

Parent's Handbook



Footsteps

West University Church of Christ
3407 Bissonnet • Houston, TX 77005-2115
Tel. (713) 666-9403 • Fax (713) 666-5645

Introduction

Footsteps is a program designed to offer children the maximum in spiritual, intellectual, and physical growth. The curriculum allows the child opportunities to learn about God and His plan for mankind. Basic moral principles are taught that help provide the children with a good foundation for facing the future. Much emphasis is placed on the home, loving, sharing, giving, and obeying. Parents are encouraged through newsletters and verbal communication to work with their children at home to reinforce their family unit and provide a positive attitude toward learning.

Each school day is divided into three main segments: classroom participation, learning centers, and physical exercise. In the classroom the students are involved in Bible stories, application stories, handwork, and arts and crafts. The children also learn group participation and classroom discipline during this educational period. The learning centers provide intellectual growth through a non-competitive environment. The students are worked with individually, not as a group. Basic pre-school skills designed to aid them in Kindergarten are taught. Each child has the opportunity to move at his or her own pace until he or she has mastered his skills. Unstructured free play is scheduled at least once in the day. Both an indoor and outdoor area is provided for their physical development. We do not take children outdoors if there is an Ozone Alert issued by the City of Houston and observed by HISD.

Footsteps provides many other activities during the year such as Community Helper visits, Holiday parties, and dress-up days. Every activity is designed to broaden their scope of understanding and to guide their environmental experiences into a positive atmosphere for learning.

A child's world is so fragile. Their susceptibility to all kinds of influences are at their peak between the ages of one and five. At Footsteps, time becomes of maximum importance in molding and shaping these young lives. We, the staff, take our role as your child's teacher, very seriously.

This handbook is written to give the reader a glimpse inside Footsteps School at West University Church of Christ. It has taken years of hard work and preparation in developing a foundation for this program. It is the sincere hope of those involved in the planning of this program that it be used to the glory of God.

Parental Communication

We feel it is very important to communicate to parents their child's daily activities. It is equally important to encourage parents to visit with their child about their day at school. Open communication between parents and teachers promotes a positive relationship and stimulates parent-child interaction. We want to make you, as parents, feel a part of the program. Your child has a better chance for growth in the right direction with all of us working together toward this goal.

Schedules

Classes are held each Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 9:30am to 2:30pm. You have the option of choosing from two schedules:

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday – 3 day program

Tuesday and Thursday – 2 day program

Each class is provided with a daily schedule. We reserve the right to modify the schedule to suit our Bible story or special holidays and events. We expect to notify you of any changes either verbally or in written correspondence. Please make it a point to have your child here every day possible and allow her or him to attend the entire class day. This will offer security to the child and establish a routine. Besides, this way your child won't miss a thing!

Centers

Footsteps provides Manipulative Centers for ages two-five. Each Manipulative Center provides the child with an awareness of his or her environment through practical life skills and sensorial development. The Centers encourage the child's conquests for natural development of his skills. Many areas of development are presented. The child experiences math and language development, pencil control, eye-hand coordination, sequence of events, dressing skills, and the development of their sense of order so that he or she can manipulate life in a progressive direction. The child is given a chance to explore and develop without competition or criticism. Many children have never experienced "being me" and it is so important that children be allowed to discover themselves. Their functions spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, and socially depend on their abilities to accept and love themselves as they are, as God created them. It is the purpose of the Manipulative Centers to provide an environment so that these things can be accomplished.

Curriculum and Administration

Footsteps will be administrated by the Director, and the Elders appointed to the congregation. The Mother's Day Out Task Force is a body selected by the director, approved by the elders to aid in administration and policy development.

The curriculum is thematic in nature, with each theme revolving around several related concepts. They are consistent with the Christian principles taught at West University Church of Christ and based on the authority of the Bible (in the event there are discrepancies found in the material to the Word of God, appropriate changes will be made.) The daily schedule allows for a balance of indoor/outdoor, teacher initiated quiet/active, large muscle/small muscle, and individual/small group activities. The curriculum is always available for parents to review.

Enrollment Process

Admission shall be open to any child without discrimination in regard to race, color, national origin, sex, religious belief, or political beliefs. Priority registration for West University Church of Christ members and current enrollments will be in the spring semester. All children must be re-enrolled if they plan to return to the program the next year. The following items must be returned, accompanied by the registration fees, which are not refundable, and the last month's tuition in order to complete each child's enrollment:

- Application Form
- Immunization Record

Fee schedule

Class	Monthly Tuition 3 days	Monthly Tuition 2 days	Registration	Supply Fee
12-18 months	\$325.00	\$250.00	\$100.00	\$100.00
18-24 months	\$325.00	\$250.00	\$100.00	\$100.00
2 year old	\$325.00	\$250.00	\$100.00	\$100.00
3 year old	\$325.00	\$250.00	\$100.00	\$100.00
4-5 year old	\$325.00	\$250.00	\$100.00	\$100.00

THE REGISTRATION AND SUPPLY FEE ARE NOT REFUNDABLE.

*We will offer sibling discounts as follows:

- 1st sibling \$20 discount monthly on tuition=\$230/month
- 2nd sibling \$30 discount monthly on tuition=\$220/month

We will follow HISD guidelines regarding age limits for each class. Each child must be the age according to the class by September 1st.

Tuition is based on a certain number of classes during the nine-month school year. The charge per month does not fluctuate. Because our program requirements force us to engage staff based on the number of children enrolled, we cannot give tuition refunds for class days missed. Tuition must be paid by the first class day of the month. Footsteps will accept checks, cash, and money orders. Please make checks payable to Footsteps. Registration and supply fees are due at the time of enrollment. A 10-day grace period is allowed for payment, however, a late payment fee of \$25.00 will be assessed for any monthly tuition not received by the 10th of each month. A charge of \$25.00 will be assessed for any returned checks. After receiving two returned checks, only money orders, cashiers checks, or cash will be accepted.

If a child is not picked up by 2:40 p.m., he/she will be moved to the front office and the parents will be assessed at \$10.00 late fee. An additional \$1.00 will be charged for every minute after 2:40pm. Late fee money will be used to compensate the classroom teacher(s) and enhance your child's classroom.

If you will be traveling and absent for 30 days or more, please discuss available options with the director. You may lose your enrollment status and fees, if arrangements are not made prior to your absence.

Program Specifications

Safety

All children must be signed in and out daily. Each parent's name must be signed clearly and the time arrived next to the child's name indicated. Parents should leave any notes or special instructions on the sign in sheet so that the teacher can readily see them. No child will be released to someone other than a parent without written authorization. Any person authorized to pick-up children must be prepared to show photographic identification before the child will be released to them.

Discipline

Planning ahead to prevent problems, defining limits, redirection and positive reinforcement are all techniques used at Footsteps. There will be no corporal punishment. Occasionally, brief periods of "time out" will be used if necessary. Biting is a very serious and dangerous occurrence with little children. The staff will at all times attempt to work with the child and family to stop the biting. If biting continues, however, a child may be subject to dismissal from the program.

Illness

Children, who have vomited, had diarrhea; fever or rash **within the last 24 hours must remain at home.** They may not return until they have been **symptom free for 24 hours without the use of acetaminophen, Imodium, or other suppressive medications.** If a child becomes ill with a contagious disease, it is imperative that the school is alerted in order to notify other parents and proper authorities if necessary. If a child becomes ill while at school, he will be isolated, and parents will be called to come immediately. This would consist of an oral temperature of 100.4 degrees or greater; rectal temperature of 101.4 degrees or greater; underarm temperature of 99.4 degrees or greater; accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness until medical evaluation indicates that the child can be included in program activities.

In case of sudden illness or accident, the program will urgently attempt to contact parents and if unsuccessful, those persons listed to contact in case of emergency on the application. In extreme emergencies, the child will be transported by ambulance to Texas Children's Hospital.

Food Administration

Snacks will be provided both by the program itself and by parent volunteers. Lunches must be sent from home with all children on a daily basis. We ask that parents provide lunches for their children that are not high in sugar, salt, fat, and preservatives.

Teachers will eat along side the children during snack time and lunch in order to serve as models for children. Children will be encouraged to eat, but they will not be forced. Uneaten food will be sent home unless it cannot be transported in a clean fashion. Should a concern regarding an ongoing eating problem develop, it will be addressed to parents.

Arrival and Departure

Children will be allowed to enter classrooms at 9:30 a.m. Parents must accompany children to their classrooms and wait with the child outside the door until the teacher or assistant is ready to receive students. The teachers will be in their classrooms from 9:00 - 9:30 a.m. each school morning. It is important to allow the teacher this time undisturbed to prepare for the children's arrival. The teacher will greet each parent and child individually at the door and take any belongings the child is unable to carry. Parents are asked not to enter the room or linger after telling the child good-bye. If there is a need to speak with the teacher further, please arrange a time she may call you or meet for a conference.

Personal Belongings

What to bring:

1. A complete change of clothing including underwear and socks. Children should be dressed in washable, comfortable play clothes appropriate for active play both indoors and outdoors. Please have your child in rubber soled, closed toe shoes at all times. ALL ITEMS MUST BE CLEARLY LABELED WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME.
2. Every child needs a bag or backpack each day labeled with his name. This bag should be big enough to hold the child's work and belongings.
3. Diapers, wipes, labeled bottles or baby food, if needed.
4. Children under 18 months should bring a small blanket for naptime each day. It must fit inside their bag.
5. Older children need a cover for the cot they will rest on. We recommend a knapsack/nap mat, sleeping bag, etc.

What not to bring:

1. Children should not bring personal items to school unless requested by the teacher for a share time. These items can become a great source of unhappiness when they are lost, broken or misplaced.
2. No boots or sandals should be worn to school except on special occasions (such as Go Texan Day!).
3. Coats should not have strings, cords, or straps that hang from them.
4. No candy, gum, or carbonated beverages may be brought to school.
5. No toy guns, weapons, or other war toys are allowed.

Important Monthly Events

September	1 st Day of School
November	Thanksgiving Holidays
December	Christmas Holidays
March	Spring Break/Easter
May	Last School Day

The parents will also receive a monthly calendar indicating class themes, parties, and holidays. Our program dates follow HISD school calendar.