



Early Education Learning Center Handbook

A ministry of
First @ Firewheel
5500 Lavon Drive, Garland, Texas 75040

Mrs. Stephanie Fuchs, Principal

Revised January 2022-2023

Firewheel Christian Academy's educational philosophy is emphasizing academic excellence, balanced extra-curricular offerings, and service to the community.

Firewheel Christian Academy strives to develop an individual and a graduate who will:

- practice the Gospel values of loving God, loving others, and loving himself
- think and communicate with clarity and precision
- exhibit curiosity, discernment, and reflection as a life-long learner
- achieve a balanced life based on spiritual, emotional and physical health
- seek opportunities to serve through community outreach
- make ethical decisions, act with integrity, and accept responsibility for his actions
- demonstrate self-confidence and discipline in applying his unique gifts and talents
- collaborate to accomplish goals, solve problems, and resolve conflict
- manifest the living presence of God in his life

Vision Statement

Students from Firewheel Christian Academy will acquire wisdom, knowledge, and a biblical worldview as evidenced by a lifestyle of character, leadership, service, stewardship, and worship. (Matthew 22:37; Luke 2:52; Matthew 5:13-14; and Romans 12:1)

Mission Statement

The mission of Firewheel Christian Academy states that the school exists to nurture and develop the whole child: spiritually, intellectually, physically, and artistically.

Philosophy of Education

Firewheel Christian Academy is a ministry of First at Firewheel. It was established in 1980 as a private Christian school committed to providing a biblically-based education by using biblically based curriculum to teach all the subjects as parts of an integrated whole with the Scriptures as the center. We strive to operate as an extension of the family under the assumption that the education of young people is the responsibility of parents.

Doctrinal Statement

1. **We believe** the Bible to be the inspired and only infallible and authoritative Word of God. (*II Timothy 3:14; II Peter 1:21*)
2. **We believe** there is only one God, eternally existent in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. (*Genesis 1:1; Matthew 28:19; John 10:30*)
3. **We believe** in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ (*John 10:33*); in His virgin birth (*Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:35*); in His sinless life (*Hebrews 4:15; 7:26*); in His miracles (*John 2:11*); in His vicarious and atoning death (*I Corinthians 15:3; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 2:9*); in His bodily resurrection (*John 11:25; I Corinthians 15:4*); in His ascension to the right hand of the Father (*Mark 16:19*); in His personal return to this earth in power and glory to rule a thousand years. (*Acts 1:11; Revelation 19:11*).

4. **We believe** in the blessed hope – the rapture of the Church at Christ’s coming.
5. **We believe** the only means of being cleansed from sin is through repentance and faith in the precious blood of Christ.
6. **We believe** that the regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential for personal salvation. (*John 3:16-19; 5:24; Romans 3:23; 5:8-9; Ephesians 2:9-10; Titus 3:5*).
7. **We believe** that the redemptive work of Christ on the cross provides healing of the human body in answer to prayer.
8. **We believe** in the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a holy life.
9. **We believe** in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; the one to everlasting life and the other to everlasting punishment. (*John 5:28-29*)

SECURITY AND SAFETY

At our facility security is a top concern. Doors remain locked and parents will be able to pick up and drop off children at the loggia doors. Children will be released only to persons authorized by the enrolling parents. EELC must be notified in writing by email if someone other than the parent is picking up the child. We are a gang and drug free facility.

HOURS OF OPERATION

We are open from 7:00 am – 5:00 pm Monday – Friday. However, we strongly encourage balance between school and active family time. Please see attached school calendar for closing dates. We believe that our role is to partner with families as they raise their children. Please be mindful, NO children may be dropped off after 10 am.

TUITION

Tuition is paid online through Facts Management. You are responsible as long as your child is enrolled. To set up your account you may contact Mrs. Renee Hyatt 972-495-0851.

FUNDRAISING

Occasionally there are fundraising events during the school year to raise money for special projects or equipment for the program.

ABSENCES

Tuition must be paid in full without deduction for absence of any duration or for any cause, and without substitution of other days of attendance as “make-up” days. This is necessary because staffing and other operational costs are incurred on the basis of fixed levels of enrollment.

ENROLLMENT

Our programs are available to all children ages 6 months – 4 years old. Non-discriminatory basis without regards to sex, race, religion, cultural heritage, or political beliefs of their parents.

When classes are full, parents are encouraged to place their child on the waiting list. When an opening becomes available, we will contact you.

Our enrollment process is completed by following these steps:

1. Online or in person inquiry
2. Tour of school with enrolling child
3. Return all requested paperwork by deadline
4. Registration payment confirmed
5. Registration Confirmation sent via email

ACCEPTED

The following forms must be received by noon the Wednesday before your first week.

- Enrollment Packet with notarized documents
- Birth Certificate
- Copy of UPDATED immunization record. Your child must be current with vaccines before they enroll.
- Physician's examination form signed by a qualified physician stating that your child is able to participate in the Preschool program. The physician's report must be submitted yearly.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Minimum State Vaccine Requirements for Texas Children

(See Attached Sheet)

HEARING AND VISION

Children age 4 and older must have a vision and hearing screenings every year with a record of the screening on file. We suggest seeking information about this exam with your physician at your child's 4 year well child visit.

HEALTH CHECK PROCEDURES

Please see your private physician for health checks and screenings.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

If a child receives an injury while in the care of Firewheel's Early Education Learning Center, we will notify parents immediately. If a parent cannot be reached, the emergency contact list will be utilized. When the injury or illness consists of uncontrollable bleeding, broken bones, head injury, seizures, or any other medical situation that we feel is in need of medical attention we will call 911. After calling 911, if parents are unable to make it to the center, we will transport the child to the nearest children's hospital for treatment. A school representative will stay with the child until a parent arrives at the hospital. Medical expenses incurred during this emergency will be the responsibility of the parents. Parents will be given documentation of how the accident and incident occurred.

MEDICATIONS

Medication may be administered to children under the following condition:

- Prescription medications must be in the original container labeled with the child's name, date, directions and the physician's name. The office staff will administer the medication as stated on the label directions. We will not administer medication after the expiration date.

- The office staff must ensure that non-prescription medication must be labeled with the child's name and the date the medication was brought to the facility. Non-prescription medication must be in the original container. The office staff will administer it according to label directions if approved in writing by the child's parent or guardian.
- Medications are not to be kept overnight unless the child has a periodic and recurring medical problem. (See next item)
- If a child has a periodic and recurring medical problem, such as headaches, asthma attacks, or allergic reactions, the parent or the child's health-care professional may sign a medication authorization form allowing us to administer the medication when symptoms occur for up to a six-month period. The authorization must include information on symptoms to watch for. You must notify the parent immediately after administering the medication.

ILLNESS POLICY

If your child is not feeling well (fever, undiagnosed rash, cough, watery eyes, diarrhea, vomiting, etc.) it is required to keep them home. They must be fever free and have no diarrhea or vomiting for 24 hours **before** they can return. If a child should develop these symptoms during the day, the parent will be contacted to make arrangements to pick up their child. If we are unable to reach you, or if you have not made arrangements to pick up your child within the hour, we will call your emergency contact person.

INJURY OR INCIDENT

During normal play children might receive an injury. If this occurs the teacher will write an accident/illness report and you will be given a copy. If the injury is substantial we will follow the Medical Emergencies part of the handbook. If your child has an illness we will fill out the same form to inform you of the incident and for your signature.

PARENT NOTIFICATIONS /COMMUNICATIONS

Each teacher will have an email and or a parent communication app; in this way you will be able to stay in touch with your child's teacher and her with you. Daily notes for infant and toddler classes may include diaper changes, child's mood, food intake, supplies needed, teacher notes and activities for the day. If you have a question about the notes or want more information for children in the 2 year old – K3 classes please feel free to ask the teacher. Check your child's folder daily for any communication from the teacher or the office.

If there is a need to contact you for non emergency reasons you will receive an phone call or email. Please make sure that your contact information is up to date.

RELEASE PROCEDURE

Pick up for all children will be at the orange canopy. To pick up a child please call this phone number and we will bring the child out to you at the door. 469-782-6054. This number is only for our drop off and pick service. Please do not call this number for any other reason.

At pick up time you will be asked to show ID or your FCA pick up card with bar code and name. Please do not give your card to another family member. Each card is individualized and must NOT be shared. Each person that you list on the pick up list will be given their own card. If you need to add or remove a person form your pick up list please do so in writing. You may send an email with the person's first and last name.

We will not release children to minors.

We will not release children to anyone who isn't on the pick up list.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

In the event you have been invited to participate in a program event, you are required to fill out necessary paperwork, safety screening and training through our parent training program.

TOYS

We request that children do not bring toys, games, make-up, weapons, VCR/DVDs, etc. to school.

ANIMALS /PETS

We do not allow any animals in the building.

CONTACT FOR PROGRAM DIRECTOR

If you have an issue that needs prompt attention please call our Early Education Learning Center at 972-530-1614. Office hours are Monday through Friday from 7AM – 5PM. You may also send an email.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PROGRAM

If it becomes necessary for you to withdraw your child from the program for any reason, it is our policy that parents/guardians must notify the director 2 weeks prior to the withdrawal date. This notification must be given in written form.

DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE

We believe that our attitude will have a great influence on the children. Discipline and guidance will be consistent and based on an understanding of individual needs and development.

Methods used will center on communication, stressing positive behavior, verbalization, redirection, or possible removal from a negative situation. Physical punishment will not be used. No child will be shamed or humiliated; left unsupervised or denied food for inappropriate behavior. No child will be punished for lapses in toilet training.

- Supervision

In order for us to give quality care we must give children our undivided attention. Being actively involved with our children, not simply baby-sitting, is our very important responsibility.

- Guidance

Guidance of children in our care will be consistent and appropriate for their age. Children need structure and it is important that they understand what is expected of them. Teachers will not humiliate or subject the children to abusive or profane language.

- Discipline

Discipline should promote a positive self-concept and acceptable behavior. Children in our care will not be shaken, pinched, bitten, isolated, unattended, etc. Our teachers will use calm voices and give positive direction, not negative. When a child's behavior is disruptive, they will be removed from the group for a short time. Teachers will help them understand why they are being withdrawn from the group. Consistent and extreme misbehavior will be reported to the Administrator.

SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION

Some children may need more individualized care and are not able to thrive in a group care setting. If your child is experiencing behavioral challenges that are a danger or major disruption to the classroom setting there may be a suspension or expulsion of child care services. If this decision is made you will be contacted. These decisions are made on a case by case basis and we reserve the right to do so at anytime.

PROCEDURE FOR TERMINATION OF SERVICES TO FAMILIES

Firewheel Christian Academy makes every effort to provide a program that meets the needs of each child. If, after working with the child and family, we do not believe it is in the child's best interest to remain at the center, we will ask the family to make other arrangements.

Your child may be terminated from the program based on abuse and neglect of the parent's rules and guidelines. If you are found to be in violation of the rules and guidelines, the following procedures will be taken.

- Notice to bring the situation to your attention.
- Written warning of suspension.
- Suspension-the child may not attend for three days.
- Termination from the program if the situation continues. A written notice stating the reason for termination will be given.

REASONS FOR TERMINATION:

- Unpaid fees
- Medical files (not up to date as required)
- Parent conduct in violation of Parental agreement
- Behavioral (disruptive or unsafe)

BITING POLICY

It is our policy that children are not asked to withdraw because of occasional biting. Although this may seem like a highly unusual habit to adults, this behavior is typical in the toddler and two year old environment. However if the behavior is chronic we will investigate and take each situation on a case by case basis.

POTTY TRAINING

When you see signs that your child is ready to begin potty training please talk to the teacher. We do not begin this process with children younger than 2 years old. Remember that this is a life skill that takes time to explore and our teachers are very experienced in training this skill. Talk to your child's teacher first. Together with a CONSISTENT plan, we can start the process together.

REST TIME

Children will participate in a time of rest or sleeping. As per state of Texas licensing requirements, we are required to provide a nap time for at least one hour but no more than three hours a day. Each child is assigned a mat and blanket.

INFANT SAFE SLEEP

While the cause of SIDS is unknown, many clinicians and researchers believe that SIDS is associated with problems in the ability of the baby to arouse from sleep, to detect low levels of oxygen, or a buildup of carbon dioxide in the blood. When babies sleep face down, they may re-breathe exhaled carbon dioxide.

We believe that being proactive can lower the risk of SIDS in our setting and that parents and child care professionals can work together to keep babies safer while they sleep. At FCA we will practice the following safe sleep policy.

- All child care staff will receive training on our Infant Safe Sleep Policy.
- Infants will always be placed on their backs to sleep unless there is a signed sleep position medical waiver on file.
- In that case, a notice will be posted on the infant's crib.
- It is recommended that babies are placed on their backs to sleep; but when babies
- can easily turn over from the back to the stomach, they can be in whatever position they prefer to sleep.
- Sleeping infants will be checked periodically by staff during nap times.
- Class room temperatures will be set to prevent over heating.
- Infants will not use blankets in cribs. Parents may provide a "sleep sack."
- No pillows, comforters, bumper pads toys, etc. will be used in cribs.
- A safety-approved crib with a firm mattress and tight-fitting sheet will be used.
- Only one infant will be in a crib at a time, unless we are evacuating infants in an emergency.
- A written copy of this policy will be included in enrollment packet.
- Infants will not be left in a rocker, high chair, swings or similar item to sleep.

BREASTFEEDING/ BONDING

Please ask our administrators about our room for breastfeeding.

SUNSCREEN/INSECT REPELLANT

Our center does not provide or apply any creams or ointments for sun protection or insect repellent. Please apply sunscreen and insect repellents at your discretion before your child arrives.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Due to minimum standards guidelines we are required to have indoor and or out door active play for a minimum of 30 - 90 minutes every school day, weather permitting. Children should be dressed in clothing that allows freedom to engage in vigorous play inside and outside everyday. Please make sure that your child has a jacket for colder weather days and closed toe shoes. When outside play is not permissible children will be able to play freely and vigorously in the indoor gym area or indoor activity room.

Out side play promotes many benefits such as:

- Greater freedom and flexibility,
- Fuller expression through loud talk
- Greater range of active movement.
- Self-confidence as I develop new skills
- Physical strength, coordination, and balance
- Use my imagination
- Problem solving

For infants birth through 12 months of age, there is no recommended total minutes of outdoor play. However, activities include music, songs, simple games and dramatic or imaginary play that encourage movement such as dancing, running, climbing, stretching, walking, and marching

Toddlers ages 12-17 months are required to have 30 minutes of outdoor play time. Toddlers 18-35 months of age, must engage in outdoor play for a minimum of 60 total minutes daily. Some examples of age-appropriate opportunities for large-muscle development activities include low-climbing structures, small riding toys, toys for pushing or pulling, a variety of light-weight balls for indoor and outdoor play, and rhythm instruments.

For Pre-kindergarten age children 3-4 years old, they must engage in outdoor play for a minimum of 60 total minutes daily. Children will be provided opportunities for large-muscle development age-appropriate equipment or activities include small wagons, light-weight balls of all sizes, small wheelbarrows, tricycles, push toys, swings, slides, climbing equipment, balance beam, hanging bars, and outdoor building materials.

We do not supply or apply sunscreen or insect repellent. Please apply these items at home before your child comes to school.

ACTIVE /PHYSICAL PLAY

Weather inside or outside children will be given opportunities for structured and free play for activities. Active play helps improve many skills such as;

- Strength, balance, and coordination of large muscles
- Teaching children to use energy in a constructive way
- Concepts of speed, direction, and location
- How to use imagination as I pretend to be a different character and make noises
- How to negotiate and take turns or solve problems
- Self confidence as they master new skills

Toddlers will be given minimum of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play. Children 3-4 years will be given a minimum of 90 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play that are chosen by the child.

DRESS AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS

We ask that your child wear comfortable play clothes to the center. Due to Texas State Licensing, all children are required to go outside every day unless it is very inclement weather. Please make sure your child is dressed appropriately for cold days (hats, gloves, warm coats, etc.) Sandals are not appropriate footwear.

Please put a complete change of clothing (*including socks and underwear*) for your child in their backpack. All removable articles of clothing (*sweaters, coats, hats, etc.*) worn to school **need to be labeled with your child's name.**

Clothes will be changed if they become soiled during the day. Soiled clothes will be placed in a bag for you to launder when you go home.

Disposable diapers and pull-ups must be sent with all non-potty trained children. All wipes and diapers provided by parents **MUST BE DISPOSABLE.** No cloth or reusable diapers or wipes may be used at our center.

WATER PLAY/ACTIVITIES

Although we occasionally have splash activities or sprinkler play no water activities will be provided using standing water over 12 inches.

MEALS AND SNACKS

All children will need to bring a lunch for each day.

- It is required that all food allergies must be diagnosed by a doctor and we must be given a doctor's statement of the allergy with a written allergy plan.
- We do not provide or prepare any meals at the center.
- Breakfast is provided by each parent daily and offered before 8:30 am. If you arrive after 8:30 your child will need to have already eaten.
- Lunch should consist of a variety of healthy finger foods they can feed to themselves. Please do not

put candy or peanut products in your child's lunch box. They will also need at least 2 sippy cups, one for water and one for milk if you want your child to drink milk at school. Remember: all items must be labeled with your child's name!

- All infant bottles and children's meals must be prepared by the parents. Teachers do not mix baby bottles or milk formula, pre packaged foods such as oatmeal, baby cereal, macaroni and cheese cups ect.
- We will not mix medicines or additives into your child's meals, food, or drinks.

During the year, some classes may have "special event" days. These could include pizza, picnic foods and treats. If you would like to share treats with your child's class, ask the teacher. All foods brought to share must be in unopened in the original packaging with ingredients listed.

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES

We strive to provide quality care at all times and if at anytime you have a problem please talk to the director. Our Early Education Learning Center does everything possible to follow each rule set forth and abide by higher levels of standards.

TO REVIEW OUR INSPECTION REPORT OR MINIMUM STANDARDS

The minimum standards and the current inspection reports can be found outside the director's office in the shadow box. If you would like to learn about specific regulations please don't hesitate to ask or login online to: <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/doing-business-hhs/provider-portals/protective-services-providers/child-care-licensing/minimum-standards>

You may also use the website to contact the local HHSC office.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse and neglect are against the law in Texas, and so is failure to report it. We are required to make a report within 48 hours of the time we suspect the child has been or may be abused or neglected.

BAD WEATHER POLICY

During bad weather there may be times when we experience late openings, early closings or forced all-day closings. When the center needs to close because of severe weather conditions, school closings are announced on WFAA Channel 8 television news stations. The staff will make every attempt to notify you via email, text or phone call if we have an unexpected closing.

FIELD TRIPS AND TRANSPORTATION

During the school year Firewheel Christian Academy EELC does not go on field trips or provide transportation of any kind (except medical emergencies).

PARENTS RIGHTS

Parents have the right to visit the center at any time to observe their own child.

When visiting, please enter at the main entrance or loggia doors. All doors are locked during school hours for the safety of children and staff.

VACCINE PREVENTABLE ILLNESSES

1. Firewheel Christian Academy does not require any adult vaccines
2. Employees are not required to receive any specified vaccines
3. We recognize exemptions for reasons of conscience, including religious beliefs or exempt from having

a required vaccine because of medical conditions

4. We do not maintain any written or electronic health records of employees
5. Employees are encouraged to use protective medical equipment, including gloves and masks, based on the level of risk the employee presents to children by the employee's routine and direct exposure to children.
6. Discrimination action against an employee is prohibited however we do require the use of PPE for any required duties , such as diaper changing, handling bodily fluids ect.
7. It is the employees' responsibility to maintain their own health records.

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Emergency drills are held monthly to acquaint your child with evacuation procedures.

- **Fire**

In case we need to leave the center due to a fire, we will relocate to:

CVS

5702 Lavon Drive

972-495-5595

- **Disaster Evacuation**

In case of a toxic spill, chemical release, or any other reason that we are required to evacuate, we will accompany the children to CVS. Staff will immediately contact parents or emergency contact people to pick up their child.

- **Active Safety Threat**

We will follow our lock down or hold drill procedures. Please see attachment

- **Power Outage**

Parents will be notified to pick up children

- **Tornado or Dangerous Weather alert**

Teachers will take children to their designated area for shelter.