



**DISCOVERY DAYS
& DISCOVERY BARN**
Learning Centers
979-345-3333 • 979-798-5696

Parent Handbook & Operational Policies

Mission Statement: We strive to provide a compassionate and safe learning environment for all the children at Discovery Barn/Days Learning Center.

Our Philosophy: At Discovery Barn/Days, we strive for excellence in care and education for the children at our center. Our goal is to build a strong early education foundation through a variety of experiences involving creative expression, independent learning, social skills, language skills, and fine and gross motor skills. Each child will develop positive attitudes about self, school and learning. We more than meet their basic needs, including nutritious meals, clean and hygienic facilities, routine, rituals and consistency. Both the children and their families are central to everything we do, and the input of families is essential to our achieving and maintaining excellence. Discovery Barn/Days Learning Center appreciates the opportunity to be a part of your child's early education experience.

We are open Monday-Friday, 6:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. We are open 12 months a year.

We observe the following holidays: New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving (two days), Christmas (three days). Holiday closures are subject to change.

Every child needs to be present by 9:30 a.m. unless you have a doctor's excuse. Drop off is not allowed during naptime. If your child will be late, please call the center so we will be prepared for the correct ratio of children.

Weekly Tuition Rates:

Infants (6 weeks-18 months) \$180,

Toddlers (18 months – 3 years) \$160,

Pre-K (3-5 years) \$150

School Age: \$80 AM & PM, \$70 PM only, \$30 AM only, Summer Weeks \$150

There is a discount for siblings of \$5 per child each week and a first responder discount of \$10 per family.

Other fees:

We require a \$75 registration fee when your child is enrolled. We also require a \$75 re-enrollment fee due each fall. During the summer we have special activities, special guests, special snacks and t-shirts that will require a \$50 fee per child.

We close at 6 p.m. There is a late fee of \$2 per minute per child that is payable immediately to the teachers on duty. Excessive late pickups will result in loss of enrollment.

Checks returned for any reason will include a \$50 handling fee. If we receive two returned checks from the same person, checks will no longer be accepted.

Tuition refunds are unavailable. If tuition is not received by Friday of each week, a **\$20 late fee** will be added each week that tuition is not paid. Failure to pay two consecutive weeks will result in loss of enrollment.

Parents must give two weeks written notification before withdrawing their child from care or pay two full weeks of tuition.

Parent Portal: Every family will have an 1Core Family account in which parents will be able to monitor tuition, make online payments and update family information including address and phone numbers. An email will be sent that allows you to create an account.

Parent Communication: Communication is very important to our center and we use many forms to keep parents up to date. Monthly newsletters will be sent home, signs are posted throughout the center. Also, email and Facebook are used for reminders and to post activities. Infants will receive a daily report that includes: diapering, sleeping, eating times. Parents can contact the director or any other staff member by phone, email or in person during operation hours. Our center's policies are reviewed annually, updated when necessary and parents are notified in writing of the changes.

Parent conferences will be offered twice a year, in the fall and spring or can be requested at any time. These conferences may be in person or over the phone and will include the student's progress, expectations and goals.

Social Media: Parents should not use social media to communicate with teachers or other staff. Please use the school phone or directors email to discuss topics related to the center or to your child.

Family Participation: Parents are invited and encouraged to be involved in their child's school activities. There are many ways in which parents can participate and volunteer at our center. Parents may volunteer to attend trips, read in the classroom, assist teachers or coordinate special events. Our center will also host special activities throughout the year such as class parties, events and Thanksgiving feast in which parents and families will be welcomed. We have an open-door policy and welcome visits at any time of day. It is important to note that young children may interpret a parent's arrival as time to go home. If a parent appears and does not take the child with them, the child often will become upset. Please consider this as you plan your visits.

Curriculum: Discovery Barn/Days uses a curriculum that is original to our center and evolves with the needs and changes of preschool education. The goal of each class is to encourage age-appropriate milestones and develop academic skills. Our lesson plans are built around both teacher and child-initiated activities that are developmentally appropriate and designed to meet the needs of the whole child: physically, emotionally, socially, creatively and cognitively. When children graduate from our preschool program, our goal is that they are prepared to master all aspects of kindergarten.

Physical Activity/Outdoor Play: Regular physical activity promotes health and fitness as well as has brain health benefits for children, including improved cognition. Physical activity is a regular part of our daily routine and may include dancing, running, tricycles, climbing, swinging, crawling, etc. Children should be prepared to play outside morning and afternoon for 20-30-minute intervals. Please do not request that your child stay indoors. Per the Texas Department of Health and Human Services, children too sick to go outside should not be at school. We are aware there can be exceptions to this rule and will require a doctor's note that describes the physical limits of the child. Weather advisories are monitored for safe outdoor play.

There are some weather conditions that will prevent outdoor play. Rain, freezing temperatures, severe heat, along with other conditions may prevent outdoor play. The staff will monitor weather conditions and make decisions that keep the best interest of the children in mind.

Pools/Sprinklers: Pools, water play and sprinklers are not used at our center or on field trips.

Screen Time: Screen time is prohibited for children under the age of two years. Screen time for children over two years does not exceed one hour per day. The three-and-four-year pre-k classrooms watch 30 minutes of



television in the afternoon and during the last 30 minutes of each day. Our center does not allow children of any age to bring personal electronic devices, including phones, tablets or watches, to the center.

Inclusive Services: Our policy is to accept children in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), its regulations, and any other applicable local, state, or federal laws pertaining to providing services to individuals with disabilities. Discovery Days/Barn promotes inclusiveness for children with special care needs. We ask that parents/guardians consult with the director regarding special accommodations for a child. We will provide accommodations recommended by health-care professionals and allow services to take place at our center. Adaptive equipment will be utilized as needed. The teachers will integrate children with special care needs into their daily routine and activities and also adapt the surroundings to best suit the child. Methods and policies will vary to provide the best care possible for a child with special care needs.

Notification of Absence: Parents are required to inform the center by 8:30 a.m. if a child will be absent. This will enable the center to effectively maintain appropriate ratios and help the teacher effectively plan for the day. If your child is ill, please notify the center about the nature of the illness. Communicable disease information will be shared with staff and parents as needed to prevent spread of the disease. We will take all measures necessary to protect your child's confidentiality.

Sign-in and out: Please make sure to sign your child in and out daily. This is very important for teachers to monitor students and is also required by the DFPS/HHS. We are not responsible for your child before he/she is signed in or after he/she is signed out. A parent or guardian must go inside to sign your child in or out. Children will only be released to persons listed on the enrollment form or someone the parent has verbally approved. A valid ID will be needed to release the child to any person we have not met.

Please remember teachers are on duty during pick-up and must supervise all the children in care. Brief discussions about a child's behavior or concerns are acceptable. Conferences for more in-depth discussions can be scheduled at the convenience of the parent.

Immediate Access: In cases where custody is subject to a court order, we must be provided with a copy of the order. In the absence of a court order, both parents will have equal access to their child as stipulated by law.

Allergies: If your child suffers from any type of allergy, we will need an individualized plan prepared by the child's physician. This plan is shared with all staff members and posted in all necessary areas. All staff members are trained annually about food allergies and all the precautions to follow to ensure children are protected from an allergic reaction. When a child that is enrolled suffers from a severe food allergy, the center will ban the particular food from the entire center.

Nutrition Policies: Our center serves breakfast, morning snack, lunch and afternoon snack. Menus are approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Program and includes nutritious meals and snacks. Liquids and food hotter than 110 degrees F are kept out of reach of children. Food that is brought into the program to be shared is commercially prepared or prepared in a kitchen that is inspected by health officials. Healthy snacks are available for school age children as they arrive.

Lunches from Home: When you provide a lunch from home, you must ensure the safety of food brought from home including maintaining the proper temperature. Please provide meals with adequate nutritional value. Sugary drinks, sodas, candy bars, other candy and large desserts are discouraged. Please see our parent resource area for information of nutritious meals and eating habits. Milk, fruit and vegetables are available for children who bring lunches from home.

Infant Meals: Parents are required to complete a feeding schedule for their child on a monthly basis or as the child's feeding requirements change. A daily report will be provided for each child detailing the child's feeding, diapering and sleeping.

Breastfeeding is welcomed and nursing mothers will be provided with accommodations that sufficiently meet their needs. Our parent resource center provides a compilation of breastfeeding education and support resources from our community.

Nap mats and blankets: Kinder nap mats are not made very well and tear easily. The mats will last much longer with a cover of some sort. A king-size pillowcase is affordable and works great as a cover for kinder mats. Another suggestion is to sew two large towels together. All nap items need to be taken home Friday to be washed and sanitized. Full-size pillows, sleeping bags or oversized sleeping mats are NOT allowed.

Safe sleep: The safe sleep policy will be part of your enrollment packet. Please read the policy carefully and sign on the bottom. The safe sleep policy reduces the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome/Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SIDS/SUIDS).

Immunizations and Records: Children cannot attend if current immunization records are not on file. If your child is more than six months behind on immunizations, they will lose their enrollment. Every child must have the following in their file: enrollment form, signed operational policy/handbook, immunization record, health statement and an allergy form if needed. Children 4 years of age also are required to have vision and hearing screening on file. Brazoria County does not require children enrolled to have TB test.

Staff and/or teachers are not required to have vaccinations including the flu, COVID and/or TB test.

Medication: A medicine form with a parent's signature is required to administer medicine. The form includes name of medication, dosage and dates. Medicine must be in its original container labeled with the child's name. Prescriptions must have a current date and correct name. Over-the-counter medication must be age appropriate or include a doctor's note. We cannot exceed a recommended dosage without a doctor's note. There is a separate form for long-term medications that will be used to record the medication's use.

Illness and Fever: Children with a temperature of 100 degrees or more will not be allowed to attend. Children with severe symptoms such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, excessive coughing, diarrhea, vomiting, unidentified rash, mouth sores, behavior changes or any other compromising health problem will also need to leave the center. Children must be picked up within an hour after the parent is contacted. Children must be free from fever, vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours without medication before returning to care. When necessary, parents will be notified that a communicable disease is present. Head lice will also result in a child being sent home until the lice and nits are treated and removed. Please see separate COVID policy.

Medical Emergency: If necessary, staff members will contact emergency medical services or transport the child to the ER, provide first aid or CPR and/or contact the physician identified in the child's record. The parent will be contacted as soon as the emergency allows.

Discipline: Our staff is trained to use a positive method of discipline and guidance. Our staff will never use corporal punishment or forms of humiliation. The steps we will take to encourage good behavior are:

- Praise and encourage good behavior instead of focusing on unacceptable behavior.
- Remind a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear instructions.
- Redirect unacceptable behavior and model the correct behavior.

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- Children will be given a safe place to reflect or calm down when needed.
 - Parents are notified when a behavior is becoming a habit or causing harm.
 - When a child is harming classmates or disrupting learning time, they may be removed from the classroom for a brief moment so the director can go over the expectations and proper behavior.
 - Parents will be contacted by phone and/or a parent communication form if the procedures above are not correcting the unacceptable behavior.
 - Positive cooperation from the family is required when dealing with disruptive behavior.
 - Discovery Barn/Days reserves the right to terminate care for discipline problems at any time.

Suspension or Expulsion: Sever behavior that is compromising the safety of children and staff and/or constant disruption of activities may result in expulsion of the child. Discovery Days/Barn will only expel a child after many attempts have been made to correct the unwanted behavior. Communication concerning the negative behavior will be continuous with the parent/guardian. Unpaid tuition or a parent/guardian that is compromising the safety of children and staff may result in suspension of a child.

Biting: Biting is a developmentally appropriate behavior for children in the infant through 2½-year-old range. Parents with children in these classrooms should expect that their child may be bit or will bite another child. The staff understands that parents are concerned and can be upset when biting incidents occur. We ask that you remember this is a developmentally appropriate behavior, and the staff is working to identify situations which, provoke or elicit this behavior so it can be prevented in the future. Parents are expected to work with staff to identify methods and strategies to curb this behavior. Parents will be notified of the incident. The staff may not discuss the identity of the children involved since this information is considered confidential. Uncooperative parents will have their child's services terminated. Children older than 3 years of age may occasionally be involved in a biting incident. Discipline procedures listed above will be used to correct the behavior. Children in the older age groups whose biting becomes a habit will face termination of care.

Potty training: We will make every effort to help potty train your child. Our suggestion is to begin with a pullup or underwear at home during the weekend or when a parent can offer one-on-one attention to get the child comfortable with using the potty. If the child has a successful weekend and is making progress, then send the child in a pull-up or underwear and three changes of clothes (including socks and shoes). Once the child has started making progress at school then we suggest using underwear full time. ****Please send the type of pull-ups that have fastening tabs so the child does not have to undress in order to be changed. ****

Clothing: Children are required to dress in seasonably appropriate, comfortable, clothing. Overalls or clothing with difficult closures are prohibited due to challenges these types of clothing present during toileting. Girls will need to wear shorts under their dresses to prevent their underwear from showing during floor activities and outdoor play. Coats must be provided in winter months. Children also must have a seasonably and size appropriate change of clothing at the center at all times. Please label all personal items, especially winter coats/jackets. Children are not allowed to wear jewelry or open-backed shoes (no flip-flops).

Transportation: During summer field trips, the school vans will be used to transport the children. Our insurance company screens each driver and each staff member is trained annually on safe driving and transportation measures. Vehicles must be in safe operation condition and drivers shall have a current Texas Drives License. Children will not be allowed on field trips unless a parent or guardian has signed permission forms and our transportation policy. DBLC: Barrow Elementary students will walk to campus. The van will be utilized during bad weather. Wild Peach Elementary students will be bussed to campus in the morning and afternoon. DDLC: West Columbia Elementary students will be bussed to campus in the morning and afternoon.

Provider's Guide to Parent's Rights

Senate Bill 1098 from the 88th Legislative Regular Session added Section 42.04271 to the Human Resources Code and states that a parent or guardian of a child at a child care facility has the right to:

- Enter and examine the child-care facility during its hours of operation and without advance notice;
- File a complaint against the child care facility;
- Review the child care facility's publicly accessible records;
- Review the child-care facility's written records concerning the parent's or guardian's child;
- Receive inspection reports and information about how to access the child care facility's online compliance history;
- Have the facility comply with a court order that prevents another parent or guardian from visiting or removing the child;
- Be given the contact information for the child care facility's local Child Care Regulation office;
- Inspect any video recordings of an alleged incident of abuse or neglect involving their child provided that:
 - Video recordings of the alleged incident are available;
 - The parent or guardian does not retain any part of the video depicting a child that is not their own; and
 - The parent or guardian of any other child in the video receives prior notice from the facility;
- Obtain a copy of the facility's policies and procedures handbook;
- Review the facility's staff training records and any in-house training curriculum; and
- Exercise these rights without receiving retaliatory action by the facility.

Required Notifications

- The child care facility must provide written notice to the parent or guardian of any other child captured in a video before allowing a parent to inspect a recording.
- The child care facility must provide a parent or guardian with a written copy of the rights no later than the child's first day at the facility.

Helpful Tips

Since a parent may perceive an action taken by a child care facility as retaliatory, keep in mind:

- Documentation is essential in supporting your actions; and
- Follow the suspension and expulsion policy outlined in your operational policies and update your policy, if needed.

