Issues	13
Developmental Milestones	14
Discrimination Policy	14
Reporting Abuse and Neglect	14
Meals and Snacks	15
Breakfast	15
Lunch	15
Snacks	16
Special Events	16
Birthday Celebrations	16
Holiday Parties	17

Field Trips	17
School Agers	17
School Agers and Discipline	17
Summer Program	18
Licensing Information	18
Pest Control	18
Updates/Changes in Policies and Procedures	19
Important Telephone Numbers and Resources	19

Welcome to Building Rainbows Day School!

Welcome to Building Rainbows! Since 1982, Building Rainbows has provided a loving, nurturing, and creative environment for children. Our beginnings go back to more than 26 years ago when a small church provided child care for young children in the neighborhood. When the church lost its funding and the school was going to close, Donna Frederick bought the sanctuary and the preschool. Calling up friends that had taught in the school district and were now staying at home with their young children, Donna began plans for a preschool where children could come to play and learn through truly hands-on activities. Building Rainbows Day School officially opened in November of 1982 with 14 children.

Over the next 24 years, more and more families brought their children to Building Rainbows. Playground equipment was added and a separate office building was built, but the philosophy remained the same. Our ties within the community strengthened as our reputation for providing excellent early childhood care grew. A new era began when parents who had once been preschoolers here brought their little ones to play and learn at Building Rainbows.

In January of 2007, Donna Frederick sold Building Rainbows to Steve Sandweiss and she continued in the role of Director until January of 2008. Steve has continued to uphold the positive traditions of Building Rainbows as a quality preschool for young children. It is still our belief that learning should be fun and that children learn best when provided with hands-on learning experiences.

This Parent Handbook has been written to describe our program, policies, and the practical details that go into making each school day as happy and successful as possible. Please read it and keep it for reference. Many of the guidelines have been set for us by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services; other guidelines have been established because we have learned from experience what works, and what does not work, in our environment.

If at any time you have a question or concern, please immediately contact our Director, Angela Tamez.

About Our Staff

We carefully select our staff at Building Rainbows. We know that the strength of our program is the experience, expertise, and dedication of our faculty. We support them with training, resources, and the freedom to create a unique learning environment. The Small Building hallway has a current list of staff names and positions.

We are fortunate because we play an important role in helping America's children grow strong. Our work requires us to be good managers, instructors, facilitators, and problem solvers.

All of our staff is First Aid/CPR certified, receive Pre-Service Training, and accrue a minimum of 15 hours of professional development yearly.

We are:

- FAST - when a child needs help or a sink overflows
- FRIENDLY - and cheerful while multi-tasking
- FLEXIBLE - and enthusiastic when embracing new challenges
- FOCUSED - when reading and listening
- FUN - when happily sharing giggles or searching for bugs

We often present ourselves to the world covered with paint, stickers, and ketchup; and, in a crowd, we can be heard reminding our friends to "go potty and wash your hands". We play as we tie shoes, wipe faces, hold

hands, and sing. We listen to the children and feel privileged to get to view the world through their eyes. Time and time again we are touched by their hearts. We are aware of the trust you have placed in us. Thank you for choosing our school!

Operational Policies and Procedures

HOURS OF OPERATION

Building Rainbows is open from 6:00am to 6:30pm Monday through Friday. We provide preschool and child care services for children 14 months - 5th grade. We are open year-round and our official school year calendar begins the same as Cy-Fair Independent School District (CFISD).

REGISTRATION AND ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

According to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, the following documents are required at the time of enrollment:

- **Application** - contains parent contact information, emergency contact information, emergency medical authorization, and health information
- **Medical Form/Shot Record** - physician's statement that your child is free from contagious or communicable disease and is able to participate in a preschool program; a shot record is also required by the health department (*children attending elementary school should have their current immunization record on file at the school - we just require the name and telephone number of your child's elementary school*)
- **Discipline Policy** - provides parents and staff with the guidelines set by the State of Texas as to what is and is not acceptable regarding discipline and guidance

Application and **Medical Forms** will need to be updated *yearly* so that everything is current and in compliance with state requirements.

In addition to this information, we also require parents to fill out a **Family Information Sheet** - this information helps to give your child's teacher a better perspective of your child and how to best meet his/her needs.

Please remember to keep us updated if there are changes in your telephone numbers, employer, addresses, emergency information, other contact information, or when shot records are updated.

Tuition and Fee Policies

TUITION AND FEES

When you enroll your child, you are contracting with us for a space in our program. We offer a limited number of spaces in each classroom to consistently maintain a low child/staff ratio. We depend entirely on the fees we charge to maintain our school - we receive no subsidies. Please notify Angela Tamez or Steve Sandweiss in a timely manner if you anticipate a change in your need for child care services.

Tuition is billed weekly every Monday based on your child's age as of September 1st and the program in which your child is enrolled. The tuition rate will remain the same throughout the school year. **Full tuition is due regardless absences, illness, vacations, or holidays.**

FEEES:

- **Registration Fee** - annual fee due at time of enrollment/re-enrollment
- **Supply Fee** - annual fee used toward classroom/playground materials and supplies
 - Registration and Supply Fees will be combined and pro-rated for children enrolling in our summer program.
- **Sunscreen/Insect Repellent** - we use Rocky Mountain Sunscreen for Kids and Off Family Care Insect Repellent for the children - a minimal fee is charged for Fall, Spring, and Summer use - *if you do not want your child to use these products, please inform Angela Tamez and arrange to supply your own.*

Tuition is due in advance on Monday of each week. A late charge of \$5.00/day will accrue to tuition that is not paid in a timely manner. Once enrolled, tuition is due regardless of absences or holiday. A calendar showing the due dates for tuition is part of your enrollment packet and is available on our website.

An account that is two weeks overdue may result in immediate termination of enrollment. An account that becomes past due may also be subject to a 1.5%/month charge on any balance that is outstanding. In the event your account is sent to collections, or referred to Small Claims Court, you will be responsible for the balance of your account and any reasonable collection and legal fees associated with the collection of your account.

PAYMENT METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Building Rainbows accepts Checks, Money Orders, and Cash for payment of tuition and fees. We also accept weekly or monthly automatic bank/credit card drafts through Tuition Express - please see Angela Tamez or Steve Sandweiss for more information.

Cash Payments - *please do not leave cash tuition payments with anyone at our school without getting a receipt for your payment.* Please deliver cash payments directly to the person in charge in the office - Steve Sandweiss, Angela Tamez, or Veronica Gonzales can help you with this transaction.

A W - 10 and statement will be provided for you in January of the New Year for your use in filing your tax return and claiming your child care tax credit.

RETURNED CHECKS

Returned checks will incur a charge of \$25.00. If this happens twice, you may be asked to pay in cash or by money order.

HOLIDAYS

Building Rainbows is closed in observance of the following holidays:

- New Year's Eve
- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- July 4th (the day observed by the Federal Government if it falls on a weekend)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- The Friday after Thanksgiving

- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

Parents are required to pay the normal tuition during the week in which the above holidays fall.

VACATION CREDIT POLICY

After one completed school year of enrollment, children enrolled in our 52 week program are entitled to a one week vacation credit. A credit equal to your child's weekly tuition will be applied to your ledger during the last week of our school year.

EXTENDED LEAVE OF ABSENCE

We recognize that there are extenuating circumstances that may involve a long-term absence from our program (i.e. families that may take off a month during the summer). In these rare instances, we do our best to work with the family. Please speak with Angela or Steve immediately in the event that you anticipate such a circumstance.

WITHDRAWAL FROM OUR PROGRAM

By signing your child's application, you agree to give us two weeks notice, in writing, of permanent withdrawal from Building Rainbows' program. **If adequate notice is not given, you will be expected to pay two weeks tuition.**

Procedures for Arrival and Release of Children

DROP OFF AND PICK UP

Children must be brought into the building and left in the care of our staff. To ensure safety, at no time is a child (including School Ageds) to be dropped off in the breezeway or driveway.

A hint for parents of little ones: "The shorter the goodbye, the shorter the cry." We know from experience that after your child has been here a few times, the morning "fuss" will be less, if any at all. Children have a unique capacity to make new friends quickly. If you are concerned, please feel free to watch your child's adjustment on the monitor in our office.

As much as we welcome parent involvement in our program, morning drop-offs and afternoon pick-ups are not a good time for parents to make lengthy inquiries into their child's day. The teachers must keep their eyes and ears focused on the children at all times. Our teachers are instructed to keep conversations brief during the "hello" and "goodbye" part of the day with parents and children. If you have any questions or concerns, please send in a note in your child's lunch kit or call us at the school and we will make sure your child's teacher is given an opportunity to return your call.

Our preschool classes begin their morning routines by 8:30am. Routines are very important for young children and the presence of another person (familiar or unfamiliar) entering the classrooms can disrupt an already established schedule. Please aim to have your child arrive by 8:30am. This will ensure a positive start to their daily needs (i.e. structure, routine, and learning experiences).

If you are arriving after 9:00am, please bring your child to the office and we will make sure he/she gets to their classroom.

The State of Texas requires that **parents sign their child in each morning and out in the afternoon**. If someone other than you will be picking up your child, please notify us in writing. **Children will not be released to anyone under the age of 18 - please take this into consideration when sending an older sibling to pick up your child.** Tell the person picking up your child to come to the office, be prepared to show picture identification, and to sign your child on the daily sheet. No child will be released to an unauthorized person.

Any person picking up a child who is deemed to be in an impaired condition (ill or under the influence of drugs, strong medication, or alcohol) will be requested to find alternative transportation. If alternative transportation cannot be agreed upon, assistance will be requested from the local police.

PARKING LOT SAFETY

Our parking area can be a busy place at certain times of the day. Please help us to provide a safe environment. We offer the following tips and ask for your cooperation:

- Please **drive slowly** when on school property - *children and parents are dropping off/picking up and we have a small parking lot that can get busy*
- Please be courteous when using the breezeway for dropping off/picking up - we would like to prevent "traffic" build-up - park in the parking lot if you are worried about getting blocked in
- Turn off your car when stopped in the breezeway or driveway to prevent the build-up of exhaust
- Hold your child's hand when walking in the parking lot
- Please do not allow children to exit the playground over the rope barriers: they know to walk up by along the ropes towards the breezeway to greet you
- Lock your car when it is parked in our lot - child care centers can be targets for thieves looking for a place to steal handbags and wallets

Immediately report anyone or anything that seems to be out of place or not familiar to you. Trust your intuition.

LATE PICK-UP OF CHILD

Our school closes at 6:30pm. If an emergency arises, inclement weather, impossible traffic conditions, please call our school as soon as you realize you will be running late. Leave a message on call notes if we are away from the phone. A Building Rainbows staff member will stay at the school with your child until you can arrive. We understand that there are times when late pick-up is unavoidable. We do not want any of our families to take unnecessary risks on the road.

If we have not been notified and/or if late pick-up happens regularly, a late fee will be charged in the amount of \$2 for every minute after 6:30pm.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

If CFISD calls for an emergency closing of schools, Building Rainbows will be closed. Closings are primarily due to inclement weather conditions, and they are announced on television and radio stations.

In the event of:

- **CFISD emergency mid-day closing** - we will follow school district instructions, make our usual pick-ups at the area elementary schools, contact you, and remain at Building Rainbows until all children are safely with their parents
- **Evacuation of our facility** - we will evaluate our circumstances and seek shelter at either Christ the Redeemer Catholic Church on Huffmeister Road or at Lamkin Elementary on Telge

- A prolonged power outage - our water operates through a well and without power we do not have long-term access to water since our tank holds a limited amount of water once the power goes out - we will make the decision to close and contact parents as soon as possible to pick-up their child

TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM AREA SCHOOLS

Our school currently provides transportation to several of the area elementary schools. It is your responsibility to notify the elementary school if your child will be transported by Building Rainbows.

*Please notify us by 2:00pm if we will **NOT** need to pick up your child (i.e. sick and thus absent from school, car rider, bus rider, doctor appointment, etc.)*

In accordance with state law, all children under the age of 8 or less than 4' 9" must wear seat belts and use a booster seat at all times while being transported on our vans. All other children must use a seat belt at all times.

We reserve the right to refuse to transport any child who consistently will not cooperate and control his/her behavior while on our school vans.

Health and Medical Policies

MEDICAL RECORDS

All children must have immunization records on file and up to date, at the time of enrollment. A statement from your physician must be on file verifying that your child is in good health and able to take active part in our program. ***All records need to be updated annually.***

As a courtesy, when you take your child for his/her yearly exam, please bring a copy of your child's updated immunizations to the office.

Children who are four years old must be screened for vision and hearing. This may be done by your doctor or by a Certified Screener at Building Rainbows. The results of the screening are made a part of your child's file.

HEALTH POLICIES

Keeping our children healthy is one of the biggest challenges in group care. We strive to maintain the highest standards of cleanliness. Proper hand washing procedures will be followed by staff and taught to the children. Toys, tables, chairs, cabinets are disinfected regularly. With that in mind, even our very best efforts cannot completely dispel all germs.

To prevent the spread of disease, germs, and viruses we must strictly enforce the standards regarding the exclusion of ill children:

- The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in child-care center activities including outdoor play;
- The illness results in a greater need for care than caregivers can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children in care;
- The child has one or more of the following, unless medical evaluation by a health-care professional indicates that you can include the child in the child care center's activities:

- Oral temperature of 100.0 degrees or greater, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness
- Rectal temperature of 101.0 degrees or greater, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness
- Armpit temperature of 99.0 degrees or greater, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness
- Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, two or more vomiting episodes in 24 hours, rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, behavior changes, or other signs that the child may be severely ill;
- A health-care professional has diagnosed the child with a communicable disease, and the child does not have medical documentation to indicate that the child is no longer contagious

Signs that your child may not be ready to participate in normal classroom routines:

- Excessive, persistent coughing that inhibits a good night's rest
- Runny nose with thick discolored mucus that has not gotten better over the course of several days
- Irritable and fussy when child is normally happy and busy
- Lethargic and sleeping more than usual
- Difficulty breathing
- Glazed or "crusty" eyes
- Not eating or sleeping well

If your child is exhibiting any combination of the above, you will be asked to keep your child at home until the symptoms are better or a doctor releases your child to participate fully in our program.

In general, children must be **free of fever for 24 hours** before returning to school without the use of fever-reducing agents. This includes the use of Tylenol, Advil, or other such medications to reduce fever.

Exception: Children who exhibit flu-like symptoms must be fever free of symptoms for 48 hours without the use of fever-reducing agents.

MEDICATION PROCEDURES

Medication is anything taken for the purpose of alleviating present symptoms in a person (i.e. prescribed antibiotics, cough and cold medicine, pain reliever for teething, ointments for chapped/chafed skin). ***Pain relievers cannot be signed in for the purpose of reducing a fever. Vitamins or oral supplements or any kind are not considered "medication" and should be administered from home.***

Medication will only be administered to children if:

- Parents sign an authorization to administer medication, including time/dosage
- Dosage is in accordance with label directions - ***over the counter (OTC) medication must be labeled for your child's age group or come with a doctor's note that includes dosage for it to be administered to your child***
- Medication is in an original container and labeled with the child's full name and date
- Medication has a valid expiration date

Medicine should be administered from home as much as possible (i.e. medicine that needs to be administered three times per day should have the morning and evening doses at home whenever possible).

All medication must be left in the designated tray in the kitchen - never in a classroom or in a child's backpack/lunch kit. When medication is no longer being signed in at school, medication must be taken home.

If your child has a periodic or recurring medical problem, such as headaches, asthma attacks, or allergic reactions, the parent of the child's health care professional may sign a medical authorization allowing us to administer the medication when symptoms occur for up to a six-month period. The authorization should include information on symptoms to watch for. We will attempt to contact you immediately if symptoms appear. If you cannot be reached, we will administer the medication and document our action in your child's record.

An authorization form can be requested in the office for medication that is taken on a regular basis. This medication can remain at Building Rainbows and must be in its original container.

HEALTH ALERTS

We will regularly post "health alerts" for our families. The purpose of the alert will be to make you aware of any viruses, symptoms of illness, or minor ailments that are posing a challenge for our children.

When we are notified that a child enrolled in our school, or an employee, has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the Department of Public Health. Authorities may require further information, testing, or preventative measures. We will immediately notify all families about exposure so that they can receive preventative treatment if available.

ACCIDENTS, BUMPS, AND BRUISES

Building Rainbows is committed to employing well-trained personnel. Our staff receives training in CPR and First Aid. Our goal, of course, is to minimally practice these skills and to ensure a safe environment for the children.

If a child receives an injury while in our care (that requires more than an ice pack, band-aid, or TLC), you will be called. Your child's teacher will put a note in your child's lunch kit if a minor bump or bruise is received or a minor injury is inflicted by another child while they are playing.

In the event of an emergency situation, we will contact you and/or call 911 and follow the appropriate procedures. The safety and well-being of your child is our first priority. We will not hesitate to take any action that will protect your child. We are also required to complete an Incident Report and keep it on file if any injury requires medical attention by a health care professional.

Program Policies

DISCIPLINE

We believe that discipline and guidance should be consistent and based on an understanding of individual needs and development. Positive verbal guidance promotes self-discipline and acceptable behavior. Children will be helped to understand boundaries and why they are important.

All children will be expected to treat adults and children with respect at all times. We help even our youngest ones learn the ins and outs of social settings.

Positive guidance techniques used at Building Rainbows include, but are not limited to:

- Recognizing and encouraging appropriate behaviors
- Developing reasonable and clear guidelines and expectations for each group of children
- Explaining the consequences of inappropriate behaviors
- Redirecting children into positive behaviors

- Modeling pro-social behavior
- Enforcing limits and rules consistently and fairly
- Helping children to identify and express feelings in an acceptable manner

Please discuss with your child's teacher or Angela specific guidance techniques that work best with your child. Keep us informed of any changes at home which you feel will affect your child's behavior while in our care.

If a child consistently:

- Exhibits violent behavior - hitting, kicking, throwing things
- Uses inappropriate and ugly language or name calling
- Argues constantly, teases, and provokes others
- Bullies or threatens other children/adults or is intentionally hurtful
- Touches others and invades other children's space
- Refuses to be respectful of peers and teachers
- Refuses to follow safety guidelines on the van, on field trips, or when using play equipment

We will conference with the child, when appropriate, and communicate our concerns to you as his/her parent(s). We will make every effort to guide and teach appropriate behavior. If we are unable remedy the situation, you will be asked to find a more suitable program for your child.

If a child acts out in a severely, uncontrollable way that is potentially harmful to themselves, other children/staff, or property, parents will be notified immediately to pick up their child.

COMMUNICATION

We strive to keep the lines of communication open with our families. If you ever have a question or concern, please feel free to contact either your child's morning teacher or one of us in the office. Our opening staff and afternoon teachers have been instructed to direct parent concerns to either the child's morning teacher or Angela and Veronica.

The three best ways to communicate with the office staff are:

- Telephone - (281) 890-2498
- E-mail - building.rainbows@sbcglobal.net
- Write a note and leave it on Angela's desk

Your child's lunch kit provides the best vehicle for sending and receiving messages and notes from your child's teacher. A dry erase "Communication Board" is also available in each building for you to leave notes of a general nature (i.e. change of transportation, pick up early, bringing lunch).

CURRICULUM

Play is the "work" of childhood - learning to play with others is a life skill that provides a lifetime benefit. Whether negotiating a turn at the swing or creating a scenario to act out in one of the centers, the children are constantly stretching their thinking skills and our teachers are there to gently guide and structure their day.

At Building Rainbows our teachers follow our own Scope and Sequence that is specially geared for each particular age group. The Scope and Sequence follows the child's developmental path through language, art, fine/gross motor skills, social skills, math awareness, and discovery science. Our daily classroom explorations support the child's experiences in these areas through music, cooking, dramatic play, games, sensory, and thematic activities.

A copy of the Scope and Sequence is available in the office at the parent's request.

REST TIME

Rest time is important for a child's health and well-being. Children need this time to re-energize and to develop self-control. Even if your child does not sleep, he/she is expected to lie quietly and rest during this time.

Licensing requires that a *Rest Time* be set aside daily for *ALL* children, including School Aged. For those children that are enrolled in our Toddler, Preschool, and Pre-k classes, Nap Time occurs after lunch as a normal part of the daily routine. For our School Aged that are here during holidays and summer, a "Quiet Time" occurs after lunch as a normal part of the daily routine unless there is a field trip scheduled for that time. We have individual sleep mats and mat covers for the Toddler, Preschool, and Pre-K classes. The mat covers are laundered on a regular basis. Your child may bring a **small travel-sized pillow** and blanket for naptime. *We have limited storage space and cannot accommodate full-sized pillows, bulky blankets, or sleep rolls/sleeping bags.*

POTTY TRAINING

Learning to control one's bodily functions is a childhood rite of passage and it is of no small concern to all adults in a child's life at home and at school. The most important factor in making this experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. There are different views on the when and how in teaching a child to use the toilet. Research indicates that young children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, mentally, and emotionally ready. Most pediatricians say that children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles.

Most positive toilet learning will occur only after children show signs of physical control (or awareness) of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process.

We encourage you to allow your child to remain in diapers until they have mastered using the toilet correctly. Moving prematurely to Pull-Ups seems to prolong the process and is more expensive to you. Pull-Ups also cause sanitary concerns because they are less absorbent than diapers.

Parents of children who are in diapers/Pull-Ups are required to supply their own diapers, Pull-Ups, and diaper lotions/ointments clearly labeled with your child's name. Building Rainbows does supply baby wipes that are unscented and alcohol-free. You may supply your own baby wipes labeled with your child's name.

TOYS FROM HOME

Please have your children leave their toys at home (examples: personal electronic equipment, trading cards, art supplies, dolls, action figures, cars, etc). Children tend to be very single-minded when any toy awaits them in their backpack/tote tray. They constantly negotiate their behavior based on what they want to do and their terms for doing it. By leaving these items at home, struggles over lost, stolen, or desired items are reduced and avoid becoming an issue at school. *Building Rainbows does not accept responsibility for lost or stolen items.*

BITING

Biting is a normal stage of development commonly seen in infants, toddlers, and sometimes even preschoolers. When it happens, it's scary, frustrating, and very stressful for everyone involved. It is a natural phenomenon and not something to blame on children, families, or teachers.

When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten, help the other child learn other acceptable behavior, and examine our program to maintain an environment that is consistent with children's needs. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting but on effective techniques that address the specific reason for biting. Delayed punishment at home will be not be understood by the child.

Occurrence reports will be written for the children involved. We will work together with the both families to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change. We will make every effort to modify the behavior quickly. Resources are available for parents in our office to learn more about this stage of development. Angela Tamez will be available in the office to answer any questions or concerns.

WHAT TO WEAR

Children should dress comfortably, simply, and suitably for the weather. Clothing is appropriate if it is comfortable for the child and if he/she can navigate it simply when using the bathroom. For boys and girls, two-piece outfits work best (tights, belts, and overalls pose a challenge in the bathroom for children).

All children at Building Rainbows are encouraged to wear tennis- type shoes. Shoes become a safety issue when children are running and playing outside. Open-toed shoes become a problem because they catch dirt, mulch, or rocks when playing outside. **Flip-flops and Crocs are not okay and are for at home or at the beach.** They do not protect the foot nor do they have traction when the children are playing on the play equipment.

Girls need to be appropriately dressed - please be sure shirts/pants/shorts fit. Skirts and shorts need to reach mid-thigh or longer - no mini skirts or "short" shorts. Shirts that reveal midriffs are not appropriate attire.

Boys must wear shirts at all times together with proper shorts/pants.

BABYSITTING REQUESTS

In an effort to maintain the professional status of our teachers and staff and to prevent any potential conflict of interest, babysitting by our teachers and staff is strongly discouraged.

CHILD CUSTODY ISSUES

It is our intent to meet the needs of children especially when parents are experiencing a difficult situation such as illness, divorce, separation, remarriage, or care of extended family. Sharing information about such situations may be helpful to us in caring for you child. Information you share will be held in confidence.

We cannot legally restrict non-custodial parents from visiting the child, reviewing the child's records, or picking up a child unless we have proper court documentation in your child's file. In case of conflicts, the proper authorities will be contacted.

DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

Early childhood is one of the most exciting times in child development. Little ones are learning to walk, talk, and begin to develop their own little sense of humor. Everyday can be the biggest adventure in the life of a child. Sometimes during these milestones, however, a child may appear to struggle through a stage of development. A little bit of a delay normally works itself out as the child matures but when little to no improvement occurs as the child continues to grow, parents can seek help through different avenues in order to determine if their child may qualify for special services.

Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) supports families of infants and toddlers from birth through 36 months. ECI can be contacted to set up a free screening to see if your child is on target for their age of development. If a child qualifies for services based upon the screening results, ECI will continue to work with the family and school to help the child's development. For more information please visit www.dars.state.tx.us/ecis.

Once a child is beyond 36 months, Cy-Fair ISD can be contacted for concerns relating to physical, speech, emotional, or academic needs which may interfere with a child's ability to learn. Parents who would like to learn more about the referral process can call 281-897-6400 at the Special Education Department.

We want every child to have that positive experience that comes from feeling successful. If we notice a child is having difficulties in certain areas of development that contribute to his/her ability to feel successful, we will communicate with parents regarding our concerns and offer information in regards to ECI or Cy-Fair's Special Education Department.

DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Building Rainbows does not discriminate against any child based on the child's race, color, national origin, sex, religion, or disabilities. All children will be accepted on a probationary basis. Our staff will work with you: together we will evaluate the level of your child's needs in our environment and determine if our program is able to meet your child's needs.

According to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and the Americans with Disabilities Act, we are required to make a case-by-case assessment of what the child with the disability requires to be fully integrated into the child-care program and then assess whether reasonable accommodations can be made to allow this to happen.

All basic care requirements for children with disabling or limiting conditions must be documented and on file for review at Building Rainbows. Any activities must integrate all children with and without special needs.

REPORTING ABUSE AND NEGLECT

In an effort to protect the well-being and safety of children, the State of Texas requires anyone who suspects child abuse and neglect to report it to the proper authorities. Our staff has been trained to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect. All suspect indicators will be documented and reported. We are required, by law, to cooperate with any investigation of child abuse and neglect. You will be notified if your child is questioned as part of any investigation.

Meals and Snacks

BREAKFAST

Breakfast has been proven to be the most important meal of the day. Children require a lot of energy - encourage them to eat healthy! We begin serving breakfast at 6:30am and are wrapping up by 7:45am. By 8:00am, children are transitioning to their morning program. If your preschool child will need breakfast at school please arrive up by 7:45am. Traditionally, we serve cereal, milk, and toast to the children. Children arriving between 6:00am and 7:45am may bring breakfast items which we will serve or heat for them.

LUNCH

Lunch time is learning experience. Your child is working on independent living skills. Children feel successful and gain confidence by taking care of themselves. We have a microwave in each classroom area for quick warm-ups (chicken nuggets, pasta, cut-up hot dogs, left overs from home, etc.)

Please send nutritious selections as children are encouraged to consume the healthy portions of their lunch first. We recommend food choices from each food group whenever possible and limit "dessert" choices to 1 treat (pudding, fruit snacks, Yogos, snack cakes, cookies, etc) per day.

To ensure that every child is served in a timely manner, ***please send foods that require two minutes or less of heat-up time.*** Pre-packaged food items that require more than a two-minute "heat-and-stir" or multiple steps to put together (i.e. Lunchable pizzas, macaroni cups that require heating and mixing of separate cheese, etc) delay serving other children and are not appropriate warm-ups. Check to see if it is something that is ready to eat - by lunch time the children are hungry and having to wait can pose a challenge for them.

Lunch time recommendations:

- Children need to bring their own lunches in a lunch kit with an ice pack to keep items cool
- Send foods cut in appropriate size and ready to eat - foods, especially for those under age 3, can pose a safety concern when not cut (i.e. grapes, hot dogs, meats, raw veggies, etc)
- Label your child's lunch kit and containers/lids with his/her name
- **Candy, colored juices, or soft drinks are not allowed** - we serve water or milk with their lunches and juice is available for special party days

Simple lunches work best. Limit the number of choices your child has to make. Three to four choices work best. Too much set out on a tray is overwhelming and too little is not enough of a selection. If your child seems to be eating all their choices and still asks for more, his/her teacher will send a note home asking that you send one or two more items. Any uneaten portions will generally be sent home so that parents can track what choices their child is/is not eating.

Some food choice suggestions:

- Left overs and finger foods such as pieces of chicken, meat, pasta, ham
- Small containers of fruit, applesauce, greenbeans, corn
- Cereal bars, soup with little broth and crackers
- Sandwiches (cut into smaller pieces for younger children)
- Yogurt, pudding, cheese sticks

A note about Toddler Lunches:

As your toddler is developing their fine motor skills, foods that are small, fine, or soupy can be difficult for your little one at meal time to eat.

At this age, toddlers prefer to self feed with foods that are easy for their fingers to pick-up or that are easy to use with a spoon or fork. Foods such as: *rice, thin pasta & noodles, soups, apple sauce, or things that are saucy can be difficult for them to eat.*

Toddlers do well with:

- wide pastas
- cut up meats
- cut fresh fruits
- cooked green beans & carrots
- cubed cheese, & crackers.

To help your child develop their self-feeding skills, please send only one spoon item (applesauce, yogurt) per day. Please keep these things in mind as you pack your little one's lunch.

SNACKS

Our snack menu is posted on the kitchen door for you to view at your convenience. We serve healthy and hearty snacks both morning and afternoon. Our snacks include fruit, macaroni and cheese, cheese toast, yogurt, applesauce, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, chicken nuggets, corn dogs, tater tots - the list is quite varied and extensive.

We serve milk or water with our morning snack and often with the afternoon snack. Children are encouraged to drink water between meals and with lunch. Milk is always available at the request of any child.

*Building Rainbows is **not** peanut-free* - if your child has a severe allergy to peanuts or other products, please let us know immediately.

Special Events

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Each child's birthday is very special and birthday celebrations are fun. The key to success in this area is to keep it simple. We suggest sending cookies or cupcakes and, if you wish, party napkins and small plates. We have birthday crowns and stickers for the birthday child. If you choose to send ice cream, the small individual cups work best. Parents are always welcome to join us for the birthday celebration!

If you are sending birthday party invitations, please leave them in the office already addressed with the children's names. We will be sure they get into the appropriate lunch kits. This is a more discreet way to avoid disappointment/over-stimulation.

Birthday treat suggestions:

- Large, soft sugar cookies with a container of icing/sprinkles that the children can fix themselves
- Fresh fruit trays are a good, healthy way to celebrate
- Cup cakes are better for older preschoolers - younger children tend to eat only the icing and not eat the cup cake

HOLIDAY PARTIES

We love parties and celebrations! Our goal is to minimize stress and have fun. A schedule of planned events is in your enrollment packet.

For some of our holiday parties we will post a sign-up sheet on the breezeway bulletin board where you can sign-up to provide cookies or treats.

If you or someone amongst your family and friends has a special talent (plays an instrument, sings, tells stories, works magic) to share with the children, please encourage them to contact us.

FIELD TRIPS

If your child is at an appropriate age for a field trip (i.e. park outing, Oil Ranch) a note will be posted in the breezeway detailing the planned adventure. There may be an additional fee involved. All children attending the outing must have signed permission to attend field trips and be transported by Building Rainbows. This signed permission is on file and is part of the **Application Form**. All children must wear Building Rainbows T-shirts when they leave the school premises. Please see Angela or Veronica for T-shirt information.

Field trips are a privilege, not a right - if we cannot trust the behavior and decisions of a child while at Building Rainbows, that child will not be allowed to participate in field trips.

Certain field trips will be designated for specific age groups based on the location and group size.

Sometimes we have "on-site" field trips where a special guest (i.e. juggler, magician, puppet show) will visit Building Rainbows. A note will be sent home explaining the visit and if there is a fee involved.

School Agers

Our School Age program is lightly structured - we are all about smiles, fun, discovery, and fully enjoying each day and the opportunities/experiences each day brings.

Kindergarteners and 1st graders are encouraged to bring a change of clothes in a plastic Ziploc bag to be left here at Building Rainbows. Accidents happen - it will be less embarrassing for your child if they have a change of clothes readily available.

All children enrolled in our School Age Program are required to dress appropriately while at Building Rainbows (i.e. no Crocs or flip-flops, no short shorts, etc). Please see the section **What To Wear** for more information.

There are special hooks in the School Age room for children to hang their back packs and lunch kits. Please label your child's belongings clearly - sometimes children at this age have similar bags and having things clearly labeled helps prevents things going home with the wrong child.

SCHOOL AGERS AND DISCIPLINE

Because the children interact closely with one another, we expect our children to be respectful of one another and to solve their differences in a positive manner. All children must feel protected and safe in order to relax and enjoy being part of a group.

Aggressive behavior - physical violence - is never okay! There is absolutely no acceptable excuse for school age children to act out their anger with violence. At our school, while they are in our care, it is not okay for children to "hit back" or to react violently when they feel they have been wronged. It is okay for them to ask a teacher or assistant for help, to separate from the group to get their calm, or to come to the office to see Mrs. Tamez and request help.

For more information, please see our **Discipline** heading under **Program Policies**.

Summer Program

Each summer, our staff plans full weeks of learning and fun-filled, age-appropriate projects and activities. We will provide an environment that is safe, healthy, fun, and confidence-building for all of the children.

A calendar of topics, activities, and the anticipated daily routine will be posted. The children will have a balanced day filled with science explorations, art, games, music, cooking, outside time, free time, special events, and weekly outings for School Ageds.

We know that summer is a time to "kick-back" and have fun; however, the children are still expected to follow general guidelines for their safety and well-being.

Licensing Information

- We are licensed by the State of Texas, Child Care Licensing Division of the Department of Family and Protective Services
- We are inspected annually by the Harris County Fire Department
- We are inspected on a regular basis by the Harris County Health Department
- Our classrooms have clearly marked exits and hardware for fast and easy exit in the event of an emergency - fire drills are practiced regularly and include a plan to be certain all children are accounted for who are in attendance on any given day
- We submit water samples monthly as required by the State of Texas and closely monitor our well
- We are tied into the local utility district to deal with wasted disposal
- We have van and general liability insurance
- We practice infection control and train our staff in regard to proper hygiene practices for themselves and the children - this includes hand-washing, general infection control, and safe food handling procedures: we clean equipment, surfaces, and other items using soap and water followed by a disinfectant (this disinfectant can be either a bleach solution or a commercial disinfectant registered by the EPA)
- We practice Risk Management by following procedures, being alert to changes, and by careful attention to our environment - your child's safety is our first priority

PEST CONTROL

We use a licensed pest control service for bug control - products that have been approved for use in schools are used. The company provides us with a "certificate" as required by law. We are required to notify parents/guardians of children attending this facility that pesticides are periodically applied indoors and we will supply information on the times and types of applications upon request. We will also notify parents 24 hours in advance when pesticides will be applied. Information concerning these applications may be obtained by contacting Steve Sandweiss or Angela Tamez either by phone or email.

Updates/Changes in Policies and Procedures

You will be notified in writing of changes in our operational policies and procedures. An updated copy of these policies will at all times be available in our office together with a copy of the Minimum Standards for Licensed Child Care Centers. Our most recent fire inspection and licensing documents are available for you to look over.

Important Telephone Numbers and Resources

For more information about program quality and staff qualifications:

Texas Association for the Education of Young Children	1-800-341-2392
The CDA Council for Professional Recognition	1-800-424-4310
To contact our local Child Care Licensing Office:	713-940-3009
Child Abuse Hotline	1-800-252-5400
Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Web Site	www.tdprs.state.tx.us
Building Rainbows Day School	281-890-7498 www.BuildingRainbowsDaySchool.com

Parent Statement

I have read and understand Building Rainbows Day School Parent Handbook to the best of my knowledge. I understand that I will be expected to be in compliance with the information contained herein.

Child Name _____

Child Name _____

Child Name _____

Parent Signature _____

Parent Signature _____

Date _____