

# Parent Handbook



# 2016-2017

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## **WELCOME**

We welcome you and your family to The Rising Stars Academy and look forward to supporting you in your role as parents. We value the uniqueness of each family and will make every effort to meet your individual needs. While Rising Stars Academy is primarily for your child, it is your school also. We encourage you to participate in our programs, invite you to observe our classroom settings, and enjoy an impromptu visit. We hope that you will find the center to be a wonderful place that continues to strengthen your relationship with your child.

As with any service organization, however, we must set forth policy to promote the common good and ensure compliance with state rules and regulations. This handbook is written as a guide to summarize helpful information and to highlight our policies. We encourage you to keep it on hand and use it as a reference, but it is not intended to take the place of open, personal communication. We encourage you to voice any concerns you may have to your child's teachers or to administration.

## **EDUCATION**

Rising Stars Academy's staff are highly motivated and dedicated early childhood professionals. All staff are trained in principles of child development, methods in early childhood programs and child guidance, as well as CPR and First Aid. Each year our staff members complete at least 24 hours of continuing education through professional conferences and in-service activities. Our support and office staff also participates in on-going training appropriate to their roles at Rising Stars Academy.

We are committed to our staff and recognize them as vital components of a successful program for your children. We make every effort to ensure the work environment is pleasant and supportive of their needs. We value each staff member's life experience and want to empower him or her as individuals. We support staff development and continuing education because we believe that adults who are learning bring that same enthusiasm for learning to the children.

### **Child Guidance and Discipline Policies**

A critical area of our curriculum is helping children gain self-control. This goal is best achieved in a loving, supportive environment where children are treated with respect and fairness. Our philosophy on discipline is based on respect for the child. The key to success for children is in preparing a supportive learning environment and using selective intervention to guide children in their behavior. We believe that when the environment and activities are prepared, children can initiate their own play and exploration, and the need for teacher control is reduced. Our policy in helping children gain self-control is to intervene and redirect energies before problems begin. Our positive discipline approach consists of redirection, choices, consequences, warnings, supplying language, and problem-solving. We introduce the treasure box as a treat to students who are able to have self discipline, as a positive discipline strategy. Instead of punishing the child for his behavior we like to encourage them to change their behavior due to a reward. We cannot write enough guidelines to fit every child or situation. Therefore, each child is treated as an individual, and parents are expected to work as partners with the staff in helping the child practice self-discipline in the classroom. When an unacceptable behavior begins to occur, the parents are asked to participate in a conference to develop a plan to correct the behavior in a positive way. The plan will depend on the child and the situation. We recognize that children often respond to changes and situations they do not fully understand. It is important that you keep the staff informed of matters that may be affecting your child's behavior. In this way, we can offer support when they are at our school. Our goal is to assist you in raising a happy, well-adjusted child. We can accomplish this goal best through mutual respect and support. We are confident that you, as a parent, will give us that support.

## **Biting Policy**

As we know, biting is a common occurrence among children who do not have language to express their feelings. We understand that biting is normal, but it is not an acceptable means of resolving issues. At Rising Stars Academy, we will take immediate action in the classroom as well as with the family regarding any biting incidents. Immediate action includes, but is not limited to, documenting the biting incident with an incident report for both parties involved, in addition to observing, shadowing, or separating the children. If a specific biting incident continuously occurs, and if we do not receive appropriate cooperation from the family, we will withdraw the child from our facility.

## **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

We hope that Rising Stars Academy is one of many enriching experiences in you and your child's lives. We recognize that you are entrusting us with your most precious family member(s) and want you to consider Rising Stars Academy as part of your extended family. You are considered an essential element in every facet of your child's activities.

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences/Communication**

Children's assessments are conducted throughout the year to provide parents with an overview of their child's developmental progress. Throughout the year, we conduct portfolio assessments, which involve the collection of multiple samples and repeated observations of the child's performance in naturally occurring situations. We also evaluate the child's developmental progress through notation during group as well as one-on-one interactions between the teacher and individual students. Parent-teacher conferences will be held for the Pre-K 3/4 class quarterly. During these conferences, we take the time to answer any questions or concerns parents may have regarding their child's experience at the center. These conferences also enable parents and staff to work closely to meet each child's specific needs. Parents and teachers are also free to request additional conferences any time they wish. We utilize the information gathered during children's assessments and parent-teacher conferences to improve and to update individualized curriculum for each child. Prior to transitioning from one class to the next aged classroom we will set up a 30 minute meeting with the new teacher.

The first line of contact for any communication should be your child's teacher. Please also notify the office of the same information as well (in email or written form), whether it be medication, doctor's orders, diet, or any other requests.

The office will then follow up and through with the requests.

### **Resolving Parental Concerns**

Occasionally, differences in philosophy or child-rearing practices may occur in the child care setting. All concerns about your child's care should be discussed promptly with a teacher or the administration to come to a resolution that will best support your child.

In case of questions or concerns regarding policies and procedures of the center please set up an appointment with the teacher or director and we will be happy to meet with you and discuss.

### **Visitations**

For children who are new to the center, parents may come into the classroom to drop their child and make them comfortable. However, we cannot allow the parents stay longer than 10 - 15 minutes at the beginning of

the class. This will help them establish a relationship and trust with their caregiver. It may take a few weeks for your child to get adjusted to his/her new surroundings and routine.

Parents are encouraged to visit their child's classroom for added insight into our programs. We also encourage parents to visit the child-care center at any time during the child-care center's hours of operation to observe their child, the child-care center's operation, and the program activities, without having to secure prior approval. We ask that you limit your visitation to 15 minutes to minimize disruption. **Please sign in at the office.**

You are also welcome to schedule a classroom observation (up to 30 minutes) and a follow-up discussion with teachers or administration to offer comments or suggestions.

### **Volunteer Program**

We extend an open invitation to parents to observe or participate in their child's classroom whenever desired. Parents and volunteers are encouraged to accompany the children on field trips and offer assistance on special projects throughout the year.

Some suggestions for parental involvement include:

- ❖ Sign up to be a room parent or parent volunteer.
- ❖ Volunteer to visit the classroom and read a story.
- ❖ Donate a book.
- ❖ Attend a field trip.

We ask that when you pick-up your children from the classroom, if you notice a situation that warrants disciplinary action, please notify the teachers in the classroom or administration. Please do not take it upon yourself to discipline any students in our care. Parents entrust Rising Stars Academy and our teachers to discipline students according to our policies set forth in our Parent Handbook. Due to a conflict of interest, we kindly request that our families not befriend our teachers on any internet source (i.e., Facebook or MySpace), texting, or solicit private child care.

### **Newsletter**

Rising Stars Academy publishes a monthly newsletter to keep you informed of our activities. In addition, please refer to our yearly Event Calendar which informs you about upcoming events and school closings.

## **ENROLLMENT**

**The center will be in operation from 6:30 AM to 6:30 PM.**

### **Requirements for Enrollment**

When you enroll your child there will be some necessary paperwork to be filled out. Examples of these are: medical forms (including verification of immunization), medical release forms, etc. We will make all this paperwork available to you and help you with any questions. All paperwork should be completed promptly and returned with the \$75 registration fee. If you choose, a deposit of \$50 can be made to hold your child's seat. The deposit will be applied towards the first week of tuition. Registration fee, supply fee, and any deposit payments are non-refundable if you decide not to enroll your child.

No child will be denied enrollment on the basis of his/her race or religion. We do retain the right to deny enrollment based on teacher student ratio for a particular child's age group. We do not make it a policy to deny enrollment on the basis of a child with special needs; however, if after talking with the parents we realize that we do not have the training, equipment, facilities, etc. to manage the child, we will not be able to accept the child. This is in the best interest of the child, since our goal is to meet the needs of each child. If we are

not sure whether or not we can manage a special need's child, we will be willing to try. The parents and RSA staff would have to evaluate whether or not this arrangement is working as we go along.

### **Closings**

- New Year's Day
- Two days of Eid
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

When a holiday falls on a Saturday, we will be closed the Friday beforehand. If a holiday falls on a Sunday, then we will be closed on the following Monday. In the event of inclement weather or a natural disaster, we will follow RISD's closing schedule.

**We do NOT provide a discount in tuition for holidays, natural disasters, or illnesses.**

## **DAILY PROCEDURES**

### **Daily Sign-In and Sign-Out**

**Parents must sign their child in and out each day.** Roll sheets are located in each of the classrooms. When you bring your child to school, you also certify that to the best of your knowledge, your child is in good health and can participate fully in all activities. Parents are required to accompany their children into their classrooms. It is important that children are aware that their parents are leaving. While this acknowledgement may result in an occasional emotional distress, parents should take comfort in knowing that such separation anxiety usually ends by the time the parent reaches the front door. Parents are required to list the name, address, phone numbers of each person other than the parent who is authorized to care for their child in an emergency. Parents or any other person designated to pick up a child must be prepared to show picture identification to the Rising Stars Academy staff. Children are not released to any other person than named on the registration form, unless we have prior written request from the parent. **Children are not released to anyone younger than eighteen years old unless specified in a letter that is signed by the parent.**

### **Visitors**

Parents and other authorized family and friends are always welcome at Rising Stars Academy. We encourage you to consider the children and their work and ask that you enter their classroom quietly and respect their learning environment. **Please sign in at the office.**

### **Parties**

Parents are welcome to bring special snacks/lunch in recognition of a festive occasion during our scheduled snack/lunch time.

Please check with office for any allergy concerns and an accurate count of students.

### **Sleeping Arrangements**

After lunch, restroom use, and hand washing, the children will take a nap or rest quietly on their individual mats. After 20-30 minutes of resting quietly, those children who are not asleep may read a book or work on a quiet activity directed by the teacher for the duration of the rest time. The classroom will resume scheduled activities once the majority of the children in the classroom are awake.

### **Clothing**

Please be sure that your child's name is clearly marked on all articles of clothing so that we can minimize the loss of personal belongings. In the event of a missing item, please notify us promptly. Unclaimed items are

donated to charity periodically. Clothing should be comfortable, easy for the child to manage (buttons in front, elastic waist bands, etc.) and appropriate for “messy” activities, such as creative arts and outdoor recreation. Clothing that comes on and off easily, without adult help, gives your child added confidence and avoids toileting accidents. Closed-toe shoes, sneakers or other soft-sole shoes are advised for the prevention of injuries. We ask that infants, pre-toddlers, and toddlers have two changes of clothing and a supply of disposable diapers and wipes. Preschoolers and kindergartners should have one change of clothing. A sweater or jacket should be brought to the center during the winter months.

**Personal Belongings**

It is difficult for young children to share toys and personal belongings with other children. Likewise, it is difficult for the staff to monitor all the many belongings children might bring from home. As a result, with the exception of show-n-tell, please leave all toys and/or personal belongings at home. Personal items for naptime should be limited to a pillow or blanket for resting. Children are encouraged to bring a book or record/tape for the teacher to share during group times.

**FINANCIAL POLICIES**

**Tuition**

The fee schedule is as follows for *weekly tuition* for ALL classes:

<u>Full-Time</u> (6:30 AM - 6:30 PM):		<u>Part-Time</u> (8 AM - 1 PM or 9 AM - 2 PM)	
4 or 5 days	\$150/week	4 or 5 days	\$110/week
3 days	\$110/week	3 days	\$ 80/week
1 or 2 days	\$86	1 or 2 days	\$62/week

Monthly Rate option available **only** for Pre-K 3/4:

M-F 8 AM - 1 PM	\$325
M-F 8 AM - 3 PM	\$425
M-F 6:30 AM - 6:30 PM	\$550

**Late Pick-up Fee: \$5 for every 15 minutes during school hours and \$1 per minute after hours**

**Hourly rate for drop in: \$10 per hour**

Families enrolling two or more children will receive a discount of **\$20 per month** for each additional child enrolled.

To keep tuition costs to a minimum, **monthly tuition is due and payable by the first week of each month. Weekly tuition is due on Monday or the first day of attendance of the week** if paying weekly. A \$25 late charge is added for monthly payers and a \$10 charge is added for weekly payers, If not paid on time! If an unforeseen emergency arises that prevents you from paying your fees as agreed, you must contact administration as soon as possible. Repeated late payment will be cause for your child to be dropped from enrollment without prior notice. Rising Stars Academy families may be subject to annual tuition increases.

**Holding Fees**

In order to apply a holding fee for your child's seat, a minimum of 2-week notice is required. Regular tuition amount will be charged otherwise.

- ❖ For all students, there is a \$25 non-refundable holding fee for leave of absence or vacations.
- ❖ A child's seat can be held for a maximum of 4 consecutive weeks then we will charge full tuition.

## Schedule

**We require a minimum of 48 hours notice in order to change days or times of your child's schedule. Or We will charge regular amount. This time allows us to ensure adequate staffing if possible.**

## Additional Important Policies

- ❖ We require a credit card on file.
- ❖ There will be a \$25 Processing Fee for any declined credit card or bounced check.
- ❖ The full tuition is due regardless of sickness, absences or shortened week as per calendar.
- ❖ There will be no transference of days or tuition from week to week.
- ❖ We require a two week paid notice prior to withdrawing the child.
- ❖ We will give you future RSA Credit if you have overpaid. No refunds.

We require 48 hours notice to change days or times. This allows us time to evaluate staff availability and teacher student ratios for the requested change. Giving adequate notice does not guarantee that the request can be accommodated. We will let you know 24 hours prior to the requested change whether it is possible to accommodate the day/time.

## Registration and Supply Fees

There is a non-refundable registration fee of \$75. This fee covers application charges. In addition to this, there is a \$75 supply fee for students enrolling in Pre-K 3 and 4.

## Withdrawal/Program Changes

Should it become necessary to withdraw your child from Rising Stars Academy, **you are required to give 2 week paid notice to administration.** Any program changes will require a 2 week written notification. Extra days beyond the enrolled program time period are billed at the drop-in rate of \$75 per day. This fee is due upon arrival each day. Please check with the office to inquire about availability. Returned checks and or declined credit cards result in a \$25 processing charge. Recurrent returned checks and or declined credit card will result in cash-only terms. Punctuality is a crucial element in the operation of our center, and we ask for your cooperation in adhering to these hours. Late fees will be applicable as necessary.

If we can no longer watch your child for one reason or another, we will give you at least a two-week notice, but would try to give you four weeks. We understand that it is not easy to find day care. Examples of why we would terminate your child's care include (but are not limited to):

- ❖ We decide to move (highly unlikely!)
- ❖ Failure of parent to pay or follow policies
- ❖ Failure to complete required forms
- ❖ Lack of parental cooperation
- ❖ Failure of a child to adjust to the center after a reasonable amount of time
- ❖ Our inability to meet the child's needs without additional staff

## Drop-in Policy

Our drop in rate is \$10 an hour or \$75 for the full day. Drop-in care is based on reservations for that day. The sooner you call to reserve and pay for the day, the better chance the day you need will be available. Full-time clients and children have priority over drop-in children. Once reservation and payment have been made, a spot will be held for your child. If for any reason a drop-in reservation is cancelled, payment will not be refunded.

## HEALTH

### Immunization Requirements

In accordance with state licensing requirements, each parent must submit a doctor's certificate and immunization record upon enrollment. These records are kept on permanent file at the center and must be updated as your child receives immunizations. You may refer to the Health Department's website for immunization requirements: [www.ImmunizeTexas.com](http://www.ImmunizeTexas.com).

Staff at Rising Stars Academy are not required to get vaccinated for any preventable diseases.

### Medicine

Each day that a child is required to take medication at Rising Stars Academy, parents must complete a Medication Authorization Form. According to state licensing requirements, the medication must be kept in its original container and clearly state the following information: the child's name, doctor's name, prescribed dosage, time to be given, and date. For over-the-counter medications, new licensing standards state that we must administer the medication in amounts according to the label directions or as amended by a physician in writing. Rising Stars Academy houses all medications in a secure place, well out of reach of children. We maintain dated records, the amount of medicine dispensed, and the name of the staff person who administered the medication for one year. We also provide refrigeration when necessary. Medicines are returned to you or properly disposed of when they are no longer required by your child.

**If your child goes to the pediatrician and is prescribed medication, please keep your child home until they have completed 24 hours of antibiotic treatment.**

**Please note: RSA does not keep any over the counter medicines on site.**

### Illnesses

While we take precautions to protect your child against illness, most children experience a normal number of infections and illnesses throughout the year. In such cases, we provide a quiet, calm place for your child to rest in the classroom. We also notify you if it is necessary to take your child home or to the doctor. **State licensing regulations state it is necessary for a child to leave the school if they have a fever of 101 degrees or higher, or if they have uncontrollable diarrhea and/or vomiting.**

Should your child become exposed to an infectious disease at Rising Stars Academy, we will notify you promptly. In return, we request that you report to us when your child has been exposed to or diagnosed with a particular infection or disease. In addition, **we also ask that your child be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school for an extended period of time due to an illness or contagion. We will not prorate your tuition.**

**RSA reserves the right to ask a child to be picked up based on illness.**

**Fever:** Fevers are common in young children and are often a signal that something is wrong. If your child has a fever of 101.0°F or higher, please keep him/ her home. If your child develops a fever of 101.0°F or higher while at the center, you will be called to pick him/her up. If your child's fever is *less than* 101.0°F, you will be notified and you may express your wishes to the staff at that time.

Our policy is that your **child must remain free of fever for 24 hours before returning to childcare.** This means that if your child is picked up at 3:00 PM, but still has a fever at 6:00 PM or later, he/she cannot return to

the center the next day. The 24 hours begins when your child's fever has broken and remains in a normal range.

**Diarrhea and Vomiting:** Diarrhea due to illness is highly contagious. If your child has diarrhea, please keep him/her home. If your child has 3 or more diarrhea episodes, or any uncontained diarrhea while at childcare, you will be called to pick him/her up. Our care providers use gloves while changing diapers and use proper hand washing techniques between diaper changes. The changing table is also disinfected after every diaper change. Please understand that germs from diarrhea can be spread through carpets, toys, swings and direct contact. It is very difficult to keep from spreading these germs to other children.

If your child has two or more vomiting episodes while at childcare, you will be called immediately to pick him/her up. Please keep your child at home until 24 hours after the vomiting has stopped. When children return too soon, there is a much higher rate of recurrence and contagiousness.

**Coughs and Colds:** Colds are a common occurrence. However, there are some symptoms that warrant keeping a child home. These include, but are not limited to: bad cold with hacking or persistent cough, green or yellow nasal drainage, productive cough with green or yellow phlegm being coughed up. These symptoms may be present with or without a fever.

If your child has just a cold, please notify their teacher. We encourage extra fluids and proper hand washing. If there are cold medicines you know will make your child more comfortable, we will administer them with your written permission. Please do not expect a teacher to keep a child with a cold indoors. If your child cannot participate in the ordinary daily routine, he/she is probably too sick to be in childcare. Fresh air with proper attire is always healthy.

**Rash:** A rash may be a sign of many illnesses, such as measles or chicken pox. In infants, an external rash may be a sign that something is going on internally. Please do not send your child to the center with a rash until the doctor says it is O.K. to do so.

**Food Allergies:** Food Allergies must be taken seriously. If your child is allergic to any food items please notify the office upon admission. Risk can never be removed but can greatly be reduced by parents, staff, and the center working closely together.

At RSA we have an action plan to deal with food allergies. The plan consists of two parts:

1. An emergency plan outlined by the child's physician. Please see the office for a copy or visit **[www.foodallergy.org](http://www.foodallergy.org)**.
2. A plan describing how the staff will manage the environment on a daily basis.

There will be no sharing of food.

Staff will make sure all children wash their hands and faces upon arrival at the Academy.

Staff will make sure all children will wash their hands and faces after snack and meal times.

Staff will ensure the child is easily observable during snack and meal times.

Staff will ensure that products for activities and projects do not include allergic foods or ingredients.

Staff will be educated and trained on managing food allergies.

Allergy accommodation will be made on a child to child basis if the condition is not severe or life threatening.

Allergy accommodation will be made on a room by room basis if the condition is life threatening.

***If your child's Allergy Action Plan is not on file, RSA will not be liable for any adverse reactions that take place under our care based on individual staff judgments.***

**Asthma:** Uncontrolled asthma can hinder a child's attendance, participation, and progress in school. Staff and parents can work together to remove obstacles and promote children's health and development.

It is important to communicate with parents about managing the child's asthma and having a protocol to follow in the case of an emergency. This communication is much more effective if a child with asthma has an Asthma Action Plan (AAP). Having a completed, up-to-date Asthma Action Plan onsite ensures that we have detailed instructions for decision-making during an asthma attack. The Asthma Action Plan is developed by the child's family and primary care provider and clearly describes steps to take if a child with asthma is experiencing any symptoms. Depending on how serious the child's symptoms are, the Asthma Action Plan provides guidance to help manage the child's asthma. The Asthma Action Plan is tailored for each child and is color-coded into three sections: the green, yellow, and red zones. The action plan can be found at: [www.getastmahelp.org](http://www.getastmahelp.org).

***If your child's Asthma Action Plan is not on file, RSA will not be liable for any adverse reactions that take place under our care based on individual staff judgments.***

## **Potty Training**

We will be happy to assist in potty training your child. When you feel your child is ready for toilet teaching, we ask that you begin this teaching at home during a weekend or vacation. We will follow through and encourage your child while in our care. The child must be showing signs of readiness. When a child is ready, the process should go pretty quickly. The child must be kept in pull-ups or training pants at all times. Putting a child in diapers part time, and training pants part time, can be confusing and delay the training process. Please keep in mind that the activity level here can distract your child from responding to an urge to use the potty, more so than at your home. Therefore, we may continue to use diapers or pull-ups until your child can and will announce that he/she must use the bathroom (not just at home, but here, as well) and can control his/her bladder and bowels for a few minutes beyond that announcement.

Parents need to supply training pants with plastic pants or pull-ups, plus a couple of extra changes of clothing each day (don't forget the socks!). We also ask that during toilet learning, the child be dressed in "user-friendly" clothing as much as possible. The best items are shorts and pants with elastic waists, or dresses for girls. Try to avoid really tight clothing, pants with snaps and zippers, and overalls as often as you can. Your child will need to pull pants up and down on their own, plus it is harder to get the child on the potty in time. Try to avoid really tight clothing, pants with snaps and zippers, and overalls. These are difficult for children to remove "in a hurry".

## **Keeping Records Current and Confidential**

To provide emergency medical care to children at Rising Stars Academy, we require signed authorization by each child's parent or legal guardian. This form contains vital information about each child, such as parents' office and home phone number and addresses; and the name, address, and phone number of the child's physician. This form must be kept current and on file as long as the child attends Rising Stars Academy. Please notify us of any changes. We will request updated contact information on a quarterly basis.

Children's files are stored directly behind the front desk. All child and family information will remain confidential unless a legitimate need exists to share such information. Furthermore, this information will not be disclosed to relevant persons without written permission by a parent or guardian.

## **Nutrition**

Good nutrition is an essential ingredient in our child development program. Rising Stars Academy provides two snacks daily. You may bring your child's breakfast between 6:00 AM and 8:00 AM. For children in our infant room, parents must provide all food (i.e., formula, breast milk, table foods, jar foods, snacks). Upon request, we will provide an area for mothers who would like to breastfeed their child.

We utilize mealtimes to emphasize at an early age the long-term benefits and the joy of healthy eating habits. We make a special effort to encourage the children to sample new foods and to cultivate a taste for those that are nutritionally beneficial. All meals are served in the classroom. We do not provide meals, we encourage parents to pack healthy meals and snacks for their child.

## **Outdoor Recreation**

Outdoor recreation for fresh air and exercise is scheduled daily, weather permitting (i.e., ozone days). The playground has developmentally appropriate climbing structures for each age group. A park-like playground is aesthetically pleasing as well as conducive to normal muscle development and creative use of space. Your child is given the opportunity to climb, balance, stack, swing, ride bicycles, and simply enjoy nature. In addition, the children enjoy playing ball, participating in group games.

## **SAFETY**

### **Licensing**

Rising Stars Academy is licensed by the State of Texas and adheres to rigid enforcement of regulations that meet or exceed the minimum standards in child care. These standards relate to our physical facility, staff, health and safety procedures, nutrition, and record keeping. The center undergoes regular health inspections by the city and state, and fire and licensing departments. We support high standards in child care, as they are in the best interest of the children in our care.

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.

### **Preventing and Responding to Abuse and Neglect of Children**

#### **Required annual training for employees**

- All employees will receive annual training specifically addressing the prevention and response to suspected abuse and neglect of children. All employees' annual training and the associated requirements will be documented to ensure compliance.
- Employees will be made aware of their legal responsibility, under state law, for reporting and responding to suspected abuse or neglect.
- The Child Abuse Hotline phone number will be provided to all employees and posted in the classroom to ensure that employees can respond to suspected abuse and neglect of children.

#### **Methods for increasing employee and parent awareness of issues regarding child abuse and neglect, including warning signs that a child may be a victim of abuse or neglect**

- All employees will receive annual training addressing the issues regarding child abuse and neglect, including the warning signs that a child may be a victim of abuse or neglect.
- Employees will conduct a regular assessment of children overall appearance and health to identify warning signs of abuse or neglect.

#### **Strategies for coordination between the center and appropriate community organizations:**

- The Child Development Center will maintain Memoranda of Understanding between the early childhood programs and appropriate community organizations to coordinate training and intervention, addressing the recognition, prevention, and intervention for child abuse or neglect.
- The employees will maintain a strong working relationship and communication with Child Protective Services.

#### **Actions that the parent of a child who is a victim of abuse or neglect should take to obtain assistance and intervention.**

- Families or children with a need for mental health or counseling services will be provided with responsive referrals for resources in the community.
- The Child Abuse Hotline toll free number is (1-800-252-5400) and the Local Licensing number is 214-583-4253.

Please review a copy of the minimum standards and our most recent Licensing Inspection report by contacting TDPRS or visiting the website ([www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us))

### **Field Trips (Currently No Field Trips)**

For children three years and older, field trips will be planned periodically throughout the school year. Information regarding the field trips will be presented in your child's monthly classroom newsletter and calendar. In addition, a sign-up sheet will be attached to the inside of your child's classroom door during the week prior to the field trip. This sheet serves as a permission slip to allow your child to attend the field trip. This sheet will need to be signed and initialed for your child to attend the field trip. Each child must wear a Rising Stars Academy t-shirt as well. During field trips, the teacher and the bus driver will have cell phones to call for help whenever necessary, first-aid kits to address any injuries, and alternate transportation arrangements if there is a problem with the bus during the trip.

### **Physical Facility**

To ensure the security of the children at Rising Stars Academy, administration is readily available at the front door to greet incoming guests. If administration does not recognize a guest, the guest will be asked to provide a photo identification card before he/she will be allowed to proceed through the building. All of Rising Stars Academy's playgrounds and classrooms are monitored. Each classroom is designed with safety features, including two exits and observation windows. Rising Stars Academy maintains high standards in health, hygiene, cleanliness, and comfort. To provide a nurturing environment, we are equipped with appropriately sized furnishings, playground equipment, and bathroom fixtures designed to help your child develop self-reliance skills.

### **Emergency Preparedness**

In accordance with the Texas State Law, Rising Stars Academy holds regularly scheduled fire and tornado drills. It is crucial to the safety of the children that they learn proper emergency evacuation procedures. In our effort to simulate emergency conditions during fire drills, children are required to exit the building, dressed as they are, for a few minutes. Evacuation plans are posted in each classroom.

In the event of a disease outbreak, Rising Stars Academy will contact the Texas Health Department and proceed according to their instructions. In the unlikely event that Rising Stars Academy has an intruder/volatile person, we will contact the local police department and follow their instructions.

In the unlikely event that the center is ever severely damaged or declared unsafe, the staff will evacuate all children to a designated emergency shelter to wait the arrival of a parent or guardian. Most likely, we will evacuate to the Brighter Horizons Academy. Should such an emergency occur, the administration of Rising Stars Academy would notify each child's parents. In the event of inclement weather or a natural disaster (floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, etc.), we will follow RISD's closing schedule. Parents may review more details regarding our Emergency Preparedness Plan upon request.

Updated, 12/15/16

I have read and agree to the terms of the Parent Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Child

\_\_\_\_\_