

St. Thomas Kids Daycare Preschool Inc.

Family Handbook

Mission and Values

The mission of St. Thomas Kids is to create a stimulating and nurturing environment where children of all abilities, regardless of socio-economic or cultural background, can grow and learn together in acceptance of one another. At St. Thomas Kids, we value the importance of character, commitment to the family, commitment to the community, respect for the individual, and celebrating our differences.

Board of Directors

After the closure of the YMCA Strawberry Patch in May 2024, St. Thomas Church, committed to our community, reorganized the daycare/preschool as a separate corporation. A Board of Directors was formed to guide the reorganization effort to open St. Thomas Kids as soon as possible. The board oversaw the restoration, repair and updating of the space, the provision of new equipment, the selection of a new director, the preparation for commonwealth inspection, all so this vital ministry to our community could begin. The chair of the board, Cyndie Rollinson, leads a board of seven, first appointed by the vestry of St. Thomas Church and later to be elected for rotating three-year terms at annual parish meetings. Requests to address the board may be submitted to the Director or through the parish office.

The Staff

The quality of the program is due to the quality of the staff. It is vital to attract staff that is experienced and knowledgeable in the field of early childhood. Each classroom is staffed with appropriate full-time teachers. Additional part-time staff float between rooms to offer additional support or coverage where needed. Each staff person must receive the required hours of continuing education in child development or special education each year. This requirement is over and above what state licensing regulations require and is crucial in maintaining qualified teachers for the ongoing success of the program. All teachers must have some level of experience with young children and demonstrate a genuine interest in children. All staff members must have an initial physical, TB test, criminal records check, and a reference inquiry before employment begins.

Licensing and Accreditation

Our school is state-licensed and will be regularly inspected to ensure everything meets or exceeds standards, including child-to-teacher ratios and safe facilities. St. Thomas Kids is subject to inspection by state and local health, fire, licensing, and building agencies. Regulations and inspections pertain to staff qualifications, the facility and playground, nutrition, health and safety matters, record-keeping, and child-to-staff ratios. If you have any questions regarding licensing or regulations, please speak with the director.

Classrooms

The individual developmental needs of each child are considered when placement decisions are made. For a child to develop a positive self-image and appropriate social skills, they need to be

grouped with peers whose developmental age is like their own. In all groups of children, there will be varying ability levels. We will take all considerations into account and group children together who may best complement one another. Individual classroom compositions are listed below:

- Infant Room (up to 12 months) – Teacher-to-child ratio is 1:4
- Young Toddler Room (12 months- 24 months) – Teacher-to-child ratio is 1:5
- Older Toddler Room (24 months-36 months) – Teacher-to-child ratio is 1:6
- Preschool Room (Ages 3-5) – Teacher-to-child ratio is 1:10

Curriculum

At St. Thomas Kids, we focus on child-centered teaching, developmentally appropriate practices, and the belief that 'play is a child's work. Our goal is to develop each child's confidence, creativity, and life-long learning skills in our program. To support this goal, we use a "Creative Curriculum," where children learn through play and interactions. Children will learn social skills, colors, shapes, letters, sounds, etc. at St. Thomas Kids. Preschoolers will be given the tools and knowledge to help lead them into a smooth Kindergarten transition. Preschool children will attend Children's Chapel on Thursdays from 11:30-11:50, where they will join Father Jeff Murphy in prayer, singing, and short story time.

Guidance Procedures

When any student at St. Thomas Kids presents with challenging behavior, teaching staff shall follow the standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC):

- Observe the children to identify events, activities, interactions, and other factors that predict and may contribute to challenging behavior.
- Teaching staff shall focus on teaching the child social, communication, and emotional regulation skills and using environmental modifications, activity modifications, adult or peer support, and other teaching strategies to support the child's appropriate behavior.
- Teaching staff shall respond to challenging behavior, including physical aggression, in a manner that provides for the child's safety and the safety of others in the classroom. Our response will be calm, respectful and give the child information on what is acceptable behavior and what is not.
- We will document the challenging behaviors and the intervention methods that were attempted in a log. Documentation may include incident reports, ABC charts, or Behavior Plans.
- Teacher-parent discussions regarding a child's behavior shall be held in private. They shall focus on working as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success.
- If necessary, intervention shall ensure each child has access to professional services, such as referrals to community agencies offering early intervention services, community mental health centers, and/or a private therapist.
- All discipline decisions will always be individualized, consistent, and appropriate to each child's understanding level.

St. Thomas Kids does not condone or tolerate the use of physical punishment of any kind on the property. This policy restricts parents and staff from using physical punishment on their children while on the property. Also, St. Thomas Kids will not tolerate psychological abuse, coercion, threats, derogatory remarks, withholding, or threatening to withhold food as a form of discipline.

Despite these efforts, some children may continue to exhibit significant, challenging behaviors. The following steps will be completed if a child must be removed for challenging behaviors that constitute an imminent danger to the child or others:

- Make a referral to an early childhood mental health specialist or Healthy Social Behavioral Initiative specialist through the Child Care Resource & Referral and refer to the agency responsible for early childhood special education services. If a child's behavior is such that it necessitates temporary removal on a repeated basis, there should be sufficient documentation for consideration of special education services.
- Maintain documentation on file of the incident's outcomes, subsequent parent conference, and the plan developed that includes appropriate intervention strategies. The parent conference's purpose is to create a plan jointly with the family and available resources to address the specific behaviors that constitute an imminent danger (recurring violence, behavior, or aggression)
- If a child continues to exhibit persistent, severe challenging behavior that is unsafe to themselves, other children, or the teachers, St. Thomas Kids may recommend and/or require alternative placement.
- Suppose a child with an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or an Individualized Education Program (IEP) exhibits persistent challenging behaviors. In that case, special considerations are enacted due to procedural safeguards and due process rights ensured under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Parts C and B. St. Thomas Kids will follow all state special education rules and regulations governing suspension/expulsion.

Biting

Biting is a normal part of child development. Young children bite for various reasons, such as teething or exploring a new toy or object with their mouth. Biting can also be a way for toddlers to get attention or express how they're feeling. Frustration, anger, and fear are strong emotions, and toddlers lack the language skills to deal with them. If they can't find the words they need quickly enough or can't articulate how they're feeling, they may resort to biting.

Biting tends to occur most often between 12-24 months of age. Biting past the age of two and a half to three is less common. For repeated biting instances with preschoolers, we may request a parent/teacher conference. The purpose of the parent-teacher conference is to discuss what may be causing the child to be upset, frustrated, confused, or afraid and therefore lead to biting. Additionally, we would develop a joint plan of action following our behavior guidance procedures listed in this handbook. If your child bites or is bitten, you and the family of the other child involved will receive an Incident/Accident Report that keeps the identity of both children confidential.

Registration & Requirements for Enrollment

After parents are notified of the admission date, you must complete the St. Thomas Enrollment Application and pay the non-refundable registration fee.

Upon receipt of the enrollment application and payment of registration fees, the parent receives the enrollment agreement, family handbook, permission forms (photo, CACFP, sunscreen), and health and immunization forms.

On the first day a child attends school, the office must have in each child's file:

- A completed Enrollment Application, including Schedule & Tuition Agreement

- A signed Enrollment Agreement
- A completed set of enrollment paperwork
- Completed medical action plan (if applicable)
- A health assessment by a licensed physician
- A record of immunization or a completed exemption form

PLEASE NOTE: We are required to have each of these forms in our files to maintain our license to operate. State law requires us to exclude from school any student whose files are incomplete until we have received their missing paperwork. We appreciate your cooperation.

Withdrawing

If you need to withdraw your child from St. Thomas Kids, you must give 30 days' advance notice in writing. The 30-day notice begins the day it is received by the director. You will be charged tuition during this notice period, whether your child is in attendance or not.

Your Child's First Day

Preparing for the first day of school can be exciting, but it can also be an overwhelming and anxious time – we understand! We will work with you to make your child's first day the best it can be. Don't hesitate to share any concerns you have before that first drop-off. If possible, we recommend new students start with a few half days, gradually lengthening their time. This helps your child become familiar with the new environment and new faces and reduces anxiety. Each child is unique in their patterns and ease of adjustment to new situations.

Be sure to talk with the staff daily during the transition phase. A consistent daily schedule (arrival and departure routines) also helps children adjust to a new routine and environment.

On the first day, we ask that you send in the items listed below. Please make sure to label each item with your child's name.

- Please provide two complete sets of extra clothes, including socks, for your child. It's always a good idea to keep a sweater or sweatshirt at the center, too. Clothing should be updated periodically to make sure it still fits and is appropriate for the season.
- Diapers and wipes (if applicable). These items will stay at school.
- A small blanket for a nap. We'll keep these items in your child's cubby and ask that you take them home weekly to wash them.
- A child-sized tote or bookbag to send soiled clothes and art projects home in.

Hours of Operation

St. Thomas Kids is currently open from 8:00 am and closes at 5:00 pm. Please be sure to stick to your agreement times for drop-off and pick-up. We will be staffed accordingly and to meet ratio needs.

Parking

To ensure our children's safety, it is of utmost importance that we practice safety and courtesy while in the churches' turn-around. Pull all the way through to allow multiple parents if needed. Please be courteous of others. If you know that you will be a few minutes at drop off and/or pick up, please use street parking.

Please watch out for others, drive slowly, and hold children's hands. Please do not leave your vehicle running and no children should be left alone in the vehicle at drop off or pick up.

Upon entering the building, please press the door button on the right. Please state your name and the child's name that you are dropping off. Also, please DO NOT hold the door open for others. The person behind you may not be a parent. If you are entering with another parent/child, please state all names that are entering the building.

Arrival

Mornings can be busy times, and they often set the tone for our day. Help your child have a successful start to their day by doing the following when you and your child arrive at school:

- Sign your child in when you enter the building upstairs.
- Parents must accompany their child to and from the classroom each day.
- You must connect with the teacher upon your child's arrival. This is a wonderful opportunity to share any important information they should know about your child's morning or changes to their schedule.
- Help your child wash their hands before playing.

***Please plan to bring your child to school by 10:00am. We want each of our students to gain the most they can from their experiences at St. Thomas Kids. When children consistently arrive late, they miss out on educational opportunities and fun activities that the teachers have carefully planned. Try to schedule doctor's appointments etc., early enough so that your child is at school by 10am or please schedule in the afternoon after 3pm (rest/nap time) for an early dismissal.

Separation Anxiety

The first few weeks of school are always a time of adjustment, and many students (and parents) feel a sense of separation anxiety which is perfectly normal. Here are a few strategies to help with the process. Remember, separation anxiety is a phase, it is perfectly natural, and it will pass.

- Make the goodbye prompt and cheerful. Giving your child "one more minute" prolongs the inevitable. As a parent, the best thing you can do is hug your child, say "I love you," and reassure them that you will be back soon.
- Establish a goodbye routine. Children crave routine, and parents who establish a consistent goodbye routine have better luck with successful goodbyes. This could be a secret handshake or a special 'I Love You' ritual. This provides a special moment between the two of you that offers a sense of reassurance.
- Trust your child's teacher. This may be difficult to do when you do not yet know them, but keep in mind that our teachers have chosen this profession because they love children, and they have a wealth of ideas and strategies to help settle an upset little one.
- Acknowledge how your child is feeling. It is important to accept and respect your child's temporary unhappiness as it is genuine and normal. Say things like, "I know you feel sad when Mommy leaves, but you will have a good time, and I will be back very soon."

Also, be prepared for regression. Sometimes a change in schedule like a long weekend or an illness that keeps your child home for a few days can have you feeling like you are right back to

square one. As frustrating and upsetting as this can be, it is perfectly normal. Stick to the above strategies, and you should notice a significant difference in a couple of days.

Absences, Sick Days, & Vacations

For children to learn from our program, they need to be here on a regular basis, and we must record attendance. Absences, sick days, vacations, and calendar holidays are built into the monthly tuition.

- Please notify your child's teacher if you know that your child will be out of school ahead of time for an appointment or vacation. If your child is sick, please notify us as soon as you can.
- If your child has been absent two days in a row for unknown reasons, a staff member will touch base with you to check in and ensure the child is well and when to expect their return.

Classroom Schedules and Activities

Teachers plan activities for the learning centers in the classrooms weekly. Teachers strive to be culturally aware and sensitive in their approach to planning. They plan concrete activities that can be modified to meet all children's needs and provide challenges in skill development.

The classrooms are organized into centers or defined interest areas. Activities are planned for each center in which the children move freely throughout each day. Schedules and lesson plans will be posted for each classroom.

Learning Experiences

Teachers connect with and use their community's resources and the families we serve to expand our curriculum and provide additional hands-on learning experiences. In-house learning events may include cultural experiences through community members as well as a cultural experience provided by families within the center, demonstrations by community helpers, or scientific investigations.

Play Yard and Outdoors

We play outside every day that weather permits. When the weather keeps us inside, we find safe and fun ways to get active indoors. Our playground equipment and materials are designed for active play and exploration, which keeps kids learning while getting exercise and fresh air. Teachers plan outdoor activities to address multiple areas of skill development, including climbing, balance, and coordination, throwing, kicking, running, jumping, and pedaling.

Snack

St. Thomas Kids will provide a morning and afternoon snack daily. Some of the snack options will include (goldfish, animal crackers, fruit (cut-up), chips, pretzels, granola bars, cereal, etc.) Please feel free to make any snack donations to your child's classroom.

Lunch

Please provide your child with a "labeled" bagged lunch daily. The lunches will be stored in the refrigerator and any meals that need heating will be warmed in the microwave. Please remember to pack a well-balanced lunch. Milk will be provided daily for lunch. In addition, please send in a filled water bottle each day. The water bottle should be taken home each day to be cleaned and brought back for the following day.

Formula/Bottles/Sippy Cups

Center staff cannot mix formula bottles and cannot add cereal to bottles. If a child is drinking formula, it must come to school premixed and labeled with the child's name and date every day. Please do not leave bottles at the center overnight; their contents will be discarded. Due to the potential risk, children will not be laid down to rest with a bottle/sippy cup, nor will the bottle/sippy cup be propped. Children cannot walk around the classroom with their bottle/sippy cup. We will work with our families to ensure our students are offered fluids from an open cup as soon as the families and teachers decide together that a child is developmentally ready to use a cup.

Rest Time

All children will participate in a quiet rest time. Children are not required to sleep; however, we have a very busy and stimulating morning, so most toddlers and preschool-aged children will nap when given a relaxing and quiet space to do so. The center provides cribs and nap mats for all children. These items are washed and disinfected weekly. Rest/nap time is daily from 1:00 pm until 3:00 pm. Please provide your child with a small blanket and take it home to be washed at the end of your child's week of care.

Personal Belongings

To prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost, please label ALL items brought from home with your child's name. Within each classroom, each child has a hook and/or cubby assigned to them. This will provide storage space for your child's personal belongings. Please check your child's cubby daily for items that need to be taken home.

Clothing & Shoes

A full day at our school includes fun activities like singing, painting, playing indoors and out, dancing, and eating, so we recommend easy-fitting, washable clothes. Being comfortable lets kids focus on learning and having fun!

Make sure your child is wearing shoes for easy movement. Flip-flops, clogs, cowboy boots, and slick-bottomed shoes often cause children to fall when running outside and limit their play. Please be sure that your child's shoes are rubber-soled and closed-toe with a closed heel or heel strap. Shoes are required for all students.

- Please provide two complete sets of extra clothes, including socks, for your child. It's always a good idea to keep an extra pair of shoes and a sweater or sweatshirt at school, too. Clothing should be labeled with your child's first and last name and checked periodically to make sure it still fits.
- Please provide appropriately layered clothing to keep warm in cold weather, including mittens or gloves, caps, hoods, or hats, sweaters or sweatshirts, socks, and warm, waterproof outerwear and footwear.
- Please have your children wear sun-protective clothing such as clothing made with fabrics rated for ultraviolet protection or clothing that protects skin areas most prone to sun damage.

- Sometimes learning and fun can get messy! St. Thomas Kids is not responsible for lost, stained, soiled, or torn clothing.

Diapers & Wipes

Parents of children in diapers and of children who are in toilet training must provide an ongoing supply of diapers, wipes, and additional necessary clothing. If your child is wearing pull-ups, it is helpful to send in the type with Velcro sides. This allows us to help your child change without having to take off their pants and shoes. Cubbies and coat hooks should be checked daily for items that need to be washed.

Belongings from Home

Your child will be provided with stimulating, educational toys every day. Special objects such as a blanket, soft toy, or a stuffed animal are okay for rest time. Please leave other toys and belongings at home, as bringing a treasured object to school can create tension between children and stress for children and staff if something is lost or misplaced.

Toy weapons (guns, water pistols, swords, shields, or other items that resemble weapons) are not permitted at St. Thomas Kids.

We cannot assume responsibility for lost or damaged personal belongings.

Change in Pickup Person

The safety of our students is our top priority. Please notify your child's teacher if someone other than you is picking up your child. St. Thomas Kids staff will only release your child to the parents and guardians or the other adults you authorized on the student's Enrollment Application. If you need to authorize a new pickup person, please send the request via the director. For your child's safety, any time a person we do not recognize comes to pick up your child, we will ask for a photo ID.

Departure

It is important to sign your child in and out each day. St. Thomas Kids closes at 5:00pm sharp. A late pick-up fee will be assessed when a child is left beyond the center's operating hours. The late pick-up fee does not constitute an agreement to provide after-hours service. If you believe you will arrive after 5:00pm, please call the center as soon as possible. Failure to pick up your child or contact the center, and if you or another authorized emergency contact cannot be reached within 30 minutes after closing time, staff will have to contact the local authorities.

Closures

Please note that any delays or closures will be posted on our website and local news stations.

Inclement Weather Days

In case of inclement weather, St. Thomas Kids will close when determined by the director.

- Opening on a delay, St. Thomas Kids WILL OPEN AT 9:00 am (this will allow enough time for staff and children to arrive safely)

Celebrations & Birthdays

Celebrations and birthdays are special days for kids, and we want to share in the fun! If you would like to provide a small treat for the celebration, please be sure to check for any possible allergies in your child's classroom first. The kiddos often tend to waste the large cupcakes and typically eat only the icing. Cookies and donuts are always a fun and delicious choice! Also, be sure to provide enough for everyone in your child's classroom and check in with your child's teacher before the special day so they can share any tips and plan accordingly.

Transitioning to a New Classroom

Our center strives to make the transition from one classroom to another as smooth as possible. When the time comes to transition from one class to the next, we look at your child's developmental and maturation levels, as well as space availability in other classrooms. A letter will go home to make you aware when your child is transitioning to a new classroom. Your child's current teacher will share with the new teacher about your child's strengths, areas for growth, and supportive strategies. If you are interested in setting up a conference centered around transition, feel free to reach out to your child's teacher.

Family Involvement

St. Thomas Kids believes that children thrive when the relationship between the family and the center is a partnership. We have an open-door policy—parents and guardians are always welcome at the center, so just let us know when you would like to come to say hello! We strongly believe in positive two-way communication. Families are encouraged to communicate with teachers and administration in whatever way is most convenient for them. This may include by phone, notes, email, or in person. Information is shared with families through verbal conversations, the communication app, newsletters, flyers, family bulletin boards, notes, phone calls, posters, conferences, and e-mail.

All St. Thomas Kids' employees are expected to treat all children and families with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all of our families. If difficulties arise, we encourage families to share their concerns with the director verbally or in writing. Inappropriate language directed toward staff and/or in front of children will not be tolerated. Through communication, we will work to resolve the issue. If you are not satisfied with the solution, we encourage you to contact the director. Please do not confront children or other parents in our program. When any member of the St. Thomas Kids community shows behavior that threatens the safety of others or shows repeated disrespect towards other members of our community. St. Thomas Kids reserves the right to ask the family in question to leave the school immediately and terminate that child's enrollment at the center.

Health & Safety

We all know that safety comes first! At St. Thomas Kids, our first goal is to keep children safe, which starts with paying attention to every detail - big and small. Every day at our center, you can be confident that your child is in the very best hands.

Daily Health Checks

Each morning when your child arrives, we will conduct a daily health check. This is a quick physical observation where we check and observe a child's behavior/mood and physical condition, including breathing, skin, eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. Additionally, we ask that you please alert us of anything out of the ordinary we need to know regarding sleep, appetite, bowel movements and urination, mood, and behavior at home and/or unusual events.

Illness Policy

We realize that it is difficult for working parents to keep their children home, but exclusion from school will help prevent contagion and promote the health and safety of your child. Children should be kept home from school if they are feverish, have diarrhea and/or vomiting, have nasal mucous discharge that isn't clear, or if they show signs of becoming sick (listlessness/drowsiness, productive cough, sore throat, ear pain, eyes that are pink, burning, itching, or producing discharge). **See exclusion criteria on the following pages for more specifics.** If your child cannot comfortably participate in the day's usual activities or your child needs to stay indoors and/or have additional rest, these signs are generally indicative that the child should not be at school.

St. Thomas Kids has established guidelines in accordance with state childcare law and other best practices concerning sick children. In case of a communicable disease or condition, and at the discretion of the director, other parents will be notified to watch for symptoms in their children.

If your child becomes ill during the school day, every effort will be made to make them comfortable, away from the other children, but with a familiar caregiver. A parent will immediately be called to come and pick them up. St. Thomas Kids is not able to provide arrangements to care for sick children. Parents are required to respond as soon as possible concerning the sick child when contacted by staff. If we cannot reach the parents within thirty minutes, we will reach out to the family's emergency contacts as stated on enrollment/annual forms. If the illness warrants, the child's pediatrician will be contacted for consultation.

******It is always helpful if you can provide us with a doctor's note, when applicable.******

Illness Exclusion Criteria

Disease/Condition:	If your child has been diagnosed with this disease, our program will:	When to allow your child to return:
Chickenpox (or rash suggestive of chickenpox)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporarily exclude the sick child from childcare • Notify all parents regarding possible exposure and include a warning about aspirin use. • Contact the Child Care Health Consultant if needed to find out other preventative measures to take • Unimmunized children must be excluded until they are permitted to return by their health 	Approximately 5-7 days after the rash begins or when ALL blisters have scabbed over

	<p>care provider</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carefully follow handwashing and cleaning procedures 	
COVID-19 or symptoms of COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporarily exclude the sick child from childcare Contact the Child Care Health Consultant if needed to find out other preventative measures to take Carefully follow handwashing and cleaning procedures 	Guidance from the state is updated frequently.
Diarrheal illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporarily exclude a child that has had 2 or more diarrhea episodes in one day. Carefully follow handwashing and cleaning procedures 	When the child is diarrhea-free for at least 24 hours without the aid of medication.
Fifth Disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporarily exclude the sick child from childcare The program will notify all parents Carefully follow handwashing and cleaning procedures 	When the child is fever-free for at least 24 hours without the aid of medication and has the energy to participate in center activities.
Fever	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporarily exclude the child from childcare if the child has a fever of 100.4 or greater. 	When the child is fever-free for at least 24 hours without the aid of medication.
Hand Foot and Mouth Disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exclude if the child has an open, draining lesion on hand or has lesions in the mouth and is drooling. Carefully follow handwashing and cleaning procedures. 	When lesions heal and/or drooling ceases, and the child can participate in center activities (including meals)

Hepatitis A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporarily exclude the sick child from childcare • Contact the Communicable Disease Section of DHHS • Contact the Child Care Health Consultant if needed to find out other preventative measures to take • Carefully follow handwashing and cleaning procedures 	<p>At least one week after onset of illness or jaundice. Permission to return should be sought from the local health authorities first.</p>
Impetigo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporarily exclude the child from childcare • Carefully follow handwashing and cleaning procedures. 	<p>After treatment has been started</p>
Influenza	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporarily exclude the child from childcare • The program will notify all parents • Carefully follow handwashing and cleaning procedures. 	<p>When the child is fever-free for at least 24 hours without the aid of medication and has the energy to participate in center activities. *Doctor note required</p>
Lice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporarily exclude the child from childcare 	<p>24 hours after treatment and no signs of nits or lice</p>
Pink Eye	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporarily exclude the child with yellow eye drainage and itching • Carefully follow handwashing and cleaning procedures. 	<p>24 hours after the first dose of medication and symptoms are mild</p>
Pneumonia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporarily exclude the child from childcare if they present with fever or difficulty breathing. 	<p>When the child is fever-free for at least 24 hours without the aid of medication and has the energy to participate in center activities.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carefully follow handwashing and cleaning procedures. 	
Ringworm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporarily exclude the child if lesions cannot be covered Carefully follow handwashing and cleaning procedures. 	If unable to cover the lesion(s), after treatment begins and the lesion starts to shrink.
RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporarily exclude the child from childcare if they present with fever or difficulty breathing. Carefully follow handwashing and cleaning procedures. 	When the child is fever-free for at least 24 hours without the aid of medication and has the energy to participate in center activities.
Scabies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporarily exclude the child until treatment is complete. Carefully follow handwashing and cleaning procedures. The program will notify all parents All clothing and blankets will be sent home to be laundered in hot water and dried in a hot dryer. 	Until treatment is completed.
Strep Throat/Scarlet Fever	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporarily exclude the child from childcare Carefully follow handwashing and cleaning procedures. 	24 hours after antibiotics are started when the child is fever-free for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medication and has the energy to participate in center activities.
Tuberculosis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporarily exclude the child from childcare 	Exclude until a health care professional provides a written statement that the child is not

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact local health department and Childcare Health Consultant • Carefully follow handwashing and cleaning procedures. 	infectious.
Vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporarily exclude the child from childcare • Carefully follow handwashing and cleaning procedures. 	When the child is vomit-free for at least 24 hours without the aid of medication.
Whooping Cough/Pertussis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporarily exclude the child from childcare • Contact local health department and Childcare Health Consultant • Unimmunized children must be excluded until they are permitted to return by their health care provider. • Carefully follow handwashing and cleaning procedures. 	<p>Exclude until five days after treatment has started.</p> <p>Exclude untreated cases for 21 days from the date cough began.</p>

* This chart is not an exhaustive list of communicable diseases and policies for exclusion from childcare. For more information, please contact the director.

*A doctor's note may be asked and required to return to care in certain instances, per director's request.

Medications

Whenever possible, we recommend that you administer medications at home. At the center, medications will be administered in accordance with regulations and the policies described below.

General Medication Policies

- No prescription or over-the-counter medication and no topical, non-medical ointment, repellent, lotion, cream, or powder shall be administered to any child:
 - a. without written authorization from the child's parent
 - b. without written instructions from the child's parent, physician, or another health professional

- c. in any manner not authorized by the child's parent, physician, or another health professional
 - d. after its expiration date
 - e. or non-medical reasons, such as to induce sleep
 - f. with a known allergy to the medication.
- All medications will be given following the doctor's written instructions.
 - Medication will be stored separately for each child.
 - Medications will be stored in a locked cabinet in the classroom or locked box in the Center refrigerator, depending on the medication. Medications for external use will be stored separately from medications for internal use.
 - Do not store medication in diaper bags, lunch bags, backpacks, or any other personal belongings.
 - We do not mix the medication with food, formula, or juice, nor will we dispense any medication in a bottle or cup.
 - Medications will be administered by regular classroom staff who have been trained in medication administration in the presence of another staff person. All staff follow the Six Rights of Safe Medication Administration: right child, right medicine, right date/time, right dose, right route & right documentation. Staff will document each dosage on the medication form, listing time, amount given, and initial. If any side effects are noticed, they will be noted on the form, and the child's parent will be notified.
 - Medication forms will be added to the child's file after the medication request is completed. Forms for long-term medication will be considered confidential and treated as such.
 - It is the responsibility of the parent to remove or dispose of any medication after the duration of the request has ended. The classroom staff will dispose of any medicine at the Center after the medication form has expired or after a child has left at the center.
 - St. Thomas Kids reserves the right to refuse the administration of medications if we feel that it is in the best interest of the staff.

Prescription Medication: Medication Administration Permission Form filled in its entirety.

- The medication must be brought to school and stored in the original, tamper-resistant container in which they were dispensed with the pharmacy labels. The pharmacy label must specify:
 - The child's name
 - The names of the medication
 - The amount and frequency of dosage
 - The date the prescription was filled and the expiration date
- The medication shall be administered only to the child for whom they were prescribed. It shall be administered according to the prescription, using the amount and frequency of dosage specified on the label.
- A parent's written authorization for administering a prescription medication shall be valid for the length of time the medication is prescribed to be taken or up to 6 months when needed for a chronic medical condition, whichever is less.

Emergency Medication

If your child requires the use of emergency medications (i.e., inhalers, Epi-pen, Dia stat, etc.), you will need to complete the corresponding medical action plan. Please see the director for a form to be filled out, and these plans MUST have a doctor or healthcare professional's signature. Emergency medicines will be kept unlocked and easily accessible to adults but out of

children's reach (at least 5 feet off the ground). This is to ensure easy access in the case of an emergency. All staff members have trained in emergency medication administration annually.

Over-the-Counter Medication

In general, St. Thomas Kids staff will not administer over-the-counter medication except when a health professional prescribes the over-the-counter medicines. This situation is most common for chronic health conditions (ex: Benadryl for students with allergy action plans or fever-reducing medication for students with febrile seizure action plans). St. Thomas Kids will not administer over-the-counter medicines such as cough syrup, Tylenol, ibuprofen, antibiotic cream for abrasions, or medication for upset stomach in the cases of acute illness or pain. Children that have these symptoms may need to remain at home until they are symptom-free.

The over-the-counter medication must be brought to school and stored in the manufacturer's original packaging with the child's name written or labeled on it. It shall be accompanied by a Medication Administration Permission Form that specifies:

- a. The child's name
- b. The medical conditions or allergic reactions
- c. The names of the authorized over-the-counter medication
- d. The amount and frequency of the dosages, which shall not exceed the amount and frequency of the dosages on the manufacturer's label
- e. In cases where the prescription says, "as needed" (i.e., allergy exposure, etc.), the instructions need to specify criteria for the administration of the medication (be specific with what symptoms or situations are criteria for administration)
- f. The route in which the medication shall be administered
- g. Possible reactions or side effects
- h. The signature of the parent AND physician, or another health professional
- i. The date the instructions were signed by the parent and physician or other health professional.

Sunscreen

Please apply sunscreen before arriving at school. Our staff can reapply sunscreen in the afternoon before going outside if we have an up-to-date Sunscreen Permission Form on file.

Medical Report & Immunization Record

A record of immunizations and a children's medical report must be completed and on file at school within the first 30 days of each child's first day of attendance. Records should also include results of any screenings, prescribed medications, descriptions of any allergies, and current or chronic health conditions.

As the child receives new immunizations, the date and type of shot or immunization should be reported to administration to be added to the child's record. Immunizations may be obtained either through the pediatrician. A schedule of immunizations can be acquired through the center. See <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/> for the current national immunization schedule.

Cleaning & Sanitation

Cleaning and disinfecting are part of our broad approach to preventing infectious diseases at

St. Thomas Kids. Each classroom has a “yucky bucket” for toys that have been contaminated with bodily fluids. Contaminated toys are specifically washed, sanitized, and air-dried. All surfaces and toys are sanitized and air-dried daily upon arrival and departure.

Hand Washing

Handwashing has long been established as one of the most important things to prevent the spread of illness.

In our school, hand washing requirements for staff are as follows:

- Upon arrival at school/center
- Before and after setting up snacks/food for student consumption
- Before and after helping students use the bathroom
- After handling items soiled with body fluids such as blood, drool, urine, stool, or discharge from nose or eyes
- After handling an ill child
- After using the bathroom or taking care of other personal needs (i.e., nose-wiping) and eating

In our school, hand-washing requirements for students are as follows:

- Upon arrival in the morning
- After using the bathroom
- Before and after eating food
- Before and after sensory play
- After they have touched a child who may be sick or who has handled soiled items
- After blowing/wiping their nose

The required method for handwashing is as follows:

- Rub hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds using warm water and soap.
- Wash between fingers and back of hands and wrists.
- Rinse hands well under running water and dry thoroughly with a clean paper towel.
- Turn off water using a paper towel instead of bare hands. This helps prevent acquiring new germs on already clean hands.

Universal Precautions

St. Thomas Kids follows universal precautions to prevent the transmission of HIV/Aids, Hepatitis B, and other bloodborne pathogens. Universal precautions refer to infection control measures that all health care workers and childcare providers follow to protect themselves and the children in their care from disease-producing microorganisms. The concept requires workers to treat all blood and various other bodily fluids as infected with HIV, hepatitis B virus, and other bloodborne pathogens. Our staff follow the following universal precautions when encountering blood or bodily fluids:

1. Gloves are worn for contact with blood, body fluids, mucous membranes, open wounds, and handling items or surfaces soiled with blood or body fluids. Only approved latex or vinyl gloves are worn. Gloves are never to be washed and reused.
2. Hands and other skin areas are washed thoroughly if they contact blood or body fluids. Hands should be washed immediately after gloves are removed.

3. Saliva is not considered by the Center for Disease Control to transmit HIV. Still, it is a body fluid, and mouth-to-mask ventilation devices will be available for resuscitation and shall be used by trained personnel.
4. Staff must review information and procedures about universal precautions, HIV/HBV infections/transmissions, and handling of infectious waste annually.

Toilet Training

High collaboration between you, your child, and your child's teachers makes for more successful toilet learning. Children learn toileting skills through consistent, positive encouragement from all the adults who care for them.

When your child shows an interest, you and your child's teachers will discuss how to work together to encourage toilet learning. We're committed to working with your child consistently so that toilet learning can be accomplished in a developmentally appropriate manner with minimum stress for you and your child.

Every child begins toilet learning at a different age and progresses at a different rate. We're always available as a resource to answer any questions about your child's progress. Several complete changes of clothes and two pairs of shoes should be kept at the center during toilet learning.

To transition into the preschool classroom (ages 3-5), your child must be fully potty-trained with little to no assistance. The child must be able to pull down and pull up their own clothing, as well as wipe, flush, and wash hands independently.

Child Safety

Supervision

Our staff assumes responsibility for enrolled children when they enter the classroom or are escorted by a staff member onto the property. Teaching staff always supervise toddlers/twos by sight and sound. Children 3-5 years of age are supervised primarily by sight, but supervision for short intervals by sound is permissible, as long as teachers frequently check on children who are out of sight.

All classrooms monitor attendance by updating their attendance records throughout the day and counting and matching the numbers of children present with names on attendance records. "Name to Face" headcounts occur throughout the day, particularly when moving about the center at every threshold.

Injuries/Accidents

Your child's safety is of our utmost concern, but we recognize that minor bumps and scrapes are an everyday part of your child exploring and learning through experience. Known minor injuries sustained at school are reported to parents on an Incident Report Form, of which you will receive a copy. If your child is injured in our care, our first step is to administer first aid. A first aid kit is available in the office, and each class always has a small first aid kit with them. The most common treatment is ice on bumps, soap and water cleansing, and a bandage on a minor wound. All permanent staff members are trained in First Aid and Infant/Child CPR within the first 90 days of their employment, and they must maintain their current certification every two years.

If an accident is more than minor, a parent will be called to discuss the need for possible medical treatment. If the accident is more serious, a parent will be contacted and requested to come immediately. In the event of a life-threatening illness or injury, an ambulance will be called. To ensure your child's safety, your Enrollment Agreement provides a record of names, addresses, and phone numbers of the people you have authorized to pick up your child. We ask you to keep this information current and supply names and phone numbers for your child's doctor and preferred hospital.

Emergency Procedures

We make every effort to be prepared for potential emergencies. St. Thomas Kids has an emergency response plan for fire, inclement weather, or if a lockdown becomes necessary. This plan is updated annually and submitted to the state. These plans are reviewed annually with the staff. Additional precautions we take in the event of an emergency are:

- Emergency phone numbers are posted by all phones.
- Staff keep an emergency "To-Go" bag in the main office with first aid supplies and emergency contact information for all students and staff.
- Fire drills are practiced once each month, and shelter-in-place drills every three months to prepare children in the case of an emergency.
- Emergency evacuation plans are posted in each room.
- Annual inspections by the ABC and Oakmont fire inspector. If an emergency requires evacuation, we'll notify you as soon as the children have been relocated to a safe area.

Mandated Reporting Requirements

It's our mission to ensure all children in our center are safe and well cared for, not only while they are at our center, but at all times. PA law requires everyone who works directly with children to report suspicions or evidence of child neglect or abuse to local law enforcement. Those who fail to report can be held accountable under the law. The law prohibits interference with an individual's attempt to report child abuse or neglect. Our school will offer full cooperation during the investigation of the reported incident.

- Should a staff member have reason to suspect abuse, they will contact the administration and follow up with an immediate phone call to Allegheny County Human Services. If an administrative staff member is unavailable, staff members have the authority to make the call and to prepare a written report of the account.
- St. Thomas Kids will not hire a person who has been convicted of abuse of any type, and all staff undergoes a fingerprint and criminal background check before employment begins.
- All staff members are responsible for protecting all children from abuse from any child or staff member.
- All staff members are required to report any suspected cases of abuse, whether it is suspected at St. Thomas Kids or away from the center
- All staff will receive training in recognizing and responding to child maltreatment, including abuse and neglect.

School Policies

Smoke-Free and Weapon-Free Environment

St. Thomas Kids and both playgrounds are smoke-free and tobacco-free environments. Smoking and the use of any product containing, made, or derived from tobacco, including e-

cigarettes, cigars, little cigars, smokeless tobacco, and hookah, shall not be permitted on the premises of the childcare center or during any off-premises activities. Additionally, firearms and ammunition are prohibited in all licensed childcare centers, including St. Thomas Kids, unless carried by a law enforcement officer.

Transportation

St. Thomas Kids does not transport children to and from school or for any off-premises activities. Parents are expected to provide transportation for their children.

Nondiscrimination

St. Thomas Kids does not and shall not discriminate based on race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status in any of its activities or operations. These activities include, but are not limited to, hiring, and firing of staff, selection of volunteers and vendors, and provision of services. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all staff members, clients, volunteers, subcontractors, vendors, and clients. St. Thomas Kids is an equal opportunity employer. We will not discriminate and will take affirmative action measures to ensure against discrimination in employment, recruitment, advertisements for employment, compensation, termination, upgrading, promotions, and other conditions of employment against any employee or job applicant based on race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

The following holidays and dates for 2025, St. Thomas Kids will be CLOSED.

- January 1~New Year's Day
- January 20~Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- February 17~President's Day
- March 17~Staff Training Day
- April 18~Good Friday
- May 26~Memorial Day
- June 19~Juneteenth
- July 4~Independence Day
- August 11~Staff Training Day
- September 1~Labor Day
- November 27 & 28~Thanksgiving Day and Day after
- December 24, 25, 26~Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Day after