



*First Step Learning Centre*

*Your partner in quality childcare.*

## **Employee Handbook**

### **Welcome to First Step Learning Centre!**

It is our Goal to make each parent feel completely at ease when they leave their children in our care. As an employee of First Step Learning Centre you will be expected to exemplify excellence and quality of service and care at all times. By following the employee policy and procedures outlined in this handbook, you will meet and exceed the standards set forth by childcare licensing.

This handbook is to provide you with information about our policies, procedures, rules, and present benefits. If this does NOT answer your questions with complete clarity, please feel free to ask the Director/Owner for assistance with any issues.

### **AT WILL EMPLOYMENT:**

This handbook is prepared to provide you with information and guidelines. It is NOT a contract of employment between First Step Learning Centre and you, as the employee. Since Texas is an at-will employment state, you are NOT under contract for employment. Thus, employment with First Step Learning Centre is NOT for a definite term. The center or you may terminate employment at any time, for any reason, or for NO reason at all.

### **STATEMENT OF POLICY:**

First Step Learning Centre strives for each employee to be treated with respect and in a fair and just manner. In keeping with this policy, all persons will be considered for employment, promotion, and or training on the basis of qualifications with our regard to race, age, handicapping condition, color , creed, sex and or national origin.

First Step Learning Centre guarantees fair treatment of all employees. This center strives to maintain a work environment in which all staff members are free from harassment, and expressly prohibits any form of unlawful harassment of employees and or co-workers on race, color, religion, creed, gender, national origin, age, marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation, or the presence of

a handicap or disability. However, all employees must be physically able to safely care and supervise young children.

#### **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY:**

In order to provide equal employment and advancement opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions at First Step Learning Centre will be based on merit, qualifications and ability.

#### **ACCIDENTS OF CHILDREN ENROLLED:**

All accidents must be reported immediately to the Owner/Director or person designated by the Owner/Director left in charge of the center in her absence. Accident reports must be made in writing, signed by the Owner/Director (or designee), copied for the child's file, and a copy must be given to the parent on the date of the incident.

*\*Use risk management to keep classrooms and the outside area free from hazards.*

#### **STATE LICENSING RULES AND REGULATIONS:**

ALL staff is expected to be knowledgeable with the Minimum Standards for Childcare. Failure to adhere to these policies may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

- Staff at our childcare center must be 18 years or older and have a high school diploma or equivalent.
- Each staff member must be certified in First Aide/CPR and Infant CPR.
- All staff members must have all state documents filled out and completed in their files before they are hired.
- Each staff member must be cleared through the State of Texas with an FBI criminal background check annually.
- Each staff member must obtain 20 clock training hours annually.

#### **SEXUAL AND OTHER UNLAWFUL HARASSMENTS:**

No harassment will be tolerated in any way, shape, or form.

*\* Immediate termination for any actions related*

**PUNISHMENT OF CHILDREN:**

We are by state law limited to “time out” ONLY as punishment of children. Any physical pain on a child as means of controlling behavior will NOT be tolerated at First Step Learning Centre.

*\*You will be immediately terminated and charges will be filed against you*

**CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY:**

The mission of First Step Learning Centre is to nurture all children entrusted to our care in a warm and loving environment. In keeping with that, this policy seeks to assure that our center is continually working towards providing an environment safe from physical and sexual abuse for those participating and receiving childcare services. All employees should have a good open line of communication with parents of the children enrolled. We operate with an open door policy at all times.

**GROSS MIS-CONDUCT:**

Some offenses are so serious that they can result in termination without warning:

Listed below are some but, not limited to:

- Inappropriate behavior towards parents
- Neglect or physical abuse of a child
- Withholding food, nap or other comfort from a child
- Failure to report to work without calling in
- Falsification of center records
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Smoking in the center
- Conviction of a felony while employed at center
- Fighting, threatening violence or disruptive activity at workplace
- Leaving children unattended (inside or outside)
- Allowing a child to leave the center with an unauthorized person
- Sleeping on the job

- Habitual absenteeism or tardiness
- Sexual or other unlawful unwelcome harassments
- Negligence or improper conduct leading to damage of employer-owned or customer-owned property
- INSUBORDINATION that shows gross disrespect such as threatening, profanity, or yelling at the Director/Owner or persons left in charge of center.
- UNAUTHORIZED use of telephones, mail system, or other center equipment.
- NO CELL PHONES DURING BUSINESS HOURS
- Possession, Distribution, Sale or Transfer, or use of Alcohol or Illegal Drugs in the work place, while on duty, or while operating center equipment.
- UNSATISFACTORY performance and conduct
- Sharing confidential information about center and its employees
- Promoting and sharing RUMORS or NEGATIVE information about First Step Learning Centre.

*\*There will be repercussions to any violations of the above rules. Depending on the severity of the offense and the Director/Owner discretion, violations may be followed by warning, two day suspension, and/or termination of employment.*

#### **CONFIDENTIALITY:**

Due to the sensitive nature of information that you will know as a teacher of young children, it is imperative that you keep sensitive information confidential. Any information about children or their families must be shared on a NEED TO KNOW basis only.

*\* This is a code of ethics.*

#### **REPORTING ABUSE OR NEGLECT:**

All employees must report all actual or suspected child abuse of any child attending the center as soon as possible to the Director/Owner or persons in charge.

Texas Law requires ALL abuse calls to be reported to 1-800-252-5400.

**NOTE:** *Employers are prohibited from retaliating against caregivers who make reports in good faith.*

**EMPLOYEE STATUS:**

Full-Time employees will work a 40 hour per week schedule. Anything less is considered a Part-Time employee.

**STAFF SCHEDULES:**

Each classroom has 2 – 3 staff members. Each staff member has a different schedule to accommodate the room.

**REQUESTING TIME OFF:**

Request must be made 7 days in advance. Forms must be completed and returned for approval. If forms are not approved TIME OFF is not approved. Do not assume because you turn in a request that it's automatically approved. All classrooms must have complete staffing and we must take that into consideration before time off will be approved.

**ABSENCES:** All staff members must call two (2) hours before their scheduled work time. This call must be placed to the center at 214-352-8608. LEAVE MESSAGE on the machine.

Wendy Mireault, Owner/Director 469-767-5549

**Car trouble:** Please arrange with a family member or a friend to arrive at work in a timely manner. It is your responsibility to notify the center if you're going to be late or absent. Failure to do this could result in immediate termination.

**CLOCKING IN AND OUT:**

In order for your work time to be accurate, you are responsible for clocking in & out daily using through Procure. This is the most effective way to document your work time. All employees are required to sign in and out when they come and go from the center. Failure to clock in and out may result in a delay of payment of wages.

**ORIENTATION:**

All new employees will be orientated to the First Step Learning Centre policies and procedures. Such an orientation should begin the 1<sup>st</sup> day of employment and continue throughout the first 30 days. It is each staff member's responsibility to uphold center expectations at all times.

The orientation program will cover the following:

-Review of First Step Learning Centre policies

- Training in Emergency procedures
- First Aid procedures
- Job responsibilities and other duties as assigned
- Training to recognition of childhood illnesses
- Review of child abuse and neglect laws reporting procedures

### **TRAINING:**

Each staff member is responsible for 20 clock training hours in their related classroom annually.

The center will pay for the actual training but the staff members will be trained on their own time.

*\*All staff members must complete the following training:*

- CPR/First Aid
- Shaken Baby Syndrome
- TB testing

All staff members must also complete 8 hours of pre-service training in the classroom in which they will be working. They will also be responsible for knowing the locations of all fire exits and the emergency evacuation plans. *\*All training will be provided by the center.*

### **INTRODUCTORY PERIOD:**

Each Staff member is on a 90 day probationary period. This gives the center time to determine if you meet our expectations to be a member of First Step Learning Centre team.

### **EMPLOYMENT TERMINATION:**

Termination of employment is inevitable part of personnel activity within any organization and many of the reasons for termination are routine. Below are examples of some of the most common circumstances under which employment is terminated:

- Absence without a leave authorized by Director
- Failure to report to work or from lunch breaks
- Violation of Any State Minimum Standard Laws
- Violation of Any First Step Learning Centre policies

Listed above are reasons for immediate termination without any notice of dismissal. You will not be eligible for un-employment. All are just cause reasons for termination.

#### **OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT:**

If First Step Learning Centre determines that an employee's outside work interferes with their performance and ability to meet requirements of this center, the employee may be asked to terminate the outside employment if he or she wishes to remain with First Step Learning Centre.

#### **POSITIVE DISCIPLINARY ACTION:**

You are expected to follow all policies and procedures for smooth operation and safety of the children in your care. However, everyone occasionally will make mistakes and need guidance for optimal performances of teaching duties. When an employee needs guidance, progressive discipline procedures will be followed.

*\*Written warning, written improvement plan, administrative leave without pay, and or termination.*

#### **PERSONAL APPEARANCE:**

Dress, grooming, and personal cleanliness standards contribute to the morals of all employees and affect the image of First Step Learning Centre.

ALL employees should wear the following:

First Step Learning Centre T-shirt, denim or khaki pants/shorts.

Close toe shoes are a MUST. NO OPEN TOE shoes will be permitted during working hours of operation at First Step Learning Centre.

**Jewelry:** should be conservative. Long chain necklaces or pendants should not be worn. Earrings should be small, conservative to prevent children from grabbing and pulling loose.

**Piercing:** Large piercings are NOT acceptable at First Step Learning Centre. Any piercing that is noticeable will be asked to be removed. We are in a business to care for children and we must maintain a professional appearance.

**NOTE:** Employees that report to work in-inappropriately dressed will be sent home and directed to return when they can follow First Step Learning Centre's dress policy. Consult Director if you have any questions.

**SMOKING OR ALCHOL:**

Prohibited on the center premises at all times.

**PROFESSIONAL DEMEANOR:**

Demeanor involves your manner and your non-verbal/verbal tone and gestures. At First Step Learning Centre each caregiver/teacher must be conscious of their emotional undertone that they are exuding.

**Four characteristics to Maintaining a Professional Demeanor:**

- Pleasant smile
- Gentle Approach
- Friendly Greeting/Conversation
- Maintaining Professionalism

**NOTE:** All employees at First Step Learning Centre will greet each parent and child with a smile to let them know that you are truly happy to care for their child.

**PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS:**

Each employee is on a 90 day probationary period from their date of hire. You can be terminated during this time without JUST CAUSE and NO UNEMPLOYMENT benefits will be offered to you.

**PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS:**

Each employee of First Step Learning Centre will be evaluated during their first year of service. Other Evaluations will be under the discretion of the Owner/Director.

**VISITORS:**

No visitors are ALLOWED behind the secure doors.

**STAFF GUESTS:**

No guests are allowed behind the secure doors.

**PAYCHECKS:**

Paychecks will be distributed every Friday at 3pm. If you choose direct deposit, it will be deposited into your account on Friday morning.



**PAY DEDUCTIONS:**

The law requires employee's compensation. We must deduct Social Security, and Federal Taxes required by the State of Texas.

**CHILD CARE :**

Employees can bring their children to daycare. Infant/Toddlers will pay full published rates, Twos, Threes and Fours will be reduced to \$40.00 per week which is payroll deducted.

*\*This benefit is based on availability ONLY by the Owner/Director.*

**PAID VACATIONS:**

Vacation is earned after a year of service. Vacations are paid to employees that work a minimum of 40 hours per week. Anything less is considered part-time. No VACATION will be paid to PART-TIME EMPLOYEES.

1 – 5 years of service = 1 week paid vacation

5 – 10 years of service = 2 weeks paid vacation

10 – 15 years of service = 3 weeks paid vacation

15 and up = 4 weeks paid vacation

**PAID HOLIDAYS:**

A holiday list published at the beginning of each year. All employee's that are Full-Time (40) hours per week will be paid for these days after their probationary period.

Employees can request time-off WITHOUT pay but it will be based on availability of all staff member attendance.

**USE OF TELEPHONE AND COMPUTER SYSTEM:**

These items are restricted for Daycare use only!!! Using these items for personal use is a violation of First Step Learning Centre policies and could result in immediate termination.

**SOLICITATION OF GOODS:**

It is against employee policy to solicit to employees the sale of goods/services.

**MEALS:**

Employees of First Step Learning Centre are welcome to enjoy the lunch that is served to the children daily, at no COST to you. You are NOT allowed in the KITCHEN at any time.

You will be awarded a 1 hour per day lunch break with your 9 hour shift.

NO hot drinks or FOOD is allowed in the classroom.

**CONCLUSION:**

First Step Learning Centre believes that any working parent should be able to feel 100% confident that their child's safety, health, and emotional well-being are given top priority by the people chosen to care for their children when they are not present. We here at First Step Learning Centre are honored to have the privilege of caring for their children. It is our belief that all children should receive excellent educational opportunities in a fun filled challenging environment.

Welcome to the First Learning Centre staff!



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## **EMPLOYMENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM**

This employee handbook has been prepared for your information and understanding of the policies, philosophies, practices, and benefits of First Step Learning Centre. Please read it carefully. Upon completion of your review of this handbook, sign the statement below, and return it to the Director/Owner.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have received and read a copy of the First Step Learning Centre Handbook which outlines the goals, policies, benefits, and expectations of First Step Learning Centre, as well as my responsibilities as an employee.

I have familiarized myself with the contents of this handbook. By my signature below, I acknowledge, understand, accept, and agree to comply with the information contained in the Employee Handbook provided to me by First Step Learning Centre. I understand this handbook is not intended to cover every situation which may arise during my employment, but is simply a general guide to the goals, policies, practices, benefits, and expectations of First Step Learning Centre.

I understand that the First Step Learning Centre Employee Handbook is not a contract of employment and should not be deemed as such.

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(Employee signature)

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(date here)