



**PRECHOOL
KINDERGARTEN
PARENT'S DAY OUT**

2021-22 Parent Handbook

Revised July 2021

WEEKDAY KIDS AT FIRST

503 N. Central Expressway
Richardson, Texas 75080

Preschool, Kindergarten
&
Parent's Day Out

2021-22 PARENT HANDBOOK

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WELCOME to WEEKDAY KIDS AT FIRST!

We are delighted to have the opportunity to be a part of your child's early childhood experiences.

The following information lists policy guidelines established for the school. Our goal is to provide a quality opportunity for your child.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding your child or the school, please feel free to contact us at any time.

OUR MISSION

Weekday Kids at First is dedicated to providing early childhood care and education in a Christian environment that focuses on developing the whole child. Weekday Kids at First believes that children will grow into who they are created to be with a strong, developmentally appropriate foundation. The environment and curriculum provide support for each child's spiritual, emotional, physical, cognitive, and social development. All children in the program will develop an awareness of God's love and acceptance through discovery and learning. Weekday Kids at First supports the overall mission of First United Methodist Church Richardson, "With open hearts and minds, we welcome people for Christ, grow people in Christ, and serve people with Christ."

Our goals are:

- To provide an opportunity for children to develop an awareness of God's love as experienced through relationships with teachers, caregivers, other children, and the child's family.
- To encourage independence and self-confidence through activities which help the child succeed and recognize his/her success.
- To provide opportunities for the children to recognize and express feelings in appropriate ways.
- To provide multi-cultural opportunities for children to grow in their understanding of the world in which they

live.

- To provide a setting and opportunity for discovery and learning to take place in a variety of areas such as creative expression, language development, science and nature, problem solving, and large motor skills.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY AT FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH RICHARDSON

As part of the overall Children's Ministry at First United Methodist Church Richardson, the staff of the Preschool teaches developmentally appropriate religious concepts. For young children, much of the teaching is through the lifestyles and attitudes that adults model. The Preschool and Kindergarten children will also have the opportunity to participate in monthly chapel services. The service will include singing, a story, and a prayer. The following are ways some religious concepts are taught to young children:

- **Unconditional Love** - By accepting and forgiving a child's behavior, teachers help children experience God's unconditional love.
- **Trust** – By being there each day, caring for the daily needs of the children and by being consistent in their expectations and reactions, teachers help children develop trust.
- **Acceptance** - By listening attentively to each child in the class as they talk about what is important to them, teachers are saying that each individual is special.
- **Responsibility** - By encouraging children to complete a task and to put toys away when they are finished with them, teachers are helping the children become responsible members of the class.

There are opportunities for the children to experience the awe and wonder of God's world as they observe nature and growing things. Snack time is an opportunity to thank God for all God has provided. As children come to class each day, they will know the church as a pleasant place to be where God's love and caring are shown. By forgiving mistakes and encouraging good behavior, adults are creating an image of a loving teacher. As children

mature, this image will transfer to the image of God as one who loves and cares for them.

PRESCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM AND ACTIVITIES

Weekday Kids at First utilizes the FROGSTREET Early Childhood Curriculum which is composed of basic academic subjects in a developmentally appropriate manner to give the child a well rounded educational foundation ... intellectually, spiritually, and physically ... within their learning capacity and in such a way as to provide positive learning.

Academic subjects include:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Early Literacy | Social Skills |
| Science Discovery | Outdoor Play |
| Number Concepts | Fine Motor Skills |
| Creative Art | Music |
| Cultural Exploration | |

Each age group works with specific units of study around which activities involving basic concepts are centered. These study units cover the general areas of Self Discovery, The World Around Us, Health and Science, Seasons and Holidays.

The staff of Weekday Kids at First is composed of experienced teachers who love and have an understanding of young children. They accept each child as a unique individual. Activities are provided that will allow for the growth of each child at their own developmental level. The teachers are required to attend training events during the year which meet the licensing requirements of the Texas Department of Health and Human Services.

LICENSED BY TEXAS HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Weekday Kids At First, Inc. is licensed by the state of Texas. We are inspected by a representative from the Texas Department of Health and Human Services, Richardson Health Department, and

Fire Department to ensure we meet health, safety and other state requirements.

Parents may contact the Texas Department of Health and Human Services by using the website www.hhs.texas.gov to review Minimum Standards and the most recent licensing report. A copy of the Minimum Standards is also available in the office.

Parents can contact the Director to review and discuss any questions or concerns about the policies and procedures of the Preschool.

GANG FREE ZONE / WEAPON FREE ZONE

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1,000 feet of a child-care center is a **gang-free zone**, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.

Weekday Kids at First is a **weapon-free school zone**. For the safety of our students, teachers, and staff, we do not allow licensed or unlicensed carrying or concealing of weapons of any kind on our campus.

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS FOR STAFF/TEACHERS

WKAF will encourage and pay for all staff/teachers to get annual flu vaccinations. The program also encourages teachers working in high risk areas which could include working with children under 12 months to get HepA and Pertussis immunizations (746.3611)

WKAF will ask each teacher to submit vaccination records voluntarily (746.3611).

IN-SERVICE TRAINING

The Texas Department of Health and Human Services requires all staff working in child care facilities obtain at least 24 clock hours of training annually. In addition, each teacher is required to be CPR and First Aid certified.

Notice of NON DISCRIMINATORY POLICY as to Students

Weekday Kids at First, Inc. admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions, scholarship and loan programs and athletic and other school-administered programs.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT and COMMUNICATION

The Preschool sends a monthly newsletter to each family which includes important information concerning the school schedule, activities, program changes, special events, or upcoming holidays will be included. In addition, flyers may be posted outside each classroom door announcing special events, holidays, field trips, or important announcements.

Demonstration of a hobby or special skill, or help with parties are just some of the ways your participation would be appreciated. This gives you an opportunity to see how we work and play together and gives the child a feeling of security and importance.

A flexible conference schedule is planned for parents and caregivers to accommodate the needs of working parents. Conferences may be arranged at any time when parents or caregivers have a special concern.

The Director and Assistant Director are always available in the office or by phone to review and discuss any questions or concerns about the policies and procedures of the school.

Parents will be notified via email if/when any policies have been added to our handbook.

ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

MONTHLY TUITION AND FEES

Parent's Day Out (2 days)	\$ 250.00
2 ½, 3 & 4 year olds (2 days)	\$ 280.00
3 & 4 year olds (3 days)	\$ 350.00
2 ½ year olds (4 days)	\$ 450.00
3 & 4 year olds (5 days)	\$ 510.00
Kindergarten (5 days)	\$ 550.00
Enrollment Fee (nonrefundable – due at registration)	\$ 200.00
Late Pickup Fee	\$ varies
Late/Returned Payment Fee	\$ 25.00

WKAF uses Tuition Express for tuition payments. Forms are included with your Enrollment Packet. If you need to make a change to your payment information or update a card, please notify Cheryl Winnenberg at 972-996-0120.

- Tuition fees apply to each child enrolled.
- All holidays have been prorated into the monthly fees. Tuition is the same each month and will be billed on the first business day of the month.
- Returned payments will be charged a \$25 Returned Payment Fee.

ENROLLMENT PROCESS

The Preschool encourages all parents and children to visit the school prior to enrollment.

When registration opens, parents will complete a Registration Form online. Once submitted, parents will receive a payment link to pay the Enrollment Fee. This fee is non-refundable and guarantees the child's place in a designated class. Registration is not complete until this fee is paid.

Once the Enrollment Fee has been paid, parents will receive our Enrollment Packet. All forms must be completed before the child begins school. These include

1. Admission Information
2. Allergy / Dietary Restriction Form
3. Transportation Emergency Information
4. Physician's Statement of Health
5. Current Vaccination Records
6. Permission to Photograph
7. Tuition Express Enrollment Form

Children between 6 months and 5 years may be enrolled on a space-available basis. After touring the school, parents may place their child's name on a waiting list for possible enrollment. We will contact parents when an opening becomes available.

The vaccination record and a list of allergies must be updated annually or at any time a change occurs.

STATE HEALTH REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILDREN

- Admission Information Sheet with Authorization for Emergency Medical Attention signed by parent.
- A written statement from a licensed physician that the child has been examined within the past year and is physically able to take part in the school program.
- A current immunization record that includes the child's birth date, the number of doses and type, and the dates (month, day, and year) the child received each immunization must be on file in the office. Children must be immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, Hib, Hepatitis A & B, PCV and varicella (chicken pox).
- Texas State Law requires a current vision and hearing screening for **all four and five year olds**. Your doctor may provide this screening but we must have a copy of the results for our files. We have arranged for the Rothschild Speech/Language Services to provide vision, hearing, and speech screening at the school in late September. There is a small fee for this screening service. If you have NOT returned a completed screening record by September 15, your child will be screened at the school for

hearing and vision. Screening for three year old children will be arranged at the parent's request.

- The school reserves the right to request a health certificate from a physician on any child enrolled in the school or making application for enrollment.

CHANGE OF INFORMATION

Please notify the office of any change of information in your child's file. Any change of home addresses or phone numbers for both parents and especially emergency numbers need to be made immediately. Please assist us as we try to keep this information current.

PERMISSION TO PHOTOGRAPH

The Permission to Photograph form must be on file in the office. This grants permission for staff and parents to photograph during class as well as during parties or other special functions.

Additionally, there is a separate permission form for your child's image to be used on our private Weekday Kids at First Family Facebook group. Only current families will be approved to join this Facebook group. We have used the group page for announcements and for sharing photos of special events like our Halloween Costume Parade and our Christmas program.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS / RELEASE AUTHORIZATION

We must have the names and phone numbers of at least two (2) persons other than the parents who can pick up your child in case of an emergency. Every effort will be made to reach parents first. Please keep these contacts current.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL AUTHORIZATION

An Emergency Medical Authorization Statement must be on file in the school office. This must have the doctor's name, address, and telephone number. The statement is part of the Admission

Information form.

CUSTODY INFORMATION

In the case of parental separation or divorce, the Center must have a certified copy of the most recent court order regarding child custody which spells out who can pick up the child at which times. The preschool is legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent with legal custody. Without a document, both parents have equal rights to custody. We keep this information confidential and solely for the safety and well-being of your child. If a new custody order or a restraining order is issued against either parent, we must have this information on file. It is our policy to remain neutral in these matters and the center may not serve as a visitation site.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

It is our policy to accept children in compliance with the Americans Disabilities Act (ADA), its implementing regulations and any other applicable local, state or federal laws pertaining to the provision of services to those with disabilities. We review each child's situation on a case-by-case basis. Please discuss your child's needs with the Program Director.

WITHDRAWAL OF PUPILS

Please call the preschool office at 972-996-0120 and notify the Director if you are withdrawing your child. We require at least one month's notice.

Tuition for the current month is due in full. No additional tuition fees will be charged after the current month.

ENROLLMENT DISCONTINUATION

Weekday Kids at First preschool reserves the right to discontinue the enrollment of any child due to

- Non-payment of tuition or registration fees

- Failure to provide center with all required enrollment information (health statement, immunization records, personal and emergency numbers, etc.)
- Child's continued inappropriate behavior

MORNING ARRIVAL AND AFTERNOON DISMISSAL

Morning Drop Off	9:00 – 9:15 a.m.
Afternoon Pick Up	1:55 – 2:10 p.m.

Parents are not allowed in the classroom during arrival or dismissal. If you need to speak with your child's teacher, please email to arrange a conference time.

It is important for the children to be on time to class as they often find it difficult to enter a classroom where activities have already begun. Classrooms will have between 6 and 20 students and one or two teachers depending on the room size.

When entering and exiting the parking lot, please be mindful of other parents and children crossing the driveway.

**PLEASE DRIVE SLOWLY!
FOLLOW ALL SIGNS!**

LATE PICK-UP CHARGES

Afternoon Pickup begins at 1:55 p.m.. Parents should be in line no later than 2:10 p.m.. **Those arriving after 2:10 p.m. will be charged a \$10 late fee plus \$1 per minute will be added for each minute until the parent arrives.**

SEVERE WEATHER

In the event of severe weather, we will follow Richardson Independent School District closings.

IF RISD IS CLOSED, WE ARE CLOSED.

Inclement weather days WILL NOT be made up and tuition fees will not be refunded.

To find out if RISD is closed, please monitor local media outlets for SCHOOL CLOSINGS. You may also visit the RISD homepage at www.risd.org or visit their official social media sites at facebook.com/richardsonisd or twitter.com/richardsonisd

FIRE DRILLS/EMERGENCY EVACUATION

In the case of fire, severe weather or emergency evacuation, we are as prepared as possible. We have regular fire drills and practices so your child can react in a safe and orderly manner. If an actual emergency occurs requiring evacuation from our center, children and staff will be transported to our designated shelter area at Spring Valley United Methodist Church, 7700 Spring Valley Road, Dallas unless otherwise directed by the City of Richardson Emergency Management officials. Our destination will be posted on the doors of First United Methodist Church Richardson and will be announced on the local television/radio stations.

SIGNED NOTES AND TELEPHONE CALLS

Either a note should be sent or a call made for the following reasons:

- Child is absent.
- Child is to go home with someone other than person authorized by the release form.
- Child is to go home in a carpool other than their own.

Number to call: 972-996-0120 or 972-996-0128

INJURIES

Minor injuries will be taken care of at the school and you will be notified by the caregiver. Serious injuries require immediate notification of parents. If parents cannot be contacted, the Director or the Assistant Director will call 911 emergency for transport to the nearest medical facility and all attempts will be made to contact you at the numbers provided. Please keep your contact information up-to-date.

ILLNESS

For the health and safety of all concerned, all teachers will employ standard universal health procedures (chlorine solution (10-1) and rubber gloves) whenever dealing with body fluid spills of any kind.

If your child becomes ill while at school, we will call you immediately and isolate him/her until you can pick him/her up. Please consider the health of all of the children and teachers and do not bring your child to school if he/she has had any of the following symptoms in the 24 hours preceding the start of the school day.

- **fever** – above 100 degrees
- **rash** – any rash other than diaper rash or one diagnosed by a doctor as non-contagious
- **cough** – any cough due to a contagious condition
- **discharge** – from eyes or nose due to an unknown cause or a contagious condition
- **swelling** – in any part of the body
- **vomiting** – any repeated vomiting
- **diarrhea** – of any origin – 2 or more loose/watery stools in one hour
- **green or yellow runny noses**

Please list any allergies or allergic reactions exhibited by your child. **Children should be free of any of the above symptoms for 48 hours without medication before returning to the preschool.**

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES

- Parents should notify the Director as soon as it has been confirmed their child has a contagious disease.
- Parents will be notified when a contagious disease occurs in the classroom.
- The school reserves the right to ask for a health certificate from a doctor if the child should return sooner than the Director thinks advisable.

MEDICATIONS

Prescription medications will be given per physicians instructions and as given by written permission by the parent. Non-prescription medications must have the designated amount prescribed for your child's specific age. If your child's age is not listed, for example "under 2 years consult physician," then you **must** have a note from the physician to verify the dosage before medication can be administered.

Procedure:

- Sign the medication list in your child's classroom. The Center will not administer or be responsible for any medication signed in "as needed." The time to administer medication must be a specified time.
- Place medication in the refrigerator or cabinet in the office.
- Medications must not be placed in the child's backpack or diaper bag.
- All medication for breathing machines must be premixed by parents and stored in the container.
- Do not put medication in infant/toddler bottles or sippy cups.

All medication must be in its original container, clearly and permanently marked with:

- ⇒ child's full name
- ⇒ doctor's name
- ⇒ medication's name
- ⇒ prescription number
- ⇒ dosage

Topical medicines will be applied by caregiver. Only the Director or Assistant Director will give medication. Permanent records of medications are kept in the Director's file.

FOOD ALLERGIES POLICY

We are aware that some children attending our weekday programs are highly allergic to some food items, especially those that can be life threatening.

Weekday Kids at First, Inc., which is part of the ministry of the First United Methodist Church of Richardson, Texas, is doing all it can to prevent an incident or any contamination. The classrooms are multi-use and have many groups and substances in them at various times. They are kept clean on a daily basis.

The teachers in the weekday programs are kept aware of any food allergies of their students and strive to keep each child safe on the days they attend school.

An Allergy/Dietary Restriction form must be on file in the school office. The plan must be filled out completely with all confirmed allergies, reactions, and steps to take should a child come in contact with the allergen. This form must be signed by a physician and the parent.

DISCIPLINE / SUSPENSION

The Discipline Policy of the school is one of guidance and re-direction. During the preschool years, children are learning to develop their own inner controls and it is the responsibility of the teachers to guide them in this process. Limits are set and

explained to the children. When children overstep these limits, they are redirected to another activity or as a last resort, separated from the group in time-out. If a problem arises which re-direction or guidance cannot solve, the parents are contacted so all can work together for a common solution. It is **NOT** the policy of the school to spank or physically or emotionally discipline any child. We believe loving, firm, and consistent discipline is most effective and appropriate in guiding your children.

Communication between home and school is a major part of our discipline policy. However, if inappropriate behavior continues and our efforts have been ineffective, we will pursue the following steps:

I. If one or more of the following behaviors occurs, the child will be informed that the behavior is extremely unacceptable and will be taken to one of the directors' offices.

The behaviors are:

- A. Verbal or physical abuse
- B. Endangering others (such as throwing objects)
- C. Persistent and excessively disruptive behavior

In the event a child is taken to one of the Directors' offices, he or she will sit quietly for 5-10 minutes, depending on the child's age. If the child does not cooperate, the parents will be notified explaining the child's behavior and how the child responded.

II. If the child's visits to a Director's office becomes frequent, a conference will be set up between the parents, the teachers and the director. During the conference, a plan of action to improve the behavior will be discussed. A time limit will be set for improvements.

III. If the behavior continues, the Director has the option of dismissing the child from Weekday Kids at First.

CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled in the fall for the Kindergarten and 4's classes and in the spring for the 3 and 4 year old classes. Individual teachers may schedule additional conferences or parents may request one.

Parents are encouraged to make an appointment for a conference with the teachers whenever needed.

It is best to not informally discuss a problem in front of your child, especially at drop off or pick up. We ask that conferences remain between parents and teachers and should not include children.

Should a child require more specialized individual attention than our school can provide, we will suggest other resources which are available to meet the child's needs. We have access to educational consultants.

SHARING TIME

Sharing, be it an item pertaining to the unit of study or an experience, is a very important part of preschool. Like all we plan, we want this to be a positive experience that will help the child become a confident individual. The teachers will determine what form sharing will take in each classroom (once a week, once a month, a toy day, a book day, a pet day, etc.). **No weapons of any sort such as toy guns, knives or swords are allowed.**

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are very special events for young children and they love to share them with their friends. We celebrate each child's birthday. The Birthday Child is welcome to bring a special snack. This snack may be the child's favorite food ...a large birthday cookie to share, special cookies, whatever will be meaningful to your child. (We have found that cupcakes are very messy and often children do not eat them.) Please check with your child's

teacher for any food allergies. You may bring birthday napkins or cups, but **NO FAVORS, BALLOONS, OR GIFTS.**

For Birthday Parties away from the school -if you are planning a party for your child that will include **SOME, BUT NOT ALL** of the children from the classroom, **DO NOT DELIVER THE INVITATIONS AT SCHOOL.** It is very painful for the child that has not been invited.

CLASS PARTIES

Parents are invited to help with class parties held at Holiday times during the school year. Teachers will coordinate party sign-up. Parents will provide party snacks, coordinate games, and art activities.

SNACKS / MEALS

Parents are responsible for sending a snack and a lunch, including drinks, with their child each day.

Please, no candy, gummy fruit snacks, fruit rollups, or sodas.

MEDIA

The use of passive media, such as television and videotapes is limited to developmentally appropriate programming that has been previewed by adults prior to use. Another activity is always available for the children; no child is required to view the program. Videos may only be used occasionally for no more than 15 minutes for two year olds –or- up to 2 hours for three year olds and older. Parents will be notified in advance of showing videos in class. Parents can choose that their child not watch the movie that is being shown to the class.

TOTE BAGS / BACKPACKS

Each child needs a tote bag or backpack to bring to school each day. A bag that is open at the top (no fasteners) works best.

Your child's name should be on the bag.

CLOTHING

Please bring your child to the center fully dressed in play clothes for the daily activities. The clothing needs to be comfortable, sturdy, and washable to withstand vigorous play and art projects. Please do not allow your child to wear flip-flops, floppy shoes, or cowboy boots. These are not suitable for the activities we encourage and can be dangerous for your child. Sneakers are safer for running and climbing. A sweater or jacket should be provided for changeable weather. Please label **ALL OUTER CLOTHING!** Please routinely check your child's supply of diapers, as the Center provides them only on an emergency basis.

LOST AND FOUND

Should your child lose or misplace an item of clothing, water bottle, or other item, please check with Cheryl in the Children's Office. We accumulate quite a collection over the semester and donate unclaimed, usable items in December and June. Please label your child's belongings.

OUTDOOR PLAY

Outside play is an important part of a child's day. It is time for children to build motor skills, have opportunities for social interactions, enhance self-esteem, and build cognitive and language skills.

Children need fresh air every day. With the exception of "extreme temperatures" and rain, outside time is an integral part of the daily schedule. Children well enough to attend the program are well enough to participate in all program activities, including outside play time. Fresh air helps keep children healthy. Children become unhealthy when they spend too much time enclosed indoors in dry air caused by heating or air conditioning systems.

Parents are responsible for providing appropriate outdoor clothing for their children. Staff monitor children and give reminders to keep hats and gloves on outside in cold weather or drink water and play in shaded areas in hot weather.

SUNSCREEN / BUG SPRAY

Parents are responsible for applying both sunscreen and bug spray prior to arrival at school.

WATER ACTIVITIES

Water activities for children include wading pools, sprinklers, spray bottles, or outside water tables. Additional adult supervision is always present during any type of water activity.

TOILET TRAINING and ACCIDENTS

A child enrolled in a 3 year old class or older will be expected to independently take care of their restroom needs when school begins. We understand that children do have an occasional accident. Please supply a full change of clothes each day for your child, including socks and shoes. Soiled clothes will be placed in a plastic bag and sent home for parents to wash. If a child has frequent accidents, the child may be removed from the program until consistent potty success is reached.

BREASTFEEDING

Mothers have the right to breastfeed or provide breast milk for their child while in care. The school has a nursing room located next to the infant classroom. This enables a mother to breastfeed her child in a comfortable private environment.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

In an effort to protect the well-being and safety of children, the State of Texas requires anyone who suspects child abuse and/or neglect to report it to the proper authorities. The Preschool Staff is required to have annual training to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect annually. All suspect indicators will be documented and reported. Parents will receive a pamphlet from DFPS outlining the warning signs that a child may be a victim of abuse or neglect. The Preschool is required by law to cooperate with any investigation of child abuse or neglect. The phone number to call to make a report is 1-800-252-5400.

SAFE SLEEP

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the sudden and unexplained death of an infant under one year of age. One of the most important ways to help reduce the risk of SIDS is to put infants on his/her back to sleep. All infants not yet able to turn over on their own will be placed on their back to sleep, unless the child's parent presents written documentation from a health care professional stating that a different sleeping position is allowed or will not harm the infant. When awake, your baby will be placed on his/her stomach for short periods of time to play and explore.

We strive to maintain a safe and healthy environment for the infants. Our aim is to protect the babies from accidents or exposure to contagious diseases.

We ask parents with other children to refrain from bringing older siblings into the crib room.

Cribs must be free of soft toys and blankets including toys that attach to pacifiers. Children may use an arm free sleep sack.

Resources for Parents

Child Abuse & Neglect

Parents should be aware that licensed daycare centers staff and administration is required, under penalty of law, to report all suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect. All caregivers and staff undergo annual training on how to detect child abuse, report child abuse and protect children from child abuse. Such cases will be referred to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and/or to the authorities immediately. Abuse and neglect affect people of every age, race, and family income level. The majority of parents who abuse their children love their children, but many factors can lead them to do things they regret.

- **Trouble managing stress.** Problems with work, money, or relationships put a strain on family life. If a parent or caretaker has trouble managing stress, it can lead to abuse.
- **A lack of parenting skills.** Some parents might not understand how to care for a child's basic needs or they might have unrealistic ideas about a child's abilities and behavior. They might punish behavior that is natural for a child.
- **A history of abuse.** Many child abusers were abused or witnessed abuse as children.
- **A problem with alcohol or other drugs.** Alcohol and other drugs impair a person's ability to act as a responsible, caring parent. They can also make it harder to control emotions—especially anger.

These factors can be overcome, and abuse and neglect can be prevented. Don't lash out when you are angry with a child—instead:

- Take a deep breath.
- Call someone or ask a friend to watch your kids while you calm down.
- Call one of the hotlines listed below to find someone to talk to.

- Find a parenting class in the community to learn about ways to handle the stresses of dealing with kids.
- Use this website (www.dfps.state.tx.us.com) to find programs in your area to help you resolve any underlying issues, such as alcohol or drug abuse.

Emergencies

- **Dial 911**

Hotlines

- ***Texas Abuse and Neglect Hotline***
Report suspected abuse and neglect.
1-800-252-5400
TxAbuseHotline.org
- ***Texas Runaway Hotline***
Counseling, services, and referrals for runaway youth and their families.
1-888-580-HELP (1-888-580-4357)
www.TexasRunaway.org
- ***Texas Youth Hotline***
Services and counseling for youths and family members in times of stress.
1-800-210-2278
www.TexasYouth.org
- ***Texas Poison Control Center Network***
Don't wait for the victim to look or feel sick—call poison control. Always call 911 if a victim is collapsed or not breathing.
1-800-222-1222
www.poisoncontrol.org

Parenting Skills

- **National Parent Helpline®**
1-855-4A PARENT (1-855-427-2736)
www.nationalparenthelpline.org
- **Car Safety: Look Before You Lock**
Online education about vehicle safety for children
- **Family Compass**
Parenting and family programs in the Dallas area.
www.family-compass.org
- **Texas Education Agency**
Life skills classes and resources for teen parents.

Family Violence

If you are the parent of a child who is a victim of abuse or neglect, you should call one of the following hotlines for assistance and intervention:

- **National Domestic Violence Hotline**
1-800-799-7233 –or- www.thehotline.org
- **Texas Abuse and Neglect Hotline**
Report child abuse and neglect.
1-800-252-5400 –or- www.txabusehotline.org
- **Childhelp® National Child Abuse Hotline**
The 24/7 hotline offers crisis intervention, information, literature, and referrals.
1-800-4-A-Child (1-800-422-4453) –or- www.childhelp.org
- **National Domestic Violence Hotline**
24-hour support through advocacy, safety planning, resources, and hope to everyone affected by domestic violence.
1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233) –or- www.thehotline.org

Quick Reference Phone Numbers

WKAF office	972-996-0120
Patti Puchala, Director	972-996-0125
Wendy Jones, Assistant Director	972-996-0128
Cheryl Bishop	972-996-0136
FUMCR Main Number	972-235-8385

first united methodist church
Richardson