



# STEPPING STONES

## EARLY LEARNING CENTER

4528 NE Stallings Drive  
Nacogdoches, TX 75965  
936-715-0188

### Mission Statement

Our mission at Stepping Stones Early Learning Center is to provide safe, affordable, high quality child care for the families in our community. In doing so, we support families in their efforts to reach their goals. Stepping Stones Early Learning Center provides a cognitively based program for children ages six weeks to five years. We provide a learning-based program with our After School Program to help develop the skills needed and learned in our education system in Texas. We provide a home like environment where children are encouraged to develop at their own pace. Our staff is committed to the families we serve, providing support and encouragement.

To Parents,

Stepping Stones Early Learning Center appreciates you for entrusting us to provide a safe, clean, and loving learning environment for your child. Our hours of operation are Monday through Friday 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. **The last Friday of every month excluding June, July, and August, we will be open a half day 6:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. We will still serve breakfast, lunch, and snack on these days. We will be utilizing these early closure days once a month to allow our teachers time to prepare the following month's lesson plans for your child's classroom.** We accept infants 6 weeks of age through 12 years old for after school care. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to communicate with us. We want to provide only the best for your children, and with your help, we can and will achieve this goal.

### Curriculum Goal

**Intellectual Development:** Early childhood education programs give children a head start. By the time kindergarten comes around they usually have a good grasp of basics like math, art, handwriting, the alphabet, reading, and so much more. Perhaps this boost will also awaken the love of learning

**Physical Development:** Preschool teaches many of the basic physical skills like balance, coordination, body awareness, and motor planning. And, this physical development also includes fine motor skills and overall muscle control.

**Emotional Development:** Our emotional well-being is central to who we are and how we approach the world. Preschool and early childhood education helps your child get a solid emotional base that serve them well for the rest of their life. Main emotional goals include helping your child get a sense of self-respect, teaching them how to adjust to new situations, and building a willingness to try new activities.

**Social Development:** Our lives are spent with people in our family, community, and workplace, and, of course, school. Early childhood programs concentrate on getting along well with other children, communicating with adults, learning to respect others, and flourishing in an educational setting.

## Admission Requirements & Enrollment Procedures

All parents and guardians will be informed of all policies and procedures. Throughout the year, if a policy or procedure changes, we will send a letter home informing you of the new policy or procedure and will need to be signed and returned.

Before a child may be accepted at Stepping Stones Early Learning Center, all of the following documents need to be completed and provided to the Director:

1. Admission Information Sheet
2. A copy of updated immunization record (All children attending Stepping Stones Early Learning Center are required to be current on immunizations at all times. TB test results required for all school age children or on file with school district.)
3. Signed Health Care Statement by child's doctor
4. Infant Care Instructions if applicable
5. Discipline and Guidance Policy
6. Emergency Contacts and Medical Emergency Authorization forms
7. Financial Agreement Form
8. Food Program Forms
9. Transportation and Field Trip Forms
10. Copy of parent's driver's license
11. Registration Fee, Supply Fee (Prorated is applicable), and First week's Tuition
12. Signed Handbook

## Tuition Rates

|  |  |
|--|--|
| 6 weeks – 12 months (Infants)          | \$140 per week or \$607 per month              |
| 1-2 years old                          | \$120 per week or \$520 per month              |
| 3-4 years old (Pre-K)                  | \$115 per week or \$498 per month              |
| After school care- Half Day (5 and up) | \$90 per week or \$390 per month               |
| After school Holiday weeks             | \$110 per week                                 |
| Summer Care (5-12 years)               | \$110 per week plus \$150 monthly activity fee |

Weekly Tuition is due every Thursday with a grace day to pay Friday- for the following week's care.

Monthly Tuition is due on the first day of each month. CCMS copays are due no later than the 5<sup>th</sup> of every month per CCMS guidelines. Missed days, school closings, or holidays will not be refunded or exchanged.

Checks can be made out to Stepping Stones Early Learning Center. Sibling discounts are offered through the Director.

## Late Fee

If payment is not received by Friday, you will be charged a late fee of \$15 for each child each day payment is late. Returned checks will assess a fee of \$30.00. If 1 week passes and payment including late fees has not been received, Stepping Stones Early Learning Center has the right to terminate enrollment of your child.

### Absences

Tuition is expected for days your child may be absent due to illness, family emergencies, doctor visits, hospitalizations, vacations, or any other reason. Please note that tuition rates do not change in the event of a week including a holiday. Because our costs remain the same throughout the year, we rely on the specified tuition to be paid each week in order to meet our expenses. All parents and/or guardian are required to pay the weekly/monthly tuition whether they attend or not. It is extremely important that your child/children attend on a regular basis; in order for them to stay up to date with classroom curriculum and adjust to a new environment.

### Supply Fee

To ensure that all materials and curriculum are held to high standards and are available to all age groups, we have a supply fee of \$150.00 per year. This fee is divided into two \$75.00 payments in February and in August. The initial fee will be prorated. This supply fee includes a kindermat.

### Registration Fee

A non-refundable registration fee of \$50.00 per child and \$40.00 for a second child will be due upon initial registration and then annually on the anniversary of their enrollment date.

### Supplies

All supplies must be labeled with your child's first name and first initial of last name

- Two complete changes of clothes
- Diapers/Pull Ups and wipes
- Bottles, Formula, Baby Food for the Infant Room
- Kinder Mat (included with supply fee)
- Small travel pillow and blanket (Parents choice)

**PLAN TO TAKE YOUR CHILD'S BLANKET AND PILLOW HOME EACH FRIDAY TO BE WASHED AND RETURNED THE FOLLOWING MONDAY.**

### Communication

Proper communication between our parents and the teachers and staff of Stepping Stones is extremely important. Teachers will be sending home information on a regular basis. Infant and toddler parents will receive daily reports. Concerns about any aspect of our program, or your child's care, may be expressed to the center director. Each child is provided with a mailbox and/or cubby. Please check these daily for notes, newsletters and daily reports.

Remember to communicate in writing any changes in your child's schedule. We must be informed, in writing, regarding any changes in the person picking up your child. You may add or delete names of authorized adults allowed to pick-up your child on the Child Information record.

Our main office must be informed of any of the following changes:

- Address and/or phone numbers, or email address
- Parent/guardian employment,
- Health/immunization up-dates, or;
- Other pertinent information related to your child.

## Breastfeeding

Stepping Stones Early Learning Center is a family orientated facility and we support any parent that wants to breastfeed their child or provide breast milk. We will provide a comfortable chair in our baby room for any parent that wants to breastfeed their baby. All containers of breast milk provided must be labeled with child's name and expiration date.

Breastfeeding Resources:

Breastmilk. Every Ounce Counts — [www.breastmilkcounts.com](http://www.breastmilkcounts.com)

Nacogdoches UTMB WIC office- 936-560-2944

2016 Stallings Dr. N, Nacogdoches, TX 75964

## Meals and Snacks

**BREAKFAST:** Breakfast will be served from 8:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. daily. **LUNCH:**

Lunch will be provided from 11:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. daily.

**SNACK:** A snack will be provided from 2:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. daily. (After School children will have snack upon arrival from school)

All meals are provided based on the nutritional guidelines set forth by USDA.

## Special Diets

While a general monthly menu will be displayed monthly, we understand some children have special needs pertaining to diets. As long as all proper forms are filled out by your child's physician, we will have no problem adjusting to your child's dietary needs.

## Nutrition Policy

Meals are provided based on the nutritional guidelines set forth by USDA. A menu is displayed monthly. A copy of the menu can be provided for you. We provide breakfast, lunch and snack. Milk, fresh fruit and vegetables are available to children who do bring a lunch from home. We encourage meals with adequate nutritional value, so please no candy, carbonated soft drinks or caffeine drinks. We are able to keep food refrigerated for food safety. We request that food sent to school should not require heating. All liquids and food hotter than 110 degrees F are kept out of the reach of children. Any prepared food that is brought into the center that is to be shared among children has to be commercially prepared or prepared in a kitchen that is inspected by local health officials.

The most common food allergies vary in children. The eight most common food allergies identified by the FDA are milk, shellfish, soy, tree nuts, eggs, wheat, peanuts, and fish. All staff are trained and educated on the proper procedures if a food allergy does occur.

Nutrition Resources:

U.S. Department of Agriculture—[www.nutrition.gov](http://www.nutrition.gov) and [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)

Super Kids Nutrition—[www.superkidsnutrition.com](http://www.superkidsnutrition.com)

## Arrival and Departure of Children

### ARRIVAL

The center opens at 6:30 am. Please accompany your child into the building and make sure that all of their belongings are in their cubby before releasing them to the provider. Children may not be dropped off at the door.

**Note: Due to our curriculum & meal counts all children must be here by 9 am.** If you are planning on arriving after the above time, you will need to call the facility, and let us know when your child will be arriving. Doctor appointments will need proper documentation. Our breakfast time is at 8:30 and ends at 9:00 sharp. If you want your child to eat breakfast, you will need to have your child here before 8:45. Your child will not have time to eat if he/she arrives after the above time due to our daily activities.

### DEPARTURE

The center closes at 6:00 pm. All children must be picked up no later than 6:00 pm to avoid a late fee charge. **If your child has not been picked up by 6:15 pm without a phone call, a \$10.00 late charge will be assessed. In addition, a \$1.00 per minute will be added to the late fee for each additional minutes.** This policy will be strictly enforced. By 6:30 p.m., if we have not heard from you and are unable to reach any person listed on your admissions forms, that is then considered child abandonment and the proper authorities will be notified.

Parents will be given an access code that allows them to enter childcare facility upon completion of our door lock. This code will change every 6 months, and parents will be notified when it will change and what the new code will be. Should you have someone other than you picking up your child for the day, you will need to notify Stepping Stones Early Learning Center before the pickup occurs. Any persons taking your place for drop-off/pick-up times is required to be listed on the Registration sheet under "Persons Authorized to pick up my child"; this will avoid any mix up. If they are not listed, a written authorization from you is required. Stepping Stones Early Learning Center WILL NOT release your child without your approval for both the protection of your child and the center. Phone-In authorizations are not accepted. Parents will need to come into the center to give permission for their child to be released to another unauthorized adult not on their list. **PLEASE DO NOT SHARE THE CODE WITH OTHER INDIVIDUALS OR INDIVIDUALS THAT ARE NOT ON YOUR CHILD'S PICK- UP LIST!!**

## Health Policy

Your child's health is a matter of major importance to all of us. We can only accept healthy children. Stepping Stones Early Learning Center abides by the health policies set by the State Department of Protective and Regulatory Services. Your child will not be allowed to attend child care when he/she has any of the following symptoms:

- ❖ Cold (green runny nose or drainage, congestion)
- ❖ Fever (taken under the arm pit with 100 degrees or more)
- ❖ Reddened eyes with discharge or crusted eyelids
- ❖ Upset stomach
- ❖ Rash of any form
- ❖ Head Lice

- ❖ Diagnosed with a communicable disease
- ❖ The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in the facility.

If your child has any of these symptoms, the child must be symptom free for 24 hours before they can return to childcare. If your child becomes ill at school, you will be notified immediately, and your child will be isolated as much as possible from the other children.

Please notify Stepping Stones Early Learning Center at once if your child has a communicable disease. Re-admission of a child recovered from a communicable disease will be upon written approval of the child’s physician only. Parents will be notified when a child has been exposed to a communicable disease within the daycare.

If any child becomes ill at school, parents should immediately make arrangements to pick up their child(ren). Parents are required to pick up their child from the center within 1 hour of being called and notified.

Dispensing Medication

Medication will only be given when a physician prescribes it. Medications must be in their original container, with the child’s name and dosage amount and time intervals to be given. When bringing medication to the center, the parent must give the medication to the Director and fill out the medication log each day the child needs medicine. The parent is to verify the information is correct and sign by the entry.

Stepping Stones Early Learning Center will follow the following schedule based on the instructions given by the physician when administering medicine to children.

| Directions      | Schedule   |
|-----------------|--|
| 2 times per day | Not administered at school   |
| 3 times per day | 1 <sup>st</sup> dose at home<br>2 <sup>nd</sup> dose at center with lunch<br>3 <sup>rd</sup> dose at home  |
| 4 times per day | 1 <sup>st</sup> dose at home<br>2 <sup>nd</sup> dose at center with<br>lunch 3 <sup>rd</sup> dose at center with<br>snack 4 <sup>th</sup> dose at home |

If a child refuses medication, the parent will be notified and must come administer the medication.

Medical Emergency or Injury

In case of a medical emergency, we will notify parents or emergency contact person immediately or take child to designated hospital if needed. If a child sustains a minor injury (a scrape, bump, bite, or scratch, etc.), the caregiver will inform the parents verbally and will be written down for documentation with a parent signature.

Physical Activity & Clothing

Because of the wide range of activities, it is recommended that children be dressed in washable, comfortable clothing.

Water activities, sand play, and occasional bathroom accidents necessitate that an extra set of clothing be kept at the center at all times. All extra clothing should be marked with the child's name. Clothing should include underwear, socks, pants/shorts, and shirt. If wet or dirty clothes are sent home, please return a clean extra set of clothes the next morning.

Licensing requires that children be taken outdoors each day weather permitting. Children should be dressed accordingly.

While we will do our best to keep your child clean as well as wash their hands and clean their faces after outdoor play, their clothes and shoes can get dirty. Sometimes learning is messy! Please keep this in mind when dressing your child.

### Transportation and Field Trips

Parents will be advised at least 48 hours prior to trips requiring vehicle transportation. All children will be properly restrained according to Texas State Law. A field trip agreement must be signed before the field trip date. We do provide transportation from school to our facility for after school care and when given consent.

### Parent Participation

All parents are welcome to visit the facility at any time during the hours of operations, and program activities. We encourage parental involvement. If you would like to volunteer, please let us know the time and date you are available.

### Parent Teacher Conference

There will be two scheduled parent/teachers' conferences per school year. The first conference will be at the beginning of the year to discuss your child's strengths and goals for the year. The second conference will be in the middle of the school year to discuss your child's progress and make goals to reach by the end of the year. These conferences can be face to face or via phone call. You may schedule a conference at any time throughout the year as well.

### Water Activity

Our water activities consist of elevated water and sand tables in the pre k classrooms and splash day only on Fridays in the summer time.

### Animals

Stepping Stones Early Learning Center does not keep animals on the premises. If an animal is brought to the facility, you must have all the current immunizations and assume all liabilities.

### Screen Time Policy

Screen time is not permitted for children under the age of two. Two and up may have screen time if the video/clip is pertaining to what the class is learning about, educational, age appropriate, involves music and movement and/or is otherwise approved by the director. Screen time must not be more than two hours per day.

### Discipline Policy

Stepping Stones Early Learning Center uses a positive reinforcement approach to discipline by directing the children to age appropriate behavior. We also believe in love and logic methods. The caregivers help the children by:

- Using positive reinforcement of age appropriate behavior choices and redirecting the child

- Using patience and understanding and clear positive statements of expected daily behavior
- Following a routine and schedule so that children are aware of expectations
- Setting clearly defined limits
- Using supervised time out from the class, when appropriate for the child's age and development, this is limited to no more than 1 minute per year of the child's age

Please take note that you must reinforce rules, discipline, behavior, and respect at home also for your child to be able to socialize with others and follow rules. Stepping Stones Early Learning Center reserves the right to dismiss children from our child care center if inappropriate behavior cannot be corrected, or you aren't cooperating. Incidents will be documented by requirement by the state.

### Exclusion Policy

We have found that behavior concerns usually indicate that a child needs more time, support, and practice to develop their social and emotional skills. When serious concerns arise, we will partner with parents and professionals who specialize in supporting children's social and emotional health.

When a child continues to be unable to control their actions, one method we use is called "safe place." When children are upset, angry, or being disruptive, they may be sent to or asked if they would like to go to the "safe place." This is a quiet spot in which they can allow themselves to take the time to relax, breathe, and try to get their emotions under control. Teachers will continue to watch children while they are in the "Safe Place" to make sure they are not hurting themselves or others. They will encourage the child to talk about their feelings and help with calming techniques so the child will be able to return to the classroom setting.

Unfortunately, there are some reasons we must ask that a child be removed from our program either on a short term or permanent basis. We want you to know we will do everything possible to work with the family of the child(ren) in order to prevent this policy from being enforced.

### WHEN A CHILD IS HAVING A PROBLEM IN THE CLASSROOM

Staff will try to redirect child from negative behavior. Staff will reassess classroom environment, appropriate of activities, supervision. Staff will always use positive methods and language while disciplining children. Staff will praise appropriate behaviors. Staff will consistently apply consequences for rules. Child will be given verbal warnings. Child will be given time to regain control. Child's disruptive behavior will be documented and maintained in confidentiality. Parent/guardian will be notified verbally. Parent/guardian will be given written copies of the disruptive behaviors that might lead to expulsion. The director, classroom staff and parent/guardian will have a conference(s) to discuss how to promote positive behaviors. The parent will be given literature or other resources regarding methods of improving behavior. Recommendation of evaluation by professional consultation. Recommendation of evaluation by local school district child study team.

### SCHEDULE OF EXPULSION

If after the remedial actions above have not worked, the child's parent/guardian will be advised verbally and in writing about the child's or parent's behavior warranting an expulsion. An expulsion action is meant to be a period of time so that the parent/guardian may work on the child's behavior or to come to an agreement with the school. The parent/guardian will be informed regarding the length of the expulsion policy. The parent/guardian will be informed about the expected behavioral changes required in order for the child or parent to return to the school.

### PARENTAL ACTIONS FOR CHILD'S EXPULSION



Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payment. Failure to complete required forms including the child's immunization records. Verbal abuse to staff. Parent threatens physical or intimidating actions toward staff members.

#### CHILD'S ACTIONS FOR EXPULSION

Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time. Uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts. Ongoing physical abuse to staff or other children.

#### A CHILD WILL NOT BE EXPELLED

If child's parents: • Made a complaint to the Office of Licensing regarding a school's alleged violation of the licensing requirements. • Reported abuse or neglect occurring at the school. • Questioned the school regarding policies and procedures. • Without giving the parent sufficient time to make other childcare arrangements.

#### Emergency Drills and Severe Weather Plan

Emergency procedure drills (such as fire or tornado) are held monthly as required by the state. Detailed evacuation plans are by all classroom doors. If in the event Stepping Stones Early Learning Center must evacuate due to severe weather or natural disaster, we will relocate to Sacred Heart Catholic Church on 2508 Appleby Sand Road Nacogdoches, TX 75965

(936-564-5321). Each parent will be notified by the director or the owner.

#### Inclement Weather

Our staff understands that our decision to open, close, or delay school opening during inclement weather often disrupts family schedules. We also understand that our children are better served-academically, emotionally, and socially-by being in school. But, as always, our top priority is the safety of our children and staff, so the decision to close or delay opening is not an easy one.

Please understand that we make the decision to open or close Stepping Stones based on a careful analysis of all relevant factors including:

- Road conditions
- Whether conditions will continue throughout the day
- Weather predictions
- Storm timing, trajectory and projection
- Building conditions (such as whether our building's electricity and/or air conditioner/heat is disrupted)

Generally, if Nacogdoches ISD announces a delay of closure for inclement weather, Stepping Stones will be delayed or closed, as well. Parents will be contacted by phone or email in the event inclement weather occurs.

#### Gang Free Zone Clause

A gang free zone is a designated area around a specific location where prohibited gang related activity is subject to increased penalty under Texas Law. Child care facilities fall under gang free zoning. The gang free zone is an area within 1000 feet of every childcare center.

#### Hearing and Vision Screening Requirements

The Special Senses and Communication Disorders Act requires that all child care centers show proof that vision and hearing tests have been performed this calendar year on children who are 4 years old. Our local health department offers this type of screening in the event your child's pediatrician does not. Submit proof of testing to the office.

## Preventing and Responding to Abuse and Neglect of Children

Stepping Stones Early Learning Center takes child abuse and neglect very seriously and we abide by the law. If we suspect child abuse or neglect, we will report all acts to the correct authorities. We also abide by the State Minimum Standards. All teachers attend an eight-hour Child Abuse seminar annually as well as twenty-four additional training hours pertaining to child development.

## Important Numbers

|                            |                |
|----------------------------|----------------|
| Abuse and Neglect Hotline  | 1-800-252-5400 |
| Child Protective Services  | 936-632-7708   |
| Local Child Care Licensing | 936-633-3734   |
| City Police                | 936-560-7794   |
| DFPS Lufkin Licensing      | 936-633-3745   |

## Parent Notifications

Parents will be notified of changes regarding our policies in writing, posted around the facility, and/or will be distributed to each parent. All parents will need to check their child's cubby for daily work/parent notes. Also, we have a notification board visible.

## Minimum Standards

Stepping Stones Early Learning Center follows the minimum standards set forth by the state. Parents are able to review a copy of the minimum standards and most recent licensing inspection report at any time. Please contact the Director to see those.

## Staff

All Stepping Stones staff are required to have a Tuberculosis Test or a TB Test Questionnaire annually. All of our staff also are CPR and First Aid Certified. Many of our staff have course work and/or degrees in Early Childhood Development.

Stepping Stones Early Learning Center strives to be the best child care facility in the area. Our excellent staff, clean facility, and love for children allow us to be able to achieve this. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to ask us.

Thanks,

Tina Grimes

Stepping Stones Early Learning Center Owner/Director

## Community Resources

Hettie Legg & Associates (936) 564-6907 (offers speech, occupational, and physical therapy)

Workforce Solutions (CCS): 1(800) 256-1030

UTMB Health (WIC): (936) 560-2944

Nac. Human Resources: (936) 559-2567

Alcohol, Drug & Abuse Council: 1(800) 445-8562

GETCAP Community Action: 1(800) 621-5746

## Medical:

- Eastside Community Clinic: (936) 560-5668
- Medical Center: (936) 569-9481
- Memorial Hospital: (936) 564-4611

Poison Control: 1(800) 222-1222

Child Abuse Hotline: 1(800) 252-5400

CASA of Nacogdoches: (936) 560-4711

Family Crisis Center of East Texas/Women's Shelter of East Texas: (936) 569-1018

The Helping House: (936) 371-1536

Nacogdoches Boys and Girls Club: (936) 560-2344

Judy B. McDonald Public Library, City of Nacogdoches: (936) 559-2970

Project Turn-Around: (936) 560-3169

Christian Women's Job Corps: (936) 564-2952

Heartbeat of Nacogdoches: (936) 569-6288 or 1(800) 395-4357