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www.lovescomesfirst.net

Dear Parents,

We welcome you and your child to Love Comes First Preschool and Child Care Center. We are delighted you have chosen our Center for your child. We look forward to working with parents and their families as a partner in the process of building a trusting, nurturing relationship that will ensure your child's development and happiness.

Please read our parent handbook and feel free to discuss any of the content with us.

Sincerely,

Love Comes First Preschool Staff

Teachers and Staff



Our teachers collectively have over 20 years' experience, and are professionals in the child care business, educated and trained to guide your child's development and education. Teachers and Teachers Aides will work with your child throughout the day to enable your child to be familiar with the people in our Center. Your child benefits from the relationships that such closeness provides. At Love Comes First Preschool we maintain a lower teacher - child ratio than the state requires, 90% of our staff have CPR and First Aid training, 2 staff members hold their Director Credential and Child Development Associates Certificate, all in the best interest of your child's education and development. We promote education within our staff as well as our children.

We encourage continued education and growth for our staff to better serve your child. All teachers who assume responsibility for your child have obtained the required certifications by the State of Florida and Manatee County.

All aides who work in the preschool with your child are directly supervised until they have passed the State and Federal background checks.

All volunteers are supervised while working in the preschool with your child.

Our Center will provide regular conversations, written communication, and conferences with your child's teacher on a daily basis.

Security



We believe strongly in the importance of security for you, your child and our staff. No child is released without proper authorization.

We have a secured entrance which will not allow anyone in the Center without one of our staff “buzzing” them into the Center. This is for the safety of you, your child and our staff. Please be patient when entering and our staff will buzz you into the Center.

Every time you arrive, a parent and/or legal guardian must accompany your child into the Center. Parents and/or legal guardian must sign your child in and out on the attendance sheet each day. This is very important for fire drills or in the case of an emergency. It is very important that each and every child is accounted for at all times of the day.

We have security cameras at the front and back entrance areas for the safety and security of our parents, children and staff.

The Director keeps an updated file of names, addresses and phone numbers of people you have authorized to pick- up your child in the case of an emergency. Anyone picking up your child must show proper identification, such as a valid driver’s license, before we will release your child. That person must then check your child out by signing the attendance sheet. It is our policy that no one under sixteen years of age (except those who are the child’s parents) is permitted to pick up a child at our Center. In special circumstances, it is important that you indicate on your enrollment form who the custodial parent is and who may pick up your child. The parent with custody is required to provide a copy of the divorce decree or custody agreement, which will be kept in your child’s confidential file.

Procedure for Identifying Children

The safety and wellbeing of your child is very important to us at Love Comes First Preschool and Child Care Center. To ensure that all children are accounted for at all times, parents must sign their child “in” and “out” of the center. Our staff will verify that each child is present on the class attendance when a child arrives.

Arrival

We have a security system that requires the parent or guardian to push a button and wait until you are asked to open the door to enter the building. This system is for the safety of your child and requires some patience for the door to open. An adult who is responsible for each child must walk each child into the preschool. Please be sure the teacher has greeted your child before you leave.

The First Day

The first day can be an emotional one for everyone involved. However, there are some positive steps you can take to help make the day a great experience and fun for your child.

- Talk with your child about what’s coming – new friends, fun activities, a nice teacher.
- Make sure your child has a special security item to bring the first day (or week).
- Start early, so the day does not feel rushed.

Early morning is the busiest time of the day! A good-bye kiss and positive smile are important for children. It is also important to tell them when you will be back to pick them up.

Adjusting

The first day can be a time of high anxiety for parents, too. Feel free to call the center throughout the day to see how your child is doing.

New situations affect every child differently. Sometimes a child does wonderfully on the first day because everything is new and exciting, but gets anxious on the second day when he or she recognizes this is going to be a set routine. Most children need two or three weeks to adjust fully to a new environment. The best support you can give is to be enthusiastic and encouraging as a parent. If you need reassurance or suggestions for helping your child, feel more at ease, speak with your child's teacher or the center Director.

Our primary goal is to work with you and provide a fun, safe, nurturing environment for your child in which to learn, play, and develop.

Center Hours

The preschool hours are from 7:30am to 5:30pm – Monday through Friday. We strongly encourage children to arrive no later than 9:00 am. This is to discourage disruptions during our structured learning time.

All children must be picked up at 2:00 pm for part-time day classes and 5:30 pm for full day classes. Arrivals after 2:00 pm or 5:30 pm will result in a late fee. This is a firm policy and late fees will be due that same day or the next morning upon arrival.

No exceptions! Lateness creates staffing issues and excessive lateness may result in your child losing their enrollment.

Activities



Your child will have a choice of activities in which to participate each day including creative arts, language, science, math, dramatic play, building blocks, physical play, computers, and sand or water play. These are just a sample of many learning centers in which your child will work to learn skills that he or she needs to continue developing. Student teachers, as well as the preschool staff, give guidance and supervision to your child in each activity.

“Play is a child’s work” meaning that your child is learning something through every activity in which he or she gets involved. Often, there is nothing tangible for your child to bring home. You will need to carefully observe your child to see the developmental changes taking place. We encourage your child to progress at his or her own pace.

Personal Belongings



Many children need a security item from home to feel comfortable during rest time. We encourage you to bring this special item for your child, keeping in mind that it needs to fit into your child’s cubby for storage throughout the day. Ask your child’s teacher about the guidelines and clearly dress for fun! Your child should be dressed in clothing that is easy for him or her to put on and take off by him or herself. Please avoid one-piece outfits, belts, and buckles that your child cannot manipulate. Shoes should be appropriate for running and climbing. No sandals without back straps. If your child wears a dress/skirt please put shorts under them. Please make sure your child is wearing the appropriate clothes to match the weather conditions. A change of clothes with your child’s name on it should be left at school in a zip lock baggy. We maintain a small supply of extra clothing. If your child goes home with “our” clothing on, please wash and return them.

Many classrooms have a designated Show-and-Share day. Show- and-Share is also an important time for your child – a chance to share something special with classmates. Ask your child's teacher about the guidelines and clearly label your child's item to avoid loss or damage. Love Comes First Preschool cannot be held responsible for lost or damaged items. Personal belongings will be stored for no more than 2 weeks after a child is dismissed or leaves our center. We ask that all personal belongings be picked up on your child's last day at our center.

One Year Old Classroom Only – Any bottles, sippy cups or pacifiers must be labeled clearly on the outside with a permanent marker.

Assessment



Assessment of your child's development is ongoing and updated throughout the year. An evaluation of your child's growth and development will be kept in their file. This is not a test, but a record of your child's social, emotional, physical, cognitive and language development and progress over the year. These records are confidential. You may review your child's assessment record at any time. Please schedule an appointment with your child's teacher and/or the director of the preschool.

Conferences

Since we feel that it is important for parent and teacher to work together for the benefit of the children, the staff is available during school hours for conferences. Please request an individual appointment with your child's preschool teacher. We discourage discussing your child's progress at drop off and pick up time. This is not the time to hold individual conferences as our responsibility to your child and the other children in the classroom must be our priority.

Discipline

We use a positive approach to disciplining children. Our philosophy is to help each child learn self-control by developing a positive self-image. We set limits for children when their behavior is unacceptable. Our discipline techniques include talking with the child about what he or she has done, separating the child from the group on a “thinking chair” for a few minutes (one minute per age-year is standard practice), and encouraging acceptable behavior by hugging, smiling, and praising good behavior. The “Thinking Chair” is always in view of our teachers. Corporal punishment, sarcasm, and yelling are never acceptable means for disciplining children at our preschool. This policy is required to be followed by every person on the property of Love Comes First Preschool.

Parent Code of Conduct

Love Comes First has developed the Parent Code of Conduct to ensure that you, your child, and our staff, and all that enter our Center enjoy a safe, welcoming, and respectful environment. Actions that demonstrate respect for others are expected in our center. Behavior that is inappropriate, illegal, threatening or disrespectful in nature or language that is abusive or instigative is not acceptable. We reserve the right to refuse service to anyone, without warning, which violates the Parent code of Conduct. Love Comes First reserves the right to dismiss the child of a parent or guardian who does not follow the Parent Code of Conduct.

Dismissal



child.

Only the parent(s) or the person(s) who is/are listed on the registration form may pick-up children. If you plan to send someone else to pick up your child, please notify us in writing prior to that person picking up your child or we will not be able to release your child to that person. This, of course, is to protect your

In an effort to further protect your child if he or she does not live with both natural parents, evidence of custody must be on file. A copy of the custody decree will be maintained with your child's record.

Enrollment



Registration is open to all families with children from 6 months to 5 years of age on a first come, first serve basis. Families on the waiting list have entrance priority as openings occur. Registration is a non-refundable yearly fee. This fee is charged for clerical and material costs.

Tuition and Fees

All tuition must be paid in advance each Friday for the following week's tuition. Fees are charged on a weekly basis and charged regardless of the number of days



your child attends. Part-time days are based on 9am to 2pm. A delinquency fee is charged for late payments, as listed on our fee schedule (provided with enrollment package). As a courtesy, we will provide tax statements to each parent at the end of the year for tax

filing.

If you have difficulty making your tuition or other payments, please speak to the center director. We will make every effort to be helpful. In special circumstances, we may request that you not bring your child until payment can be made. If payments are not received within a reasonable time or you are consistently late with your tuition payment, it will be necessary for us to take action up to and including termination.

A receipt is written for all cash money received and is obtained from the preschool bookkeeper. Receipts for all payments by check will be given at the end of the school year for your tax reporting unless otherwise requested.

If your child is absent on the day he or she is registered to attend, you are still obligated to pay tuition. This applies to illness, and vacations, etc.

A registration fee is due upon enrollment and is renewable each school year. Please see the director for details. A registration fee is due for all full-time and part-time children. These fees are not refundable. If your child drops out and then re-enrolls, the registration fee will be charged again.

Please see our fee schedule for late pick-up charges, they will be enforced. This is in the best interest of our staff; they need to have family time too.

Returned Checks

In the event that your check is returned for insufficient funds, we will not make another attempt to collect from your checking account. The maximum fee allowed by state law will be charged. We will require full payment for tuition and check fees as listed on our fee schedule by cash, cashier's check, or money order before your child will be permitted to return to the center. If there are repeated instances of returned checks, you may be required to pay by cash, cashier's check, or money order on an ongoing basis.

Field Trips



At this time, we will not have field trips off the property of our preschool. Special guests will be invited for special on site "property field trips" such as the fire department, Smokey the Bear fire safety, police and Stranger Danger. Please see <http://www.lovecomesfirst.net/field-trips/> for more information.

Inclement Weather Policy



Playground activities are an important part of your child's day and it is our policy for all children to participate in outdoor activities on a daily basis, weather permitting. With this in mind, we ask that parents dress their children accordingly. In the event of inclement weather or extreme temperature, outdoor play experiences will be limited to 10 or 15 minutes. Our center suggests that parents apply sunscreen at the beginning of their child's day at home. Our center will only be able to apply sunscreen with written authorization by the parent or guardian and instructions for applying the sunscreen are required based on the instruction of the bottle. Remember to label your child's sunscreen with their full name.

Health Records

Each child must have on record a recent physical and immunization record. Florida requires that these records be on file when your child enters the preschool. Parents must provide new students records within 30 days of enrollment. If medical records are not provided to the center, this will result in suspension of the child until records are provided to keep the Center in keeping compliance with the state regulations.

Illness



To limit exposure, children must be sent home if they have symptoms of illness to prevent other children and staff from becoming ill. Parents will be called only when it is absolutely necessary. If notified that a child is ill, the parent is expected to pick up their child as soon as possible and not later than one hour after receiving the phone call.

If symptoms persist and nobody can be reached, emergency medical services (911) may be called and a child neglect report may be made. This is for the safety of each child.

Staff will perform a daily health check to monitor for signs of illness. Children must be excluded from Love Comes First Preschool and Child Care Center if they have any of the symptoms listed in this policy. Children may return only after they have been symptom free for 24 hours without symptom reducing medication such as Tylenol or Motrin.

- Nasal Discharge – Yellow or green color for more than 3 days.
- Fever – Temperature over 101.0 degrees Fahrenheit
- Vomiting – More than 1 occurrence unrelated to medications or documented food reactions.
- Wooziness – Unable to participate in regularly scheduled activities within the program due to tiredness, dizziness, or other symptom that requires more than ½ hour of quiet time to completely recover.

If your child were to be exposed to a communicable childhood disease, you would want to know right away. For that reason, please tell us if your child has been exposed to or diagnosed with a communicable disease so we can alert other parents. If your child becomes ill while at our center, we will contact you to pick up your child immediately. “Illness” as defined by the stated licensing agencies varies. Please check with our director for exact regulations.

Licensing

Love Comes First Preschool and Child Care Center is a licensed Child Care Center, under Florida Department of Children and Families, License #C12MA0159.

Meals and snacks



We provide 2 nutritional snacks daily. Our menu includes foods based upon the U.S.D.A. Food Guide Pyramid. We avoid non-nutritious foods such as sweets, and sodas. We ask that parents please send lunch pails with ice packs to keep your child's lunch fresh.

We have a "limited food service" license therefore we will not be able to heat or keep extra food in the refrigerator for your child. In case of emergency should a lunch be forgotten at home we will provide lunch (see fee schedule for charge).



Medication

We are able to administer medication, including non-prescription medication. All medication must be clearly labeled with your child's name.

A *Medication Authorization Form* must be fully completed and signed by the parent. Please hand the completed form directly to your child's teacher. If medication is needed for more than one week, a new authorization form must be submitted each week.

For over-the-counter (non-prescription) medications, if the dosage differs from the label's recommended instructions, written authorization from a doctor is required to meet state licensing regulations.

All medications will be stored securely in a locked box or cabinet to ensure the safety of all children.

Allergies

If your child has allergy issues, please speak to the Director so we can take the right precautions. Our policy is to have allergies posted in our kitchen area for the safety of your child.

Injuries and Accidents

We take precautions to prevent childhood accidents. However, as children begin testing their limitations, accidents sometimes happen. Safety and security are our number one priority. Our vigilant approach to safeguarding children starts with ensuring that our building, playground, and equipment meet all applicable safety guidelines and requirements. Our staff is trained to be watchful and take precautions to prevent accidents and injuries. Children receive instruction on safe practices and they are guided away from hazardous behavior. Although safeguards are in place, accidents and injuries are still possible. Should your child have an accident or suffer a minor injury while at our center, we will administer basic first aid and you will be notified. If your child needs non-emergency medical care, we will call you promptly so that you can arrange for him or her to be seen by a doctor. We will call 911 in the event of an emergency and the parent or guardian will be called immediately after. In the event your child should require medical attention, you will be asked to sign a form acknowledging that the matter was reported to you in a timely fashion. This is in accordance with state licensing regulations. We also ask you to keep us informed while your child is recovering. We care deeply about how your child is doing and we may be able to help with the healing process.

Diapering and Toilet Training

Love Comes First Preschool requires parents to supply the center with diapers and/or pull-ups and wipes for their child. Staff will notify parents when the supplies are running low. The children's diapers are changed as needed and are checked on a regular basis. Our staff will work in conjunction with the parents on toilet training their child. Diapering procedure guidelines are used when cleaning up a toileting accident. Parents are asked to supply an extra change of clothing with the child's name in a zip lock bag. Please refer to our "Policy and Practices" for fees that may apply if diapering and toilet supplies are not provided by parent or guardian for your child.

Holidays

Love Comes First Preschool and Child Care Center will be closed on the following holidays: Martin Luther King, Jr Day, President's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth National Independence Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Week, Christmas Break.

Please see <http://www.lovecomesfirst.net/closed-holidays> for the most update to date Holiday list and dates.

Note: You are expected to pay tuition for all closed holidays listed.

Toys, candy, gum or money



We ask that toys, candy, gum or money be left at home. Arrangements can be made with the teacher for sharing items in class. Appropriate books, toys, and nature items are encouraged for sharing on show-n-share day.

Notification if a child is withdrawn

We request the courtesy of a two-week notice should you decide to withdraw your child from our center.

Center and family partnership

We would like to form a partnership with families of our children. Let us work together to create a fun, nurturing environment, which includes open communication between parents and staff.