



SEMILLAS

SPANISH IMMERSION PRESCHOOL

Parents Handbook

5226 Elm Street, 77081
Houston, TX.



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1. WELCOME TO SEMILLAS PRESCHOOL

Dear Families,
Bienvenidos a Semillas!

We are honored that you have entrusted us with the care and education of your child during the most important years of early development. The early childhood years are a time of extraordinary growth, discovery, and formation, and we are grateful to accompany your family during this special stage.

At Semillas, we believe that education begins with relationships. Our goal is to create an environment where children feel safe, valued, and inspired to explore the world around them. Through meaningful experiences, nurturing guidance, and a carefully prepared environment, we seek to support the development of the whole child, intellectually, socially, emotionally, and spiritually.

We also recognize that families are the first and most important educators in a child's life. For this reason, we see our work as a partnership with parents. Together, we aim to build a community rooted in trust, communication, and shared values, where children can grow with confidence, curiosity, and joy.

This Parent Handbook has been prepared to help guide our shared journey. It outlines the policies, procedures, and expectations that allow our school community to function smoothly and support the well-being of every child. We encourage you to read it carefully and keep it as a reference throughout the school year.

Thank you for being part of the Semillas community.
We look forward to a wonderful year.
With gratitude,

Melissa Ortiz
Founding Head of School & CEO
Semillas Preschool



1.1 Our Mission

At Semillas Preschool, our mission is to nurture each child's foundation by cultivating strong habits that build character, strengthen values, and inspire a lifelong love for learning.

We are committed to honoring the richness of Hispanic culture while fostering a spirit of love, service, and respect toward others and the world around us.

1.2 Vision

We envision a learning environment where children develop critical thinking skills while growing in a joyful, caring, and structured community.

Through meaningful experiences, children explore the Spanish language and Hispanic culture, while developing character, spiritual awareness, and a deep appreciation for nature.

Our goal is to guide children to become confident, compassionate, and thoughtful individuals.

1.3 Educational Philosophy of Semillas Preschool

At Semillas Preschool, we believe that early childhood is the most important stage in a person's development. During the first years of life, the foundations for learning, emotional security, relationships, and curiosity about the world are formed. Research in neuroscience confirms that millions of neural connections develop during early childhood, shaping cognitive, emotional, and social growth. For this reason, we intentionally design environments that provide children with safety, structure, and the freedom to explore.

- **Respect for Each Child's Developmental Pace**

Every child develops and learns at their own pace. At Semillas, teachers carefully observe, guide, and support each child's development with patience and respect. Rather than accelerating learning, we focus on creating the right conditions for children to grow naturally, confidently, and securely.

- **Learning Through Play and Exploration**

Play is the heart of early childhood learning. Through play, children develop language, problem-solving skills, creativity, social abilities, and emotional regulation. Our classrooms



offer hands-on experiences where children explore materials, experiment, build, imagine, and discover. These experiences encourage curiosity and meaningful learning.

- **Social and Emotional Development**

Children learn best when they feel safe, seen, and valued. For this reason, Semillas places great importance on social and emotional development. Teachers build trusting relationships with each child, helping them recognize emotions, develop empathy, and form healthy relationships with others.

- **Character Formation**

At Semillas we educate both the mind and the heart. Throughout the school year, children are introduced to virtues and values that help guide behavior and strengthen character. Through daily interactions and classroom experiences, children learn respect, responsibility, kindness, gratitude, and confidence in their unique strengths.

- **Language Development and Cultural Identity**

Early childhood is a critical period for language development. Our classrooms encourage rich language experiences through conversation, storytelling, songs, and daily interaction. These experiences strengthen communication skills while also honoring the richness of Hispanic culture and traditions.

- **Small Groups and Secure Relationships**

Semillas classrooms are intentionally designed with small groups and multiple teachers to allow for close attention and meaningful relationships. Strong emotional connections between teachers and children create a sense of security that supports healthy brain development and readiness to learn.

- **Introduction to Early Literacy**

Early literacy is introduced in developmentally appropriate ways that respect each child's readiness. Semillas incorporates the Handwriting Without Tears program, which introduces writing through sensory and hands-on experiences that strengthen fine motor development and make early writing a joyful process.

- **Learning in Connection with Nature**

Nature plays an important role in the learning experience at Semillas. Through activities such as planting and caring for gardens, children observe growth, develop patience, and build respect for living things and the environment.



- **Partnership with Families**

We believe that a child's education is a shared journey between school and family. Semillas works closely with parents to create a consistent and supportive environment for each child's development. Open communication and collaboration allow us to support children in a meaningful and holistic way.

- **Faith and Human Values**

Our educational environment is inspired by human and Christian values rooted in our Catholic identity. In simple and natural ways, children are introduced to gratitude, love for others, respect for life, and a sense of purpose.

1.4 Core Values

Our values are the foundation of everything we do at Semillas Preschool:

Care

We nurture each child with love, patience, and attention.

We create a warm, respectful, and secure environment where every child feels seen, valued, and supported.

Integrity

We act with honesty and consistency in all that we do.

Our team models strong values daily, helping children understand the importance of doing what is right, even when no one is watching.

Joy

We believe that joy is essential for learning and growth.

Our environment is intentionally positive and encouraging, helping children build confidence, resilience, curiosity, and a genuine love for learning.

1.5 The Importance of reading the Parent Handbook

This handbook has been created to help families understand the policies, procedures, and expectations that guide daily life at Semillas Preschool. It serves as a reference to support clear communication and a shared understanding between the school and our families.

We encourage all parents to review this document carefully and keep it available throughout the school year. The guidelines included here help ensure that our school community functions in an organized, respectful, and consistent manner.

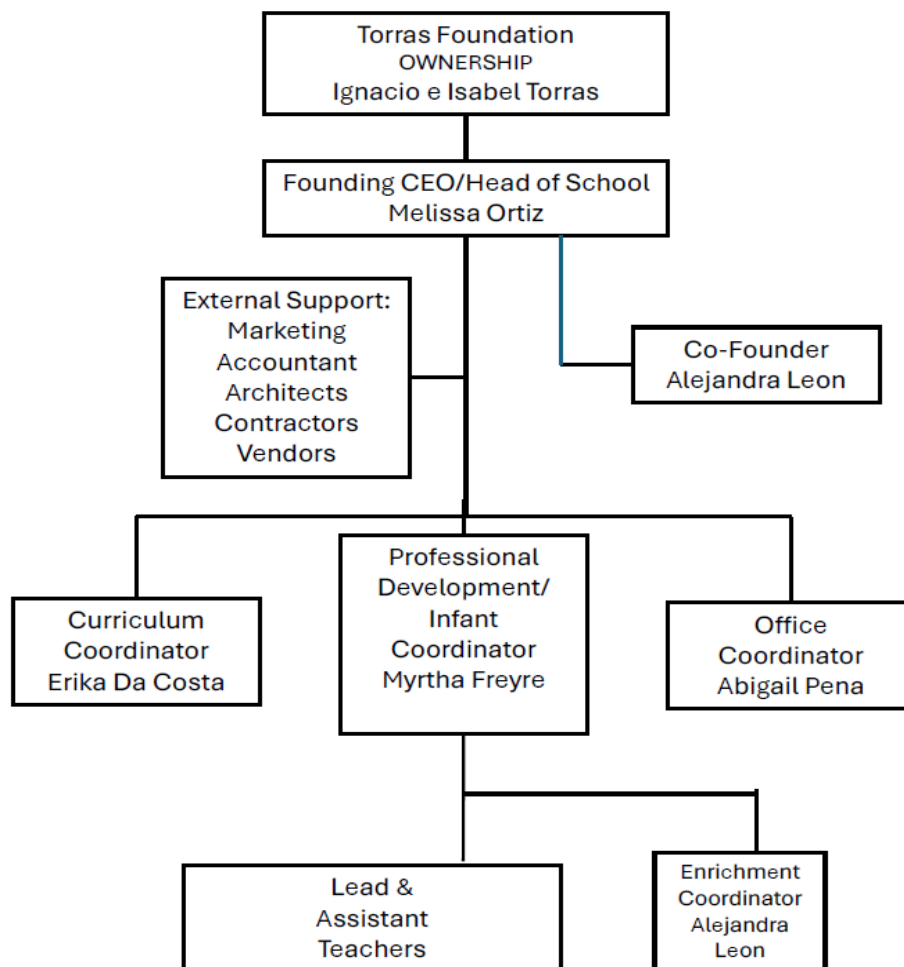


Enrollment at Semillas Preschool indicates the family's agreement to follow the policies outlined in this handbook. Should any questions arise, our school leadership team is always available to provide clarification and support

1.6 School Community

At Semillas Preschool, we strive to build a respectful and supportive school community where children, families, and staff work together to create a positive environment for learning and growth. We ask all members of our community to treat one another with kindness, respect, and consideration. Open communication and collaboration between families and the school are essential to maintaining a healthy and welcoming environment for everyone.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART SEMILLAS PRESCHOOL



2. GENERAL INFORMATION

2.1 School Information

Semillas Preschool

5226 Elm Street

Houston, TX 77081

info@semillaspreschool.com

(713) 505-1126

Semillas Preschool operates as a licensed early childhood program in accordance with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) and all applicable Child Care Regulation (CCR) Minimum Standards.

All school policies, procedures, and daily practices are designed to ensure the safety, well-being, and development of every child in our care.

2.2 Semillas Preschool Core Programs:

2.2.1 Infants: 6-17 months

We know that a baby's brain is shaped through everyday moments: a loving gaze, a soft lullaby, a warm touch, time on the floor, and the comfort of predictable rhythms. Our teachers create these moments with intention, offering a safe foundation for early learning and emotional growth.

A warm and safe start for infants

Every detail of our classroom says: you are safe here. Our Spanish immersion preschool environment is designed to be calm and welcoming, with soft lighting, natural materials, and soothing sounds. Babies feel at home, surrounded by caregivers who understand their individual needs and personalities

Slow, predictable rhythms

Babies thrive when they know what to expect. Our days flow gently, rest, play, feeding, and connection, with no rush and lots of care. This structure gives them the security they need to explore the world, much like the best early childhood education programs



Freedom of Movement

We respect each child's motor development. We don't prop babies up before they're ready; instead, we give them the space to roll, crawl, and explore freely. Movement is part of learning, and we make sure they can do it safely in a nurturing bilingual preschool environment

Loving relationships

Every baby needs someone who truly sees them. Our teachers form stable, loving relationships that help infants feel understood, valued, and deeply connected. These bonds create the emotional security that fuels both confidence and curiosity—a strong foundation for future Spanish immersion learning

2.2.2 Pre-Toddler (12–24 months)

Toddlers are natural explorers. They don't need to be pushed to learn; they just need the space and freedom to do what they already know how to do—move, investigate, test, repeat, and create. At Semillas, our toddler program gives children a safe, engaging environment to follow their curiosity while experiencing the beauty of Spanish immersion preschool learning every day.

We believe exploration is the heart of early learning. That's why our classrooms invite movement, discovery, and meaningful connection—without rushing toddlers to talk, share, sit still, or behave in a certain way. Instead, we meet them where they are, offering calm presence, gentle guidance, and clear, loving boundaries.

A space that sparks discovery

Toddlers are surrounded by low shelves, real objects, and baskets filled with everyday items. These materials are chosen to engage all their senses and encourage them to explore with their whole bodies. Whether they're stacking blocks, pouring water, or exploring textures, they're building essential early childhood education skills through hands-on experiences.

Time to move, get messy and repeat

Toddlers learn best by doing things again and again. We welcome repetition, knowing it's how they master new skills. In our Spanish preschool environment, children pour water over and



over, build and take apart, fall and try again. All while hearing Spanish naturally woven into routines, songs, and play.

Language through real connection

Language development thrives in a space filled with respect, interaction, and genuine conversation. Our teachers speak clearly and kindly, naming feelings, actions. This approach builds vocabulary, understanding, and confidence—helping toddlers connect words to their experiences in meaningful ways.

Care routines as meaningful moments

Snack time, diaper changes, and handwashing aren't interruptions, they're opportunities. We slow down these routines so toddlers feel respected and secure, turning everyday care into moments of love, connection, and Spanish language learning.

2.2.3 Toddler (2–3 years)

At this age, children are stepping into a whole new stage of independence. They have stronger opinions, a growing curiosity about the world, and a deep desire to “do it myself” all while needing the reassurance that someone safe is nearby.

At Semillas, our early preschool program provides a warm, engaging environment where children can explore freely, express themselves, and build meaningful relationships. Here, they feel safe, supported, and truly seen.

We understand that this is an age of big emotions, big energy, and big learning through play. Instead of trying to control it, we honor it, guiding each child with calm presence, genuine connection, and clear, loving limits.

A space that encourages independence and curiosity

Our Spanish immersion preschool classrooms are designed to spark curiosity and confidence. Low shelves, real materials, and hands-on activities invite children to try, test, and repeat. They can choose what to explore while still having structure and support from attentive teachers.

Opportunities for practical life skills



Watering plants, preparing snacks, cleaning up spills—these aren't chores, they're powerful learning moments. Practical life activities teach responsibility.

Support for social development

At this age, children begin to interact more with their peers. We encourage turn-taking, collaboration, and problem-solving in ways that build empathy and cooperation. Our early childhood education approach uses gentle guidance and clear language to help children navigate social situations successfully.

Emotional coaching

We help children name and understand their feelings, offering tools to express them safely through movement, art, storytelling, and conversation. Emotional language is an essential part of our Spanish preschool experience.

Movement and sensory play

Every day includes opportunities for active, whole-body movement and sensory-rich play. From climbing and dancing to messy art and water play, these experiences strengthen both brain and body development.

2.2.4 Preschool (3–4 years)

Curiosity truly takes off between the ages of three and four. Children start asking more questions, imagining new possibilities, and making sense of the world through everything they see, hear, and do. At Semillas, we nurture this natural curiosity through a Spanish immersion preschool experience that combines exploration, creativity, and meaningful connections.

Instead of following a rigid plan, we follow their interests and ideas. We build learning experiences with them—because true understanding begins with wonder, not with instruction. This approach fosters a love of learning that will last well beyond the preschool years.

A space that invites creativity

Our classrooms are filled with open-ended materials like fabric, cardboard, mirrors, light, and loose parts that don't tell children what to make but inspire them to invent. Their play is



their research. Creativity is explored by children, with problem-solving activities, while expanding their vocabulary naturally.

Real-World Connections

We bring nature inside and spend plenty of time outdoors. We explore real questions and real problems using tools and materials that matter in the world around us. This hands-on, early childhood education approach makes learning meaningful and memorable.

Long Projects and Deep Exploration

A puddle, a bug, or a cardboard box can spark investigations that last days or even weeks. We follow the children's curiosity wherever it leads, encouraging persistence, teamwork, and critical thinking, all while weaving Spanish into the daily flow of activities.

Emotional Growth

We guide children to name their feelings, understand others' emotions, and solve conflicts with empathy and words. This emotional literacy is an essential part of our Spanish preschool philosophy, giving children the tools they need for healthy relationships and self-regulation.

2.2.5 Pre-K (4–5 years)

The year before kindergarten is a big milestone. At this age, children begin to see themselves as thinkers, creators, and learners. Their play becomes richer and more complex, their friendships deepen, and their projects show real intention and planning. At Semillas, our Pre-K program is designed to nurture this exciting stage while giving children the benefits of a Spanish immersion preschool experience.

We trust their thinking, value their voice, and encourage their curiosity, creating a space where children feel confident to explore, question, and grow.

Learning through projects

In our Spanish immersion preschool, children become young researchers. They ask questions, test ideas, build models, and document discoveries through drawings, photos, and storytelling. Teachers guide the process, but the children lead—developing problem-solving skills and creativity along the way.



Foundations for Reading, writing, and math through real-life experiences

We don't rely on drills or worksheets. Instead, letters and numbers come alive in recipes, signs, maps, patterns, and the stories children create and act out. This early childhood education approach builds strong academic readiness while keeping learning engaging and meaningful.

Leadership within the group

In our Spanish preschool, children take on leadership roles—caring for their classroom, helping younger peers, and making group decisions. These experiences build responsibility, empathy, and a sense of belonging.

Self-Expression and reflection

Through drawing, storytelling, movement, and conversation, children explore and express their thoughts and feelings. Our teachers provide emotional support, helping children develop self-awareness and communication skills.

2.3 Extracurricular Activities

Semillas Preschool collaborates with a variety of specialized vendors to provide extracurricular activities that take place after the regular school day. These programs are designed to support families by offering convenient opportunities for children to explore additional interests such as arts, sports, and other enriching experiences. Extracurricular activities begin at 3:30 PM.

2.4 Daily Routine and Program Overview

At Semillas Preschool, each day is intentionally designed to provide a balance of structure, exploration, and meaningful learning experiences.

Children thrive in environments where they know what to expect. For this reason, we follow a consistent daily routine that provides security while allowing flexibility to respond to each child's developmental needs.

A Typical Day at Semillas Includes:

- Arrival and warm classroom greeting



- Circle Time and group learning experiences
- Hands-on activities including language, early math, science, and art
- Outdoor play and movement
- Snack and lunch time
- Rest or nap time
- Afternoon activities and closing routines

How Our Day Works

Each part of the day is intentional.

- Arrival is a transition time where children are welcomed and guided into the classroom environment
- Circle Time builds language, attention, and social connection
- Learning Activities are designed to be hands-on, engaging, and developmentally appropriate
- Outdoor Play supports physical development, exploration, and regulation
- Meals provide nourishment and an opportunity to practice independence and social skills
- Rest Time allows children to recharge in a calm and respectful environment

Consistency and Expectations

To support your child's learning and integration into the classroom:

- Children should arrive no later than 9:00 AM
- Late arrivals may disrupt the classroom routine and the child's ability to fully participate
- Consistent attendance helps children feel secure, build relationships, and engage more fully in learning

Our Approach

At Semillas, we respect each child's pace and individuality.

While the structure of the day is consistent, teachers make thoughtful adjustments to meet the needs of the group and each child. Our goal is to create a rhythm that feels both predictable and responsive, allowing children to feel safe, confident, and ready to learn.

Child Development Observation

At Semillas Preschool, teachers regularly observe each child's development as part of the daily learning experience. These observations help teachers better understand each child's interests, strengths, and developmental needs, allowing them to guide learning in a thoughtful and responsive way.



Observation is an ongoing and natural part of the classroom environment. Teachers may take notes, document activities, or reflect on children's interactions and participation during daily routines and learning experiences.

Transition to Preschool

Starting preschool is an important milestone for both children and families. For many children, it may be their first experience spending time away from home and becoming part of a group environment.

During the first weeks of school, children are learning new routines, forming relationships with teachers and classmates, and becoming familiar with the classroom environment. It is normal for this adjustment period to take some time as children gradually gain confidence and comfort in their new setting.

Our teachers support this transition by creating a warm, predictable, and nurturing environment where children feel safe and welcomed. With patience, consistency, and encouragement, most children quickly develop a sense of belonging within the classroom community.

Families can support this transition by maintaining consistent routines at home, encouraging independence, and speaking positively about school.

SECTION 3: SCHOOL OPERATIONS

3.1 Hours of Operation

Semillas Preschool operates Monday through Friday.

- Office Hours: 7:00 AM – 6:00 PM
- School Program Hours: 7:00 AM – 5:45 PM

3.2 School Calendar and Closures

Semillas Preschool operates on an annual academic calendar.

The school calendar includes:

- First and last day of school
- Holidays and school closures
- Staff development days
- Parent meetings and special events

The calendar is available through school communication platforms, Web page, and school communications platforms. The calendar is subject to change, any change will be notified to parents and staff in advanced.



In the event of severe weather, Semillas Preschool follows local school district (HISD) closure decisions.

All closures or schedule changes are communicated via email, school platforms and text message.

3.3 Arrival Procedures

Arrival Time

Children may not be dropped off before 7:00 AM.

The arrival window is from 7:00 AM to 9:00 AM.

Parents or authorized adults must walk their child into the building and into the classroom.

Infants must always be brought directly to their classroom by a parent or authorized adult.

Children must never be left unattended at any time.

Parents must complete the daily sign-in using the QR code when walking their child into the classroom.

To support the flow of the morning and the start of classroom activities, families are encouraged to arrive before 9:00 AM.

At 9:00 AM, the school doors will close so that the academic program can begin without interruption.

The Importance of Arriving on Time

Arriving on time helps children begin their day calmly and participate fully in the most important learning moments of the morning. Early in the day, children are often at their highest level of attention and readiness to learn. Each classroom begins the day with circle time, an engaging group activity that sets the tone for the day.

Circle time supports:

- Social interaction and community building
- Establishing daily routines
- Developing listening and communication skills
- Early literacy and numeracy practice
- Preparing children for a structured school environment.

3.4 Pick-Up Procedures

- Children must be signed out at pick-up in their classroom by a parent or authorized representative.
- The exact time of departure and initials must be recorded using the QR code

Pick up during nap time:

- During nap time, children will be brought to the front by staff
- Parents are not permitted to enter classrooms during rest time



- Children must never be left unattended in vehicles under any circumstances
- Parents are responsible for supervising their child while on school premises after pick-up

3.5 Release of Children

For the safety of all children, children will only be released to individuals authorized by the parent or legal guardian:

- Authorized Pick-Up List
- Emergency Contact List

All authorized individuals must:

- Be at least 18 years of age
- Present a valid photo ID

If the individual is not recognized by staff, identification will be required.

3.6 Temporary Pick-Up Authorization

If someone not listed will pick up a child, the parent or guardian must notify the school **in** advance.

Authorization must be provided through:

- A completed Child Release Form, or
- Written authorization sent via email to info@semillaspreschool.com, followed by a phone call to confirm

The authorization must include:

- Child's full name
- Date of pick-up
- Name of the parent/guardian providing authorization
- Full name of the person authorized to pick up the child

The authorized individual must present valid photo identification when picking up the child.

If these requirements are not met, the child will not be released.

3.7 Custody and Legal Documentation

If there are custody arrangements or legal restrictions:

- Official legal documentation must be provided to the school and kept on file
- The school cannot enforce restrictions without valid documentation

It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to provide updated legal documents.

3.8 Late Pick-Up Procedures

Semillas Preschool expects all children to be picked up on time.

- School program ends at 5:45 PM
- A grace period is extended until 6:00 PM



After 6:00 PM:

- Late fees will be applied (see late fees section)
- The parent will automatically get a late pick-up fee when they sign out the child.

Repeated late pick-ups may result in administrative action, including possible dismissal.

3.9 Parking Lot Safety & Cell Phone Policy

The safety of our students and families is a top priority.

- Drive slowly and remain alert at all times
- Cell phone use is not permitted while driving or walking in the parking lot
- Children must be under direct supervision at all times
- Parents must hold their child's hand when entering and exiting the building
- Children must never be left unattended in a vehicle

3.10 Open Door Policy

Semillas Preschool respects the right of parents and guardians to access their child at any time during school hours, in accordance with Texas Minimum Standards.

To ensure safety and organization:

- Any person must check in at the front office
- A valid photo ID may be required
- Parents, substitutes, visitors must sign in and wear a badge at all times (Child Care Regulations Licensing representative or DFPS, CPS needs to present and wear a badge).
- Access to classrooms must be approved by administration
- Visitors must remain under staff supervision

To support classroom routines and children's independence:

- Extended visits inside the classroom are discouraged
- Visits should not disrupt instructional time

Unauthorized individuals will not be permitted access to the building.

However, if a child is experiencing separation anxiety, frequent visits or repeated comings and goings may disrupt the child's adjustment to the classroom routine. In these cases, we may recommend limiting visits to support the child's comfort and successful transition

4: FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Parent Responsibilities

At Semillas Preschool, we believe that a child's success is built through a strong partnership between school and family.



To ensure a consistent and supportive experience for every child, parents and guardians are expected to:

Communication and Engagement

- Maintain current and accurate contact information at all times
- Regularly review all school communications, including:
 - Daily folders
 - School platform updates
 - Emails and text messages
- Respond promptly to school communication when necessary

Daily Preparedness

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child arrives at school prepared for the day. This includes:

- Bringing all required items (as applicable), including:
 - Water bottle
 - Lunch
 - Change of clothes
 - Diapers and wipes (if needed)
 - Nap mat (for children 12 months and older)
- Ensuring that all items are clearly labeled with the child's first and last name
- Sending children in appropriate clothing and footwear for daily activities

Health and Safety

- Keeping children at home when they are ill, in accordance with the school's illness policy
- Informing the school of any health concerns, allergies, or changes in medical condition
- Providing required medical documentation and updates as needed

Adherence to School Policies

- Following all school procedures, including:
 - Arrival and pick-up procedures
 - Release of children policies
 - Safety guidelines
- Respecting school hours and deadlines
- Ensuring all tuition and fees are paid on time
- Support the school's approach to behavior, routines, and expectations
- Reinforce positive habits and independence at home



- Communicate openly and respectfully with staff

4.2 Communication with Families

Daily Communication

A daily folder will be sent home with each child.

This may include:

- Classroom notes
- Important reminders
- Samples of the child's work

Parents are expected to:

- Review the folder daily
- Return it to school the following school day

Each Friday, families will receive a weekly update through the Brightwheel platform, which includes:

- A summary of the child's learning experiences
- A preview of upcoming activities and focus areas

Monthly Announcements and Weekly Lesson Plans

Each month, the school shares a Monthly Newsletter with important updates, school news, celebrations, and upcoming activities. The Newsletter is sent to families via platform, posted in the general school announcements board, and displayed in each classroom on the Parent Bulletin Board.

In addition, teachers prepare a Weekly Lesson Plan that provides an overview of the activities and learning experiences planned for the classroom. The weekly lesson plan is posted inside each classroom on the Parent Bulletin Board and updated monthly.

School platform App

Semillas Preschool uses the school platform app, a digital platform that helps families stay connected and informed throughout the school day.

Through the app, families can:

- Sign children in and out of school (for parents who walk their children into the classroom)
- Receive updates about their child's daily activities, behavior, photos, and classroom notes
- Communicate directly with the school administration and received directly from the teachers information about supplies needed for the child.
- Receive important school closures and notifications sent directly to their phone or email

School Social Media



Semillas Preschool shares highlights of school life through the school app, and our official social media channels, Instagram and Facebook.

A School social media consent release is needed.

Families are welcome to follow our pages to stay connected with the life of the school and celebrate the learning taking place in our classrooms.

Privacy of Classroom Photos and Videos

Photos and videos shared through the school communication platform are intended exclusively for enrolled Semillas families. To help protect the privacy and safety of all children, families are kindly asked not to download, repost, forward, or share group or classroom photos/videos on social media, messaging apps, or with third parties without the school's authorization and the consent of the families involved.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher Conferences provide an opportunity for families and teachers to discuss each child's development and progress.

During the first weeks of the school year, after approximately eight weeks of school, an initial Social-Emotional Development assessment will be shared to each family, observations about how the child is adapting to the school environment and daily routines.

Formal Parent-Teacher Conferences are held in January. These meetings provide an opportunity to discuss the child's growth, development, and learning progress.

If additional support or discussion is beneficial, a follow-up conference may be scheduled in April, for ages 3 and up.

- Parents may request a conference at any time by contacting the school office
- Teachers or administration may request meetings when needed to support a child's development

Procedure for Parents to Discuss Concerns

Semillas Preschool values open and respectful communication between families and school leadership. If a parent or guardian wishes to discuss a concern with the school administration, we ask that the following process be followed:

1. Contact the school director by email to request a meeting or phone conversation.
2. Include a brief description of the concern so the school can prepare appropriately.
3. The school will respond within 24 business hours to arrange a conversation.
4. Meetings may take place in person, by phone, or virtually depending on the nature of the concern and family preference.



Procedures for Parents to Contact Child Care Regulation (CCR), DFPS Child Abuse Hotline, and CCR Website

In accordance with the Texas Health and Human Services Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers, all staff members participate in annual training focused on recognizing and preventing child abuse and neglect:

- Indicators that may suggest a child could be experiencing abuse or neglect
- Preventive measures that help protect children
- Resources available for intervention and support

Parents and staff can access additional information regarding abuse and neglect through the following resources:

- Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) – Reporting Abuse
- Texas Health and Human Services – Child Care Licensing Contact Page

Whenever appropriate, Semillas Preschool will work in collaboration with local community organizations, Child Care Regulation (CCR), and the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services to provide support for children and families when concerns arise.

If you believe a child may be experiencing abuse or neglect, please take action using one of the reporting options listed below.

Reporting Procedures for Parents and Staff

Contact information:

- 📞 1-800-252-5400
- 📞 1-800-4-A-CHILD
- 🌐 www.txabusehotline.org

Reporting timeframe is immediately and no later than 24 hours after first suspecting

All reports are handled with strict confidentiality and in compliance with state regulations.

To Contact Child Care Regulation (CCR) Directly

Texas Child Care Regulation Information

Families may contact Texas Health and Human Services Child Care Regulation for information regarding childcare licensing, minimum standards, and compliance history.

Texas Health and Human Services – Child Care Regulation

Houston Regional Office

Phone: (713) 696-7184



Families may also access public childcare licensing information, inspection reports, and compliance history through the Texas Child Care Search website:

[Texas Child Care Search](#)

Additional family resources and information regarding child care regulations may be found through:

[Texas Health and Human Services Child Care Resources](#)

Parents are encouraged to communicate with the school administration regarding any concerns. However, families always retain the right to contact Child Care Regulation (CCR) or DFPS directly if they believe it is necessary.

Legal Reporting Requirements for Staff

Under Texas law, individuals who hold state licenses or certifications, or who work in state-regulated facilities and have direct contact with children, are considered mandatory reporters. Reporting timeframe is immediately and no later than 24 hours after first suspecting.

Semillas Preschool fully cooperates with any official investigation and maintains strict confidentiality in all such matters. Our school remains committed to providing a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment for every child entrusted to our care.

5. ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT

5.1 Enrollment Requirements:

- Admission Information Form (Child Licensing Form)
- Emergency contact information
- Medical Information Form
- Health Statement signed by the child's physician
- Immunization records signed by the child's physician or a notarized immunization exemption affidavit if applicable
- Authorization for Emergency Medical Care
- Allergy Action Plan, if the child has a diagnosed allergy (Physician's signature is required)
- Asthma, Seizure, or other Medical Action Plan, if applicable (Physicians signature is required)
- Enrollment Contract and Financial Agreement
- Permission and Authorization Forms
- Release of Liability Agreement



- Teacher Information Sheet (information to help teachers better understand the child)
- Parent Handbook Acknowledgment
- Potty Training Policy (required for children enrolled in the 3-year-old program)

5.2 Admission and Enrollment Process

The admissions process includes:

- A family meeting or interview with school leadership
- Review of the child's developmental needs and program alignment
- Submission of required application and documentation

Admission decisions are based on:

- Program fit, including the child's developmental needs and the family's understanding of the program
- Availability of space
- The school's ability to support the child within the scope of its program

Admission to Semillas Preschool is not guaranteed. Final enrollment is confirmed only after all required steps in the admissions process have been completed and approved by the school.

Semillas Preschool does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, or disability in its admissions policies or educational programs.

5.3 Enrollment Confirmation and Space Reservation

To secure a child's space at Semillas Preschool, a non-refundable registration fee is required.

- This fee confirms enrollment and reserves the child's spot in the program
- The registration fee is separate from tuition and is not applied toward tuition payments
- Enrollment is not considered complete until this fee has been received

Spaces are limited, and enrollment is confirmed on a first-completed, first-secured basis.

5.4 Enrollment Agreement

By enrolling in Semillas Preschool, families agree to comply with:

- The Parent Handbook
- The Operational Policies
- The Enrollment Contract

These documents together govern the expectations, procedures, and financial responsibilities of enrollment.

In the event of any discrepancy, the Enrollment Contract will govern financial obligations. Continued enrollment indicates acceptance of all school policies and procedures.



5.5 Re-Enrollment Policy

If a child withdraws from the program for any reason and later seeks to return:

- Re-enrollment is subject to space availability
- A re-enrollment fee, will be required

The re-enrollment fee may be waived for families who:

- Maintain continuous enrollment through the summer
- Keep their account in good standing

5.6 Withdrawal Procedure

A 30-day written notice is required to withdraw a child from the program.

- Notice must be submitted prior to the next billing cycle
- If proper notice is not provided, two weeks of tuition will be charged

Families are responsible for all tuition and fees incurred during the notice period.

6. TUITION & FINANCIAL POLICIES

6.1 Tuition Structure

Tuition at Semillas Preschool is based on an annual enrollment commitment and is divided into equal monthly payments for convenience.

- The tuition cycle runs from August through July
- Monthly tuition reflects the total annual cost of enrollment, not the number of days attended in a given month
- Tuition is charged to reserve and maintain your child's space in the program

For this reason:

- Tuition is not adjusted for absences, holidays, illness, vacations, or school closures
- No refunds, credits, or prorations are provided

6.2 Payment Schedule

- Tuition payments are due in advance on the 1st day of each month
- All payments are processed through AutoPay

If an AutoPay transaction is declined:

- The account will be considered pending
- Families have until the 3rd day of the month to resolve the balance without penalty

6.3 Late Payments

If payment is not received by the end of the 4th day of the month:

- A \$35 late fee will be applied

Beginning on the 5th day of the month:



- The child may not attend school until the account balance is paid in full, including any applicable fees

6.4 Payment Methods and Fees

- Payments made via bank account (ACH) incur a 0.6% fee with a 0.25 cent minimum and a \$1 max.
- Payments made via credit or debit card incur a 2.55% processing fee

All payments must be made electronically.

Cash payments are not accepted.

6.5 Discounts and Prepayment Options

Semillas Preschool offers the following options:

- Sibling Discount:
A 10% discount is applied to the lowest tuition rate
- Annual Prepayment Option:
Families may choose to pre-pay 12 months of tuition and receive an 8% discount

Please note:

- Discounts may not be combined
- Discounts do not apply to registration fees or additional charges

6.6 Late Pick-Up Fees

Semillas Preschool operates on a structured schedule that must be respected.

- School program hours end at 5:45 PM
- A grace period is extended until 6:00 PM

After 6:00 PM, late fees will apply as follows:

- First 10 minutes: \$20
- Each additional minute: \$1

Additional guidelines:

- Late fees are applied per family, not per child
- The individual picking up the child will be required to sign acknowledgment of late pick-up
- Repeated late pick-ups or failure to pay late fees may result in administrative action, including possible dismissal from the program

6.7 Payment Responsibility

Families are responsible for:

- Maintaining current and valid payment information on file at all times
- Ensuring all tuition and fees are paid in accordance with school policies

Any unpaid balances may be subject to collection efforts, including associated legal fees.



6.8 Receipts and Tax Statements

- A year-end tuition statement will be made available by January 31st for tax purposes
- Statements will be accessible through the school platform
- Copies may also be requested via email

Families who are no longer enrolled may request their statement to be sent electronically or by mail.

6.9 Emergency Closure and Tuition

In the event of an emergency or unforeseen circumstance requiring school closure (including but not limited to hurricanes, severe weather, or public health situations):

- Tuition will be billed at 100% for the first month of closure
- If closure extends beyond one month, tuition will be billed at 50% until normal operations resume

During extended closures, Semillas Preschool may provide learning materials or virtual support when possible.

SECTION 7. HEALTH, SAFETY & HYGIENE

Prepared Learning Environment

At Semillas Preschool, classrooms are thoughtfully prepared to support children's exploration, independence, and curiosity. Each learning environment is designed with materials and spaces that are appropriate for the age and developmental stage of the children.

Classrooms include areas for hands-on learning, creative expression, reading, and collaborative play. Materials are intentionally selected to encourage exploration, problem-solving, and meaningful engagement with the environment.

Our goal is to create a safe, organized, and inviting space where children feel comfortable discovering, experimenting, and interacting with others

7.1 Illness Policy

At Semillas Preschool, the health and well-being of all children is a top priority.

While staff are not medical professionals, teachers conduct daily visual health checks to identify signs of illness such as fever, unusual behavior, or visible symptoms.

To protect all children:

- Children who are ill must remain at home.



- If a child becomes ill during the school day, a parent or legal guardian will be contacted and must arrange for the child to be picked up within 1 hour of notification.
- If the school is unable to reach a parent or legal guardian after reasonable attempts, staff will begin contacting the child's authorized emergency contacts in the order listed on the child's Emergency Contact Form until someone is reached and able to pick up the child.
- Parents are responsible for ensuring that all emergency contact information remains current and that authorized contacts are available to respond when needed.

While waiting for pick-up:

- The child will be cared for in a designated area
- A quiet activity will be provided
- Staff will ensure the child remains comfortable and supervised

7.2 Exclusion Criteria

A child must be picked up from school if any of the following occur:

- The child is unable to participate in normal activities
- Fever of 100.1°F orally or 100°F axillary or higher
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Persistent coughing, wheezing, or difficulty breathing
- Unusual lethargy, irritability, or behavioral changes
- Rashes, open wounds, or skin conditions
- Red or irritated eyes with discharge
- A diagnosed communicable disease
- The illness requires more care than staff can provide without compromising supervision of other children

A doctor's note may be required when appropriate.

7.3 Return to School

Children may return to school when:

- They have been symptom-free for at least 24 hours without medication
- They have been on prescribed antibiotics for at least 24 hours, if applicable
- They are able to fully participate in daily activities

7.4 Communicable Diseases

Semillas Preschool follows DFPS guidelines to prevent and control the spread of communicable diseases.



- Parents must notify the school if their child is diagnosed with a communicable illness
- Children must remain at home until they meet return criteria
- The school will notify families of potential exposure while maintaining confidentiality

7.5 Head Lice Policy

Head lice are common in early childhood and are not related to hygiene.

If lice are detected:

- Parents will be notified privately
- The child must remain at home until treatment is completed
- All lice and nits must be removed before returning

Upon return:

- The child will be checked by trained staff
- If lice or nits are still present, the child will not be readmitted

If multiple cases occur:

- A general classroom notice will be sent (no names disclosed) and if needed the closure of the class will take place.

7.6 Universal Precautions

Semillas Preschool follows universal precautions as defined by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to prevent the spread of illness.

- Staff wear gloves when handling:
 - Food
 - Bodily fluids
 - Diapers
 - Soiled materials
- All surfaces exposed to bodily fluids are:
 - Cleaned immediately
 - Disinfected using approved methods
- Soiled clothing or bedding is:
 - Double-bagged
 - Sent home

7.7 Sanitation and Hygiene

Maintaining a clean and safe environment is essential to children's health.

- Toys and materials are cleaned and disinfected daily
- Mats and rest surfaces are sanitized before and after use
- Trash is disposed of promptly and safely



- Classrooms are maintained in a clean, organized, and sanitary condition at all times

7.8 Hand Washing Procedures

Proper handwashing is required for both staff and children.

Hands are washed for at least 20 seconds:

- Upon arrival
- Before and after eating
- After using the restroom or diapering
- After outdoor play
- After contact with bodily fluids
- After handling animals or garbage

Handwashing is one of the most important practices in preventing the spread of illness.

7.9 Smoking and Tobacco Policy

Semillas Preschool is a smoke-free environment.

- Smoking, vaping, or the use of tobacco products is strictly prohibited:
 - Inside the building
 - On school grounds
 - In the parking lot

This policy applies to staff, parents, and visitors at all times.

SECTION 8. MEDICATION & MEDICAL CARE

8.1 Medication Policy

General Requirements

- Medication must never be sent in a child's backpack
- All medication must be hand-delivered to school staff
- A completed Authorization for Dispensing Medication form must be submitted for each medication
- The form must be signed and dated by the parent or guardian

Prescription Medication

Prescription medication must:

- Be in the original container
- Include:
 - Child's full name
 - Date medication was provided to the school
 - Dosage instructions



- Physician's name
- Be administered only to the child for whom it is prescribed
- Not be used past its expiration date

A doctor's prescription or written authorization is required.

Non-Prescription Medication

Over-the-counter medication must:

- Be in the original container
- Be labeled with:
 - Child's full name
 - Classroom
 - Date medication was brought to the school

Over-the-Counter Medication Policy

For the safety and well-being of all children, Semillas Preschool requires a physician's written authorization for all over-the-counter medications administered at school. The authorization must be provided on the physician's office letterhead, include complete dosing instructions, and be signed and dated by the physician.

This policy helps ensure that medication dosages are appropriate for each child's individual weight and health needs, as children of the same age may vary significantly in size and medical considerations.

If a physician is unwilling to provide written authorization and dosage instructions, the medication may not be administered at school. All medications must also comply with the school's medication administration procedures and licensing requirements

Additional Medication Guidelines

- Semillas Preschool will not administer the first dose of a new medication (Exception: emergency medications such as EpiPen)
- Long-term medication authorization expires one year from the date signed
- Sample medications require a physician's written authorization

Topical Products

The following may only be applied with written parental authorization:

- Diaper rash creams
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent

Additional requirements:

- Products must be clearly labeled



- Products are stored in a secure location in the classroom
- Expired products will not be used

8.2 Medical Emergencies

In the event of a medical emergency, Semillas Preschool will act immediately to ensure the child's safety.

The following steps will be taken:

1. A staff member will assess the situation and begin first aid or CPR if needed
2. Emergency services (911) will be contacted when necessary
3. Every effort will be made to contact the parent or guardian
4. If parents cannot be reached, emergency contacts will be notified
5. A designated staff member will accompany the child to the hospital if required
6. An incident report will be completed and shared with the parent

Parents are responsible for keeping all contact information current and accurate at all times.

8.3 Incident Reports

Semillas Preschool documents all incidents to ensure transparency and communication.

- An incident report will be completed for:
 - Injuries
 - Accidents
 - Unusual events
- Parents will be notified the same day
- The report must be reviewed and signed by the parent
- A copy will be provided to the family
- A copy will be kept in the child's file

SECTION 9. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

9.1 Emergency Preparedness Plan

Our school follows Harris County Safe and Secure Schools guidance and complies with Texas Child Care Licensing safety regulations and preparedness requirements.

Semillas maintains comprehensive emergency preparedness and response plans that have been carefully developed to help protect children, staff, and families in emergency situations. Through ongoing training, secure campus procedures, emergency drills, and compliance with state safety standards, we are committed to providing a safe and protected learning environment for our community.



- Emergency procedures are practiced regularly through drills
- Staff are trained to respond calmly, quickly, and effectively
- Children are guided in a safe and age-appropriate manner

While drills may be new for some children, they are conducted in a way that helps children feel secure and confident over time.

9.2 Fire Drills

Fire drills are conducted monthly at varying times throughout the day.

During a fire drill:

- Teachers lead children through designated evacuation routes
- Primary and secondary exit routes are used as needed
- Children are escorted to a designated safe meeting location

Teachers will:

- Take attendance before exiting and after evacuation
- Carry emergency contact information and emergency bag

Evacuation maps are posted in every door of each classroom and on common areas.

9.3 Severe Weather Procedures

Severe weather drills are conducted every three months.

In the event of severe weather:

- Outdoor activities will be suspended
- Staff will monitor weather alerts and conditions

If a severe weather watch is issued:

- Staff will prepare for possible sheltering

If a severe weather warning is issued:

- Children will be moved to designated safe areas
- Children will remain in a protective position until it is safe

Parents will be notified via email when possible.

9.4 Lockdown Procedures

Semillas Preschool practices lockdown procedures throughout the year.

In the event of a lockdown:

- All classroom doors will be secured
- Movement within the building will be restricted
- No entry or exit will be permitted until the situation is resolved

Detailed procedures are maintained internally and shared with staff only to ensure safety.

9.5 Evacuation Procedures

In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation (such as fire, gas leak, or other hazards):



- Children will be evacuated using designated exit routes
- Staff will guide children to a predetermined safe location
- Attendance will be taken immediately

Administrative staff will:

- Bring emergency contact records
- Communicate with families as soon as possible

9.6 Designated Emergency Relocation Area

Should an emergency situation require evacuation or temporary relocation, Semillas Preschool has established the reception/cafeteria area of Hank's Gym as its designated emergency relocation and reunification site. The facility is conveniently located in immediate proximity (4 min walking distance) to the school campus and is intended to provide a safe temporary gathering location for children and staff during emergency situations.

- Children will only be released to authorized individuals listed in their records
- A valid photo ID will be required at the time of release

Parents will receive communication with instructions regarding:

- Pick-up location
- Timing
- Procedures

9.7 Communication During Emergencies

During an emergency:

- Communication via email, text message, and an Announcement from the school platform will be sent.
- Instructions of pick and location will be sent in case it is needed.

Please note:

- Staff may not be able to answer phone calls during an emergency
- Parents should monitor email and official school communication channels at all times

SECTION 10. DAILY CARE & ROUTINES

10.1 Supervision

Semillas Preschool ensures that all children are supervised at all times in accordance with Texas Minimum Standards.

- Children remain under sight and sound supervision at all times
- Supervision is maintained during:
 - Classroom activities



- Transitions
- Outdoor play
- Rest time

Children are never left unattended under any circumstances.

10.2 Teacher-Child Ratios

Semillas Preschool maintains teacher-child ratios that meet or exceed Texas Minimum Standards.

Whenever possible, lower ratios are implemented to:

- Provide individualized attention
- Ensure safety and effective supervision
- Support each child's development

10.3 Nap and Rest Time

At Semillas Preschool, rest is an essential part of each child's daily rhythm.

- All children are provided with a daily rest period appropriate to their age
- Children are not required to sleep, but are expected to rest quietly
- A calm and respectful environment is maintained at all times

Infants follow individualized sleep schedules based on their needs.

10.4 Nap Materials and Sleep Arrangements

For Children 12 Months and Older

- Children are required to bring a **mat roll from home**
- Each child is assigned a designated cot or rest space
- All rest spaces are:
 - Clearly labeled
 - Cleaned and sanitized daily

For Infants

- Each infant is assigned an individual crib labeled with:
 - Name
 - Photo
 - Date of birth
- Cribs follow all safe sleep regulations
- Cribs and bedding are cleaned and sanitized daily

Families are not required to bring sleep items for infants.

Comfort Items

Children 18 months and up can bring a small comfort item (lovey):



- Items must be clearly labeled
- Items must be appropriate in size
- Items are used only during rest time

Infant Sleep Requirements (Safe Sleep)

At Semillas Preschool we follow the safe sleep recommendations of:

- Texas Minimum Standards
- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)
- The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)

These practices are implemented to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID).

The following safe sleep procedures are strictly followed:

- Infants are always placed on their backs to sleep.
- Alternative sleep positions may only be used with written physician authorization.
- Infants may not be swaddled.
- Infants sleep on a firm crib mattress with a tightly fitted sheet that meets CPSC safety standards.
- Only one infant per crib is permitted.

The crib remains free of all objects, including:

- blankets
- pillows
- stuffed toys
- bumper pads
- sleep positioners
- soft bedding
- loose items of any kind.
- Sleep positioners are not allowed.
- Pacifiers may be used if they are not attached to any object, cord, or clothing.
- If a pacifier falls out during sleep, it will not be reinserted unless the infant is awake.
- Staff ensure that nothing covers the infant's face or head.
- Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the facility.
- Infants will be actively observed while sleeping.
- Each infant is placed in an individual crib
- Infants will not sleep in car seats, swings, bouncers, or other sitting devices.



- Awake infants will receive supervised tummy time several times per day to promote healthy development.

Crib Requirements

- Cribs:
 - Are labeled with the child's name
 - Include photo and date of birth
 - Contain only a fitted sheet

10.5 Sleep Environment

Semillas Preschool maintains a safe and sanitary sleep environment.

- Cribs, cots, and mats are:
 - Cleaned and sanitized regularly
 - Assigned to individual children
- Sleep equipment is spaced appropriately

A quiet and dim environment is maintained during rest time.

10.6 Rest Equipment (Toddlers and Preschool)

Children 12 months and older are provided with individual rest equipment.

- Each child is assigned:
 - A cot or mat
 - A designated rest space

Requirements:

- Equipment is labeled with the child's name
- Equipment is cleaned and sanitized daily

10.7 Nap Materials

Parents are responsible for providing:

- A nap roll (for children 12 months and older)

Optional items:

- A small comfort item (lovey)

All items are:

- Clearly labeled
- Used only for the assigned child



10.8 Infant Bedding and Materials

For infants:

- Families are not required to provide sleep items
- The school provides and maintains all required bedding

Bedding is:

- Clean
- Washed regularly
- Used only for the assigned child

10.9 Pacifier Policy

Pacifiers are permitted for infants and toddlers for comfort and self-soothing.

To ensure safety and hygiene:

- Pacifiers must be:
 - Clearly labeled with the child's full name
 - Brought in a clean, labeled container
- Each child's pacifier is stored:
 - Individually
 - In a designated area within the classroom
- Pacifiers are:
 - Not shared under any circumstances
 - Maintained clean and in good condition

If a pacifier becomes soiled:

- It will be washed with soap and water
- Properly disinfected
- Allowed to dry before being returned to the child

The school maintains appropriate disinfecting supplies.

- Pacifiers are not attached to strings, clips, or clothing
- If a pacifier falls out during sleep, it will not be reinserted unless the child is awake

As children grow, staff will work with families to gradually reduce pacifier use.

10.10 Diapering Procedures

Semillas Preschool follows strict diapering procedures in accordance with Texas Minimum Standards.

- Diapering procedures are posted at each changing station
- Staff are trained and follow proper hygiene protocols at all times

Parents are responsible for providing:

- Diapers



- Wipes

Additional procedures:

- Gloves are worn during diapering
- Surfaces are cleaned and disinfected after each use
- Soiled items are securely bagged and sent home

10.11 Toileting and Potty Training

Semillas Preschool supports children in developing independence in toileting.

General Expectations

- Children in the 3-year-old and 4-year-old classrooms must be fully potty trained
- Children who are not potty trained may not transition to these classrooms

Support and Accidents

- Staff provide age-appropriate guidance and support
- Children are treated with dignity and respect at all times

In case of accidents:

- Children will be assisted in changing into clean clothing
- Parents must provide extra clothing
- Soiled clothing will be sent home

Consistency Between Home and School

Successful potty training requires consistency.

Families are expected to:

- Support toileting routines at home
- Communicate progress and needs with teachers

SECTION 11: FOOD & NUTRITION

11.1 Meals and Snacks

Semillas Preschool provides children aged 18 months and older with:

- A healthy morning snack
- A healthy afternoon snack

Snacks are selected to support balanced nutrition and healthy eating habits.

11.2 Lunch from Home

Lunch is provided by the family.

- All food sent from home must be fully prepared and ready to eat
- The school does not heat, cook, or modify food brought from home under any circumstances



Lunch Requirements

- Food must be packed in sealed, leak-proof containers
- Glass containers are not permitted
- Children must bring:
 - A spill-proof water bottle or cup daily

Food Safety Rules

- Children eat only the food provided from home
- Food is never shared between children

This policy helps:

- Protect children with allergies
- Maintain safe and hygienic practices

11.3 Infant Feeding

For infants, families must provide:

- Bottles
- Breast milk or formula
- Baby food and snacks as needed

All items must be:

- Clearly labeled with the child's full name
- Prepared and sent daily

Infants are fed according to:

- Parent instructions
- Developmental readiness

11.4 Food Guidelines

To support children's safety and healthy habits:

- Sweetened drinks are discouraged
- If juice is provided:
 - It must be 100% fruit juice
 - Limited to no more than 4 ounces per day

Choking Hazard Prevention

For children 4 years and under, the following foods must be avoided:

- Whole grapes
- Nuts
- Popcorn
- Hot dogs (unless cut appropriately)



- Raw peas
- Hard pretzels
- Large amounts of peanut butter
- Large chunks of raw vegetables or meat

Staff will ensure food is cut into safe sizes when needed:

- Infants: approximately ¼-inch pieces
- Toddlers: approximately ½-inch pieces

11.5 Allergies and Dietary Restrictions

The safety of children with allergies is a top priority.

- Each classroom maintains an allergy list
- Staff are informed and trained to follow precautions

Parents must:

- Provide written documentation of allergies
- Submit an Allergy Action Plan signed by a physician when applicable

11.6 Food for Special Events

For birthdays or classroom celebrations:

- Food must be:
 - Store-bought
 - In original packaging
 - Include ingredient labels

Additional guidelines:

- Families must notify the teacher in advance
- Items must be brought the morning of the event
- Balloons are not permitted due to safety concerns

Nutrition Policy

At Semillas Preschool, meals are not prepared or provided on-site. Families must send all meals and snacks their child will need during the day. For infants, parents must provide all bottles, breast milk or formula, packaged foods, and any necessary snacks.

While the school does not regulate the nutritional content of food brought from home, we support safe and healthy eating habits. Children will only eat the food provided by their families unless written authorization is given by a parent or guardian. For health and safety reasons, children are not permitted to share food with one another.

To promote healthy habits, we encourage families to:

- Avoid sending sugary drinks.
- Avoid introducing solid foods or juice to infants under 6 months.
- If sending juice, ensure it is 100% juice and limit it to no more than 4 ounces per day.



To reduce choking risks for children under four years old, we encourage parents to prepare foods appropriately by cutting them into small pieces and avoiding high-risk foods such as whole grapes, hard candies, popcorn, nuts, large chunks of peanut butter, and similar items.

Food Allergy Policy

When a child with a diagnosed food allergy enrolls, families must provide the Emergency Care Plan for Food Allergies and Anaphylaxis, signed by both the physician and parents.

Staff are trained to:

- Prevent exposure to allergens
- Recognize symptoms of allergic reactions
- Respond appropriately if a reaction occurs

Parents must provide all required medications, which will be stored in the emergency cabinet of the classroom, office staff and teachers will be trained. Allergy information will be shared with staff while maintaining student confidentiality.

All Infant and Toddler classrooms are maintained as peanut-free and nut-free environments.

Based on the severity and nature of a child's allergy, Semillas may implement additional classroom or campus precautions as needed. In certain cases, specific classrooms may become free from designated allergens in order to support the health and safety of the children enrolled in that environment.

Emergency Medications & EpiPen Procedures

Semillas Preschool follows Texas Child Care Licensing Minimum Standards and applicable health and safety regulations regarding the storage and administration of emergency medications. Emergency medications, including epinephrine auto-injectors (EpiPens), inhalers, and other physician-prescribed emergency medications, are maintained to support an immediate response in the event of a medical emergency.

The following procedures are implemented:

- Children requiring emergency medication must have a current physician's authorization, written parent consent, and, when applicable, an Allergy or Medical Action Plan on file with the school.
- Physician documentation must include the child's name, medication name, dosage instructions, administration procedures, and physician signature.



- All emergency medications are clearly labeled with the child's full name and maintained in secure locations readily accessible to designated trained staff during emergencies.
- EpiPens are stored in the child's classroom emergency locked cabinet together with the child's Allergy Action Plan and physician instructions.
- Inhalers and other emergency medications are maintained in a designated secure school office location with immediate staff access in the event of an emergency.
- Emergency medications are prescribed specifically for the individual child and may not be shared between children.
- Designated Semillas staff members receive training on recognizing signs of allergic reactions, asthma emergencies, anaphylaxis, and the proper administration of emergency medications.
- In the event of a suspected life-threatening allergic reaction or medical emergency, trained staff will administer the medication according to the child's medical plan, contact emergency medical services (911), notify school administration, and contact the child's parent/guardian immediately.
- Emergency medications are reviewed regularly to monitor expiration dates and ensure current documentation remains current and on file.
- Any administration of emergency medication is documented promptly according to school procedures and licensing requirements

Infant Feeding Guidelines

Infants are fed according to their individual feeding schedules and needs to maintain consistency between home and school.

- Feeding schedules must indicate whether the child receives breast milk or formula and any foods introduced or intolerances identified.
- All bottles must be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name and the contents (breast milk or formula identification) and must be plastic with secure caps.
- Bottles may be stored in the child's cubby or in the classroom refrigerator.
- All breast milk must be stored in the classroom refrigerator until it is ready to be used. Bottles may not be stored in the child's cubby.

Safety guidelines include:



- Formula must be consumed within one hour after feeding begins; any remaining formula must be discarded.
- Breast milk must remain refrigerated until feeding begins.
- Teachers must record the feeding start time on the bottle label each time a breast milk bottle is used.
- Any remaining breast milk must be used within 2 hours after feeding begins. After 2 hours, any unused breast milk must be discarded.

Reference: [Breast Milk Storage and Preparation | Breastfeeding | CDC](#)

Teachers will document infant feedings on the child's daily report, and all remaining bottles will be sent home at the end of the day.

11.7 Food Handling and Sanitation

Semillas Preschool follows strict food safety procedures:

- The kitchen is inspected annually by Harris County Environmental Health Services
- Staff follow proper handwashing procedures
- Gloves are used during food preparation and service
- Gloves are changed after each use

Additional procedures:

- Surfaces and utensils are cleaned between uses
- Disposable utensils are used when appropriate
- Refrigerated items are stored at safe temperatures
- Dry food is stored in clean, dry conditions
- Expired food is never served

11.8 Breastfeeding Support

Semillas Preschool supports breastfeeding families.

- Mothers are welcome to breastfeed on-site
- A quiet and comfortable space will be provided upon request

11.9 Lunch Support Option (Simply Fresh)

To support families with busy schedules, Semillas Preschool partners with Simply Fresh, a third-party vendor that provides nutritious, child-friendly meals.

- Meals are delivered directly to the school
- Families may choose this option for convenience

This service is optional and provided directly by the vendor.

SECTION 12: PERSONAL ITEMS & DRESS CODE

12.1 Personal Belongings



To maintain an organized, safe, and respectful environment, all personal belongings brought to school must be clearly identified and limited to essential items.

- All items must be labeled with the child's first and last name
- Items should be appropriate for daily school use
- Belongings must be placed in the child's designated area upon arrival

Please note:

- Semillas Preschool is not responsible for lost, damaged, or misplaced items
- Families are encouraged not to send valuable or irreplaceable items

Unclaimed items will be kept for a limited time and may be donated or discarded if not retrieved.

12.2 What to Bring to School

To ensure your child is fully prepared for the day, families are responsible for sending the following items as applicable:

- A spill-proof water bottle or cup
- A lunch (ready to eat)
- A change of clothes (at least one full set)
- Diapers and wipes (if applicable)
- A nap mat (for children 12 months and older)
- A small comfort item for rest time (optional)

All items must be clearly labeled.

Children should arrive each day with everything needed to participate comfortably in all activities.

12.3 Extra clothing

- Children must bring at least two changes of clothing at school
- Two extra pairs of socks
- And 1 pair of shoes

For safety:

- Children must wear closed-toe shoes at all times
- The following are not permitted:
 - Flip-flops
 - Sandals
 - Crocs
 - Rain boots
- Clothing and backpacks with drawstrings are not allowed due to safety risks

12.4 Uniform Policy



At Semillas Preschool, the school uniform is required daily, except on designated special days communicated by the school.

The purpose of the uniform is to promote a sense of community, simplify daily routines for families, and maintain a neat and consistent school environment.

Girls' Uniform

Girls are expected to wear:

- An official Semillas polo shirt or blouse
- A skirt, skort, or dress
- For footwear, white socks, and black, or dark blue rubber-soled shoes are required.

Boys' Uniform

Boys are expected to wear:

- An official Semillas polo shirt
- Shorts or pants
- For footwear, white socks, and black, or dark blue rubber-soled shoes are required.

Cold Weather Guidelines

For colder weather, the following may be worn:

- Long pants, leggings, shorts, or skirts in:
 - Navy blue
 - Khaki
- A long-sleeve shirt may be worn under the uniform

Uniform Purchasing

Uniforms can be purchased through the link provided on the school website.

- Families should allow approximately 15 business days for processing and delivery
- It is recommended to order uniforms in advance to ensure availability
- Uniforms should be shipped directly to the family's home address. Semillas Preschool is not responsible for lost, delayed, misdelivered, or damaged shipments. Families should contact the uniform vendor directly regarding any shipping or order concerns.

SECTION 13: BEHAVIOR & GUIDANCE

13.1 Semillas Preschool Discipline and Guidance Philosophy

At Semillas, our goal is to nurture respectful, responsible, compassionate, confident, and joyful learners.



Semillas uses Positive Discipline and the Language of Virtues as the foundation for discipline and guidance. We believe that young children learn appropriate behavior through secure relationships, clear and consistent expectations, adult modeling, encouragement, repetition, co-regulation, and developmentally appropriate guidance.

Making mistakes is a natural part of childhood and the learning process. Teachers will address the specific behavior, help the child understand its effect, and guide the child toward a safer and more respectful choice.

Caregivers will intentionally recognize and name virtues demonstrated by children. Virtues will also be used when redirecting behavior.

Examples of the Language of Virtues include:

- “Let us practice kindness by using gentle hands.”
- “You are showing patience while you wait for your turn.”
- “Let us show respect by listening while our friend is speaking.”
- “You showed responsibility when you put the materials away.”
- “It takes courage to use your words and ask for help.”
- “Let us practice self-control and take a breath together.”

Caregivers will model the same virtues and behaviors expected from children. Guidance will be calm, respectful, consistent, and appropriate to each child’s age, developmental level, communication abilities, temperament, and individual needs.

13.2 Behavioral Support Plan

If a child demonstrates repeated or challenging behaviors, Semillas Preschool follows a structured process to support the child and family.

Step 1: Initial Incident

- A Behavior Report will be documented and shared with parents

Step 2: Communication with Family

- The teacher and/or Director will meet with the parents
- Expectations and next steps will be clearly explained

Step 3: Parent Conference

- A formal meeting will be scheduled
- A plan of action will be discussed and agreed upon
- Parents will acknowledge understanding of the process



Step 4: Immediate Action

- If behavior continues, the child may be sent home for the day

Step 5: Temporary Suspension

- The child may be suspended from school for a specified period

Step 6: Additional Support Requirement

- In certain cases, additional support may be required to ensure the safety and well-being of all children
- This may include the presence of an additional support adult approved by the school

Final Step: Enrollment Decision

If all previous steps have been taken and behavior does not improve:

- Semillas Preschool reserves the right to determine that continued enrollment is no longer in the best interest of the child or the school community

13.3 State Discipline Policy (Texas Minimum Standards)

In accordance with Texas Administrative Code (Title 40, Chapters 746 and 747):

Discipline at Semillas Preschool must be:

- Individualized and consistent
- Appropriate to the child's level of understanding
- Focused on teaching acceptable behavior and self-control

Permitted Guidance Techniques

- Positive reinforcement and encouragement
- Clear and consistent expectations
- Redirection of behavior
- Brief, supervised separation when appropriate

Prohibited Practices

The following are strictly prohibited:

- Physical punishment of any kind
- Punishment related to food, rest, or toileting
- Hitting, shaking, or any form of physical force
- Verbal humiliation, ridicule, or harsh language
- Isolation in a locked or dark space
- Forcing inactivity or silence for extended periods



SECTION 14: SCHOOL COMMUNITY

14.1 Parent Involvement

At Semillas Preschool, we believe that education is a partnership between school and family.

We value and encourage meaningful parent involvement as part of building a strong and connected community.

Families are invited to participate in:

- Classroom events
- School celebrations
- Special activities and programs

Opportunities for involvement will be shared throughout the year.

Volunteer Guidelines

To ensure the safety of all children:

- All volunteers must complete a background check
- Orientation on policies and procedures and
 - Complete Mandatory Reporting for Child Abuse
 - (<https://www.dfps.texas.gov/Training/Reporting/default.asp>)
- Follow all school policies and procedures
- Respect classroom routines and structure
- Maintain confidentiality at all times

14.2 Visitors and Community Presence

Semillas Preschool maintains a secure and structured environment while remaining welcoming to families.

To ensure safety:

- All visitors must check in at the front office
- Visitors must:
 - Sign in
 - Present valid photo identification
 - Wear a visitor badge at all times
- Access to classrooms must be approved by administration
- Visitors must remain under staff supervision while in the building

Classroom Environment and Independence

At Semillas, we intentionally support each child's independence and sense of belonging within the classroom.



For this reason:

- Extended parent presence inside the classroom is not part of the daily routine
- Visits should be purposeful and coordinated in advance
- Classroom routines and instructional time must be respected

Open Door Policy

Parents and legal guardians have the right to access their child at any time during school hours, in accordance with Texas Minimum Standards.

However, to maintain a safe and organized environment:

- All access must follow school procedures
- Visits should not disrupt the classroom or the learning environment

Communication and Respect

Semillas Preschool is a community built on respect, trust, and collaboration.

All interactions between families and staff are expected to be:

- Respectful
- Professional
- Solution-oriented

Concerns or questions should be addressed through appropriate communication channels, including scheduling a meeting when needed.

SECTION 15: FACILITY & SECURITY

15.1 Building Safety

Semillas Preschool maintains a secure and controlled environment at all times to ensure the safety of all children, staff, and visitors.

- Access to the building is monitored and controlled
- All individuals entering the facility must follow check-in procedures
- Unauthorized individuals are not permitted access to the building or classrooms

Safety measures are in place throughout the school to maintain a protected and well-supervised environment.

15.2 Video Surveillance Policy

Semillas Preschool utilizes video surveillance systems in designated areas of the facility to support safety and security.

- Cameras are used for:
 - Safety monitoring
 - Incident review
- Cameras are located in:



- Classrooms
- Hallways
- Common areas

Cameras are not installed in:

- Bathrooms
- Diapering areas
- Any private spaces

Access to Recordings

- Video recordings are for internal use only
- Access is limited to authorized administrative personnel
- Recordings are reviewed only when necessary

To protect the privacy of all children and families:

- Video footage is not shared with parents or third parties, except when required by law

15.3 Transportation Policy

Semillas Preschool does not provide transportation services.

- Parents or authorized individuals are responsible for transporting children to and from school
- All arrival and pick-up procedures must be followed

SECTION 16: Guidance & Discipline Policy

Semillas Preschool follows Texas Child Care Licensing Minimum Standards regarding positive guidance and discipline practices. Our approach to discipline is designed to help children develop self-regulation, empathy, respect, responsibility, and age-appropriate self-control within a safe and nurturing environment.

Discipline and guidance practices at Semillas are:

- Individualized and developmentally appropriate
- Focused on teaching and redirection
- Based on positive reinforcement and encouragement
- Intended to support healthy social-emotional development

Positive guidance strategies may include:

- Redirection
- Modeling appropriate behavior
- Positive reinforcement and encouragement
- Problem-solving support
- Clear and consistent expectations



- Age-appropriate supervised separation from activities when necessary

Semillas Preschool strictly prohibits:

- Corporal punishment
- Harsh, humiliating, or abusive language
- Physical punishment of any kind
- Punishment related to food, rest, or toileting
- Isolation in locked or dark spaces
- Any form of inappropriate or excessive discipline prohibited by Texas Child Care Licensing regulations

Additional information regarding Texas Child Care Licensing discipline requirements is available in the school's Operational Policies Manual.

Student Dismissal Policy

Semillas Preschool reserves the right to dismiss a child or family from the program when the school determines that the partnership, program structure, or classroom environment is no longer able to appropriately support the needs of the child, the safety and well-being of others, or the expectations outlined in school policies.

Reasons for dismissal may include, but are not limited to:

- Non-payment of tuition or fees
- Repeated late pick-up
- Failure to comply with school policies and procedures
- Disruptive, unsafe, or inappropriate behavior by a child or parent/guardian
- Inability of the school to safely or appropriately meet a child's needs within the current classroom setting
- Repeated failure to maintain respectful cooperation with school staff and procedures

Whenever possible, the school will attempt to work collaboratively with families to address concerns before dismissal becomes necessary. However, Semillas Preschool reserves the right to determine when immediate dismissal is appropriate in order to protect the safety, operation, and well-being of the school community.

SECTION 17: ADDITIONAL POLICIES



17.1 Physical Activity and Screen Time

Indoor and Outdoor Physical Activity

Active play is an essential part of a child's healthy development. Regular movement supports physical growth, coordination, and overall well-being. Throughout the day, children participate in both structured and unstructured physical activities as part of the daily schedule.

For physical activities, children must wear appropriate footwear with rubber soles, such as school sneakers or athletic shoes.

Infants

Infants participate in daily physical movement activities such as nature walks, tummy time, and opportunities to crawl and explore safe open spaces, including access to age-appropriate play structures.

Toddlers

Toddler classes participate in 30 minutes of structured physical activity, which may include Active Circle Time activities, Stretch and Grow, Music and Movement, Nature walk. In addition, toddlers enjoy two outdoor play periods of approximately 30 minutes each, one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

Preschool

Preschool classes participate in 60 minutes of structured physical activity, alternating between Active Circle Time, Stretch and Grow, Music and Movement. They also enjoy two outdoor play periods of approximately 30 minutes each, in the morning and afternoon.

Physical activity supports children by helping them:

- Build strength and coordination
- Develop balance and stability
- Improve motor skills
- Strengthen confidence and self-esteem
- Enhance concentration and thinking skills
- Learn about shapes, colors, and spatial awareness
- Improve cardiovascular health

17.2 Rainy Day Policy

Outdoor play depends on weather conditions. On rainy days, teachers plan indoor movement activities so children remain physically active.

Examples of indoor activities include:

- Music and dancing



- Obstacle courses using classroom equipment
- Gym mat activities and tumbling
- Cooperative games using hula hoops, streamers, parachutes, or balls
- Tossing and catching games
- Relay races and balance activities

These activities ensure that children remain active and engaged even when outdoor play is not possible.

17.3 Special Needs Policy

Semillas Preschool follows the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which ensures equal access and prohibits discrimination based on disability.

When a child is diagnosed with special needs, the school evaluates the situation on a case-by-case basis to determine what support the child requires and whether reasonable accommodations can be made to provide a safe and appropriate environment.

If medical professionals need to conduct observations, evaluations, or therapy sessions on campus, the following procedures apply:

- Parents must provide written authorization before any assessment takes place.
- Professionals must present valid identification upon arrival.
- To protect the privacy of other students, a designated space outside the classroom may be used.
- Frequent visits (three or more within 30 days) may require a background check.

17.4 Screen Time Policy

Hands-on learning is central to our educational philosophy.

- Children under 2 years old are not exposed to screens.
- For children ages 2 and up, screen use is not part of the regular classroom routine.

Although the Texas Minimum standards allows up to one hour of screen time per day for children 2 and up, our school limits its use to 1 hr. a week. Screens may occasionally be used for specific educational purposes, such as a short educational video related to classroom learning or a virtual assembly.

Screen media may never be used during meals, snacks, rest time, or nap time. Screens are not used as a behavioral management tool, reward, or punishment. Screen media is never used to occupy children without active supervision and engagement from teaching staff.

Any screen media used must be free of advertising, violence, or inappropriate content and must align with the educational philosophy of the school.



Use of Electronic Devices During Drop-Off and Pick-Up

- During drop-off and pick-up times, the use of electronic devices by parents or guardians is not permitted while entering classrooms or interacting with children and staff.
- Families are expected to remain fully present during these transitions in order to support their child's emotional adjustment between home and school.
- Being attentive and engaged during arrival and dismissal helps children feel secure, valued, and supported, and allows for respectful communication between families and school staff

17.5 Water Play Activities

During the summer, Semillas Preschool may offer supervised water play activities as part of the program.

- Water play occurs on designated days during Summer Camp sessions
- Activities include:
 - Water tables
 - Gentle water play

Please note:

- Children are not submerged in water at any time
- All activities are closely supervised by staff

Parent Responsibilities for Water Play

Families must provide:

- A change of clothes
- Appropriate water shoes or sandals
- Sunscreen (if authorized)

Participation is optional and subject to:

- Weather conditions
- Safety considerations

The school reserves the right to modify or cancel activities as needed.

17.6 Hearing and Vision Screening

In accordance with Texas Child Care Licensing Minimum Standards and the Texas Health and Safety Code, children who are four years of age must have documentation of a vision and hearing screening or a professional examination for possible vision and hearing problems.

To support compliance and ensure timely record keeping, Semillas Preschool requires families of children who are four years old by September 1 of the school year to submit



documentation of hearing and vision screening no later than December 1 of that same school year.

The screening may be completed by a physician, pediatrician, qualified health professional, or a certified vision and hearing screener. Documentation must clearly indicate that the child has been screened or examined for possible vision and hearing problems.

All documentation will be maintained in the child's confidential file as required by Texas Child Care Licensing.

17.7 Inclement Weather Policy

In the event of severe weather conditions:

- Semillas Preschool follows the decisions of Houston ISD (HISD)

If HISD closes:

- Semillas Preschool will also close

Families will be notified through:

- Email and text
- And through the Brightwheel app parents' communication

17.8 Weather Guidelines for Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is an important part of the daily routine.

Semillas Preschool follows weather safety guidelines:

32F and up for winter time- outdoor play.

90F and below- summer time- outdoor play.

17.9 Animals & Pets

For the safety, health, and well-being of all children and staff, pets are not permitted on school premises, including classrooms, playgrounds, parking areas, and common spaces.

17.10 TB Testing & Employee Immunizations

In accordance with current guidance from the Texas Department of State Health Services, routine tuberculosis (TB) testing is not currently required for children or staff members in licensed childcare settings unless otherwise recommended by a healthcare provider or public health authority.

Semillas Preschool complies with all applicable Texas Child Care Licensing health requirements regarding employee health records, immunizations, and communicable disease practices. The school reserves the right to request additional health documentation, medical clearance, or testing when deemed necessary for the health and safety of children and staff or as required by public health authorities



17.11 Gang-Free Zone Notice

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1,000 feet of a childcare center is designated as a Gang-Free Zone. Criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity committed within this zone are subject to increased penalties as provided by Texas law.

Semillas Preschool is committed to maintaining a safe, secure, and protected environment for all children, families, staff, and visitors.

17.12 Special Needs & Inclusion Policy

Semillas Preschool is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive environment for all children. Families must inform the school of any medical, developmental, behavioral, emotional, or educational needs that may affect a child's care, safety, or participation in the program.

The school may request additional evaluations, therapy plans, medical documentation, or professional recommendations when necessary to help support the child appropriately within the classroom environment.

Semillas Preschool will make reasonable accommodations when feasible within the school's staffing, resources, licensing requirements, and ability to safely support the child while maintaining the well-being of all children and staff.

The school reserves the right to determine whether the program is able to appropriately meet a child's needs within the current classroom setting and operational structure.

Active Supervision & Child Safety

Semillas Preschool maintains active supervision practices at all times to help ensure the safety and accountability of every child. Staff members conduct name-to-face counts throughout the day, including during transitions, outdoor play, restroom routines, and emergency procedures, to maintain accurate child accountability and active supervision at all times.

SECTION 18: CONFIDENTIALITY & HANDBOOK AGREEMENT

18.1 Confidentiality of Records

Semillas Preschool respects and protects the privacy of all children and families.

- All student records are kept confidential
- Records are accessible only to:
 - a. Child Care Licensing Personnel and/or DFPS
 - b. Authorized school staff



- c. The child's parent or legal guardian

Information is maintained in accordance with licensing requirements and applicable laws. Semillas Preschool does not share personal or student information with third parties, except when required by law.

18.2 Policy Updates

Semillas Preschool reserves the right to update or modify policies as needed.

- Families will be notified of any policy changes through official communication channels
- Continued enrollment constitutes acceptance of updated policies

Parent Handbook Agreement

By enrolling in Semillas Preschool, families acknowledge that they have:

- Read and understood the Parent Handbook
- Agreed to follow all policies and procedures
- Accepted the expectations outlined by the school

Parent/Guardian Acknowledgment

Parent/Guardian Name (please print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Child(ren)'s Name(s):

For additional information regarding school policies and detailed procedures, families are encouraged to refer to the Semillas Preschool Operational Policies Manual, which is available at all times through the school website under the "Parents" section, or may be requested directly from the school staff.

