



Parent Handbook

Firewheel Christian Academy
Mother's Day Out and K-4
5500 Lavon Drive
Garland, Texas 75040
972-530-1614

Rebekah Walden, Administrator
Michelle M. Chapman, Principal/Director

INTRODUCTION

We welcome you and your child to Firewheel Christian Academy MDO and K-4. We are honored that you are considering our school for your child's early childhood experiences. Our center offers a friendly and flexible environment, which will facilitate your child's transition from home to school. Firewheel Christian Academy MDO and K-4 is here to provide your child personal care, attention, guidance and love. We are looking forward to a rewarding experience working and playing with your child!

This handbook has been prepared to answer many of the questions you may have about the center. Please review the following information in order to become acquainted with our basic policies and operational procedures. If you have unanswered questions after your review, please feel free to speak with the center Administrator, Rebekah Walden.

PHILOSOPHY

Firewheel Christian Academy MDO and K-4 is dedicated to providing a caring, Christian atmosphere. Our faculty believes that every child is a unique individual with special gifts and talents from God that can and should be nurtured to their fullest potential. Each staff member is committed to guiding the whole child toward balanced spiritual, physical, social, emotional, and intelligent growth.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Our purpose at Firewheel Christian Academy MDO and K-4:

- To honor God by providing quality care facilitating growth in the lives of young children in a loving and safe environment where they can develop spiritually as they grow emotionally, physically, cognitively, and socially.
- To provide a Christian service to the families and children of the community.
- To foster learning and allow the children to develop socially in an age-appropriate environment including such activities as:
 - ◇ Beginning language skills
 - ◇ Letter recognition and introduction to phonics
 - ◇ Number recognition and introduction to basic math concepts
 - ◇ Strong emphasis on children's literature
 - ◇ Bible stories and Bible memory
 - ◇ Music
 - ◇ Science through hands-on interaction with God's world
 - ◇ Social interaction
 - ◇ Large-muscle and small-muscle motor skill development
 - ◇ Special event days
- To provide facilities where all are welcome regardless of race, color, sex, or national and ethnic origin.

PROGRAM GOALS

Our program meets the needs of children ages 6 months through 5 years of age during the school year and 6 months through completed 3rd grade during the summer.. We believe that children learn in a variety of ways and should be free to explore those areas. We provide a safe environment with trained staff.

Our goals are to:

- Help each child understand that God loves them, and that they are special.
- Give your child a good foundation of Bible stories.
- Provide a variety of learning experiences with freedom to choose activities of their choice.
- Help your child develop relationships with classmates and adults.
- Help develop problem-solving skills.
- Foster independence and self-reliance.
- Teach respect for others.

STAFFING

Firewheel Christian Academy MDO and K-4 chooses their teachers and caregivers based on their ability to work with and care for children. Our staff is continually being trained in Early Childhood Development.

PROGRAMS

The Mother's Day Out offers two separate programs: one for the school year and one for the summer. We have a two week break at the end of the school year and summer.

TUITION

Tuition is due during the first week of each month. Returned checks will result in a \$25 fee and the check with fee must be repaid in cash or money order. If you have a second returned check you will be required to make all tuition payments in cash or with a money order.

NOTE: There is a \$10.00 late fee charge if payment is not received on time.

Please be on time in both bringing and picking up your children. There is a \$5.00 charge for every 15 minutes you are past 2:00 pm. This charge will automatically be added to your next month's fees.

ENROLLMENT

Our programs are available to all children 6 months through 5 years of age during the school year and 6 months through completed 3rd grade in the summer on a fully, non-discriminatory basis without regards to sex, race, religion, cultural heritage, or political beliefs of their parents. Children will be placed initially in classes according to their chronological age with some variances as the staff evaluates developmental placements.

When classes are full, parents are encouraged to place their child on the waiting list. When an opening becomes available, we will contact you. Children of parents already in the center will receive priority.

When accepted, the following forms **must be in** before your child's first day at Mother's Day Out.

- Enrollment forms;
- Parental Agreement Form;
- Copy of the immunization record;
- Physician's examination form signed by a qualified physician stating that your child is able to participate in the Mother's Day Out program. The physician's report must be submitted yearly.
- Discipline guidance policy

All changes to the policy will be sent out in the daily folders or in their cubbies. Please watch your children's folders for updates and changes.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Minimum State Vaccine Requirements for Texas Children

Age	Vaccine with # of dose
Younger than 2 months	No shots
By 3 months	DTaP 1, HIB 1, IPV 1, Hep B 1
By 5 Months	DTaP 2, HIB 2, IPV 2, Hep B 2
By 7 Months	DTaP 3, HIB 3
By 16 Months	HIB 4, MMR 1
By 19 Months	DTAP 4, IPV 3, Varicella , Hep B 3
By 36 Months	Hep A 1
By 48 Months	Hep A 2
Age 5	DTap 5, IPV 4, MMR 2

HEARING AND VISION

Children age 4 and older must have a vision and hearing screening every year. Firewheel Christian Academy MDO and K-4 will offer this service each year for the screening company's cost. We recommend at the 4 and 5 year old physician visit that you have their doctor perform the test. This will allow you to catch any issues before major damage is caused.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PROGRAM

If it becomes necessary for you to withdraw your child from the program for any reason, it is our policy that parents/guardians must notify the Administrator 2 weeks prior to the withdrawal date and will be required to pay tuition for those 2 weeks. **This notification must be given in written form.** This enables us to contact a family on the waiting list.

PROCEDURE FOR TERMINATION OF SERVICES TO FAMILIES

(The rights and responsibilities of the consumer were examined closely when this termination policy was being developed.)

Firewheel Christian Academy MDO and K-4 makes every effort to provide a program that meets the needs of each child. However, at times it is impossible to meet the needs of a child and family. If, after working with the child and family, we do not believe it is in the child's best interest to remain at the center, we will ask the family to make other arrangements.

Your child may be terminated from the program based on abuse and neglect of the parent's rules and guidelines. If you are found to be in violation of the rules and guidelines, the following procedures will be taken.

- Notice to bring the situation to your attention.
- Written warning of suspension.
- Suspension-the child may not attend for three days.
- Termination from the program if the situation continues. A written notice stating the reason for termination will be given.

Major Reasons for Termination:

- Unpaid fees
- Medical (not up to date as required)
- Behavioral (disruptive or abnormal)

PARENT'S BILL OF RIGHTS

Parents have rights at Firewheel Christian Academy MDO and K-4. We provide these rights to allow parents the freedom to discuss all issues with the Administrator and teachers in a professional manner.

- A parent has the right to be treated courteously, fairly, and with respect.
- The parent has the right to visit the center at anytime during normal business hours.
- A parent has the right to ask questions and not be intimidated by anyone.
- A parent has the right to complain when we do a poor job.
- The parent has the right to compliment us when we do a good job.
- A parent has the right to expect us to be enthusiastic and stand behind our school.
- A parent has the right to have knowledgeable and skilled people care for his or her child.

ABSENCES

Tuition must be paid in full without deduction for absence of any duration or for any cause, and without substitution of other days of attendance as “make-up” days. This is necessary because staffing and other operational costs are incurred on the basis of fixed levels of enrollment. Daily attendance is recorded when you check your child in/out.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Upon arrival you **must** sign in at your child’s classroom each day. Do not let your child enter or leave the building unaccompanied. Please keep in mind that we do have other classes going on with different schedules. Do not let your child leave their classroom without you. This is disruptive to the other classes and no one may be in the office to make sure they stay in the building.

Firewheel Christian Academy MDO and K-4 will only release children to the designated people listed on the enrollment form. When you arrive to pick up your child, you **must** sign your child out.

Only those persons listed on your Enrollment Form will be authorized to pick up your child/children. These persons must bring their state issued identification to verify they are the person you have designated to pick up your child. NO child will be released without proper identification.

You are responsible for updating the records if a person on your enrollment form is no longer allowed to pick up your child. All people on your list must have the correct car-seat for your child. If you have a new person that you would like to pick up your child you must give the Administrator the full name of the person. That person must bring their state issued ID to verify they are the person you have designated to pick up your child that day. **NO child will be released without proper ID.**

PARKING

As you pull into the parking lot, you must **always go right**. Speed limit in the parking lot is **10 MPH**. Park in designated parking spaces only. Parking in fire lanes may cause you to be fined or towed.

WATER ACTIVITIES

Firewheel Christian Academy MDO and K-4 does not participate in water activities that involve a pool or standing water due to minimum standards guidelines. We will play in sprinklers during the summer. Please be sure to sign the enrollment form that allows your child to participate.

FIELD TRIPS AND TRANSPORTATION

During the school year, Firewheel Christian Academy MDO and K-4 does not go on field trips or provide transportation of any kind (except medical emergencies). In lieu of field trips we will have special programs and guests throughout the year.

During the summer months, completed Kindergarten through Third Grade may go on field trips. Permission Forms will be sent home and must be signed and returned before each trip.

SECURITY AND SAFETY

At MDO, security is a top concern. Doors remain locked and persons entering the building are viewed from the front desk. Children will be released only to persons authorized by the enrolling parents. The MDO must be notified if someone other than the parent is picking up the child. This person must be on the child's list along with their driver's license number. This person must have an age appropriate car-seat and clock the child out before leaving.

ILLNESS

If your child is not feeling well (fever, undiagnosed rash, cough, watery eyes, diarrhea, vomiting, etc.) it is better to keep them home. **They must be fever free and no diarrhea or vomiting for 24 hours.** We cannot admit a child for the day if the above symptoms are present. If a child should develop these symptoms during the day, the parent will be contacted to make arrangements to pick up their child. If we are unable to reach you, or if you have not made arrangements to pick up your child within the hour, we will call your emergency contact person. **A child may not come back to the program for 24 hours after being sent home. A child must be free of fever, vomiting, or diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school.** A temporary solution (such as Tylenol or Motrin) is unacceptable according to state standards.

No child will be kept inside while the class is on the playground. If a child is too ill to play outside, they are too ill to come to school.

MEDICATIONS

Medication may be administered to children under the following condition:

- ✓ Prescription medications must be in the original container labeled with the child's name, date, directions and the physician's name. The office staff will administer the medication as stated on the label directions. We will not administer medication after the expiration date.
- ✓ The office staff must ensure that non-prescription medication be labeled with the child's name and the date the medication was brought to the facility. Non-prescription medication must be in the original container. The office staff will administer it according to label directions if approved in writing by the child's parent or guardian.

- ✓ The office staff must document each dose of medication administered showing the child's name; the name of the medication; date, time & amount administered and the name of the staff administering the medicine.
- ✓ MDO must keep medications out of children's reach or in locked storage.
- ✓ MDO must keep medications requiring refrigeration stored in a manner that does not contaminate food and separate from food.
- ✓ MDO must administer the medication only to the child for whom it is intended.
- ✓ MDO must return medication when no longer needed to the child's parents. MDO must dispose of medications when a child withdraws or when the medicine is out of date.
- ✓ Medications are not to be kept overnight unless the child has a periodic and recurring medical problem. (See next item)
- ✓ If a child has a periodic and recurring medical problem, such as headaches, asthma attacks, or allergic reactions, the parent or the child's health-care professional may sign a medication authorization form allowing us to administer the medication when symptoms occur for up to a six-month period. The authorization must include information on symptoms to watch for. You must notify the parent immediately after administering the medication and document this in the child's record.

Please bring all medications to the MDO office. **Do not leave medications in your child's bag/backpack or with their teacher.** All medication can be picked up at the end of the day in the MDO office.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

If a child receives an injury while in the care of Firewheel Christian Academy MDO and K-4 we will notify parents immediately. If a parent cannot be reached, the emergency contact list will be utilized. When the injury or illness consists of uncontrollable bleeding, broken bones, head injury, seizures, or any other medical situation that we feel is in need of medical attention we will call 911. After calling 911, if parents are unable to make it to the center, we will transport the child to the nearest children's hospital for treatment. A Firewheel Christian Academy MDO and K-4 representative will stay with the child until a parent arrives at the hospital. Medical expenses incurred during this emergency will be the responsibility of the parents. Parents will be given documentation of how the accident or incident occurred.

PARENTAL NOTIFICATION

Daily notes for children under the age of 2 will include the diaper changes, child's mood, food intake, supplies needed, teacher notes and activities for the day. If you have a question about the notes or want more information please feel free to ask the teacher. Check your child's folder **daily** for any communication from the teacher or the office. Pay particular attention to the work your child has accomplished.

During normal play children might receive an injury. If this occurs the teacher will send home a note informing the parents of the type of injury sustained, where it occurred, when it occurred, treatment given, and how the accidents happened. If the injury is substantial we will follow the Medical Emergencies part of the handbook. If your child has an illness we will fill out the same form to inform you of what was wrong with the child and when they can return to school.

REST TIME

Except for K-3 and K-4, children will participate in a time of rest or sleeping. Each child is assigned a mat and will be asked to remain quiet during rest time. Children will be allowed to read at their mat after others have fallen asleep. Restful music is played during this time and lights are dimmed. Children should bring a small blanket, and may bring any quiet and soft toy they wish to sleep with.

DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE

Our goal is to build a positive self-image. Future success in school and life depends on being able to handle various social situations and interactions. We believe that our attitude will have a great influence on the children. Mutual respect will always be treasured. Discipline and guidance will be consistent and based on an understanding of individual needs and development.

Methods used will center on communication, stressing positive behavior, verbalization, redirection, or possible removal from a negative situation. Physical punishment will not be used. No child will be shamed or humiliated; left unsupervised, shouted at, or denied food for inappropriate behavior. No child will be punished for lapses in toilet training.

- **Supervision**

The children in our care will have proper supervision at all times. In order for us to give quality care we must give children our undivided attention. When children are adequately supervised there will be less discipline problems and children will learn to play more appropriately. Being actively involved with our children, is our primary responsibility

- **Guidance**

Guidance of children in our care will be consistent and appropriate for their age. Rules are established and consistently carried out. Children need structure and it is important that they understand what is expected of them. Teachers will be aware of their responsibility as role models to the children. Teachers will not humiliate or subject the children to abusive or profane language.

- **Discipline**

Discipline of children should be consistent and appropriate, based on individual needs and development. Discipline should promote a positive self-concept and acceptable behavior. Children in our care will not be shaken, pinched, bitten, isolated or left unattended, etc. Teachers will approach the children to correct them rather than yelling. Our teachers will use calm voices and give positive direction, not negative. When a child's behavior is disruptive, they will be removed from the group for a short time. Teachers will help them understand why they are being withdrawn from the group. Punishment may not be associated with food, naps, or toilet training. Consistent and extreme misbehavior will be reported to the Administrator.

DRESS AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS

We ask that your child wear comfortable play clothes to the center. We will be going outside each day weather permitting. Due to Texas State Licensing, **all children** are required to go outside every day unless it is very inclement weather. Please make sure your child is dressed appropriately (hats, gloves, warm coats, etc.).

Because our playground is full of playground mulch, **sandals are not appropriate footwear.**

Please put a **complete change of clothing** (*including socks and underwear*) for your child in their backpack. Remember to change these out seasonally. All removable articles of clothing (*sweaters, coats, hats, etc.*) worn to school need to be labeled with your child's name.

Clothes will be changed if they become soiled during the day. Soiled clothes will be placed in a bag for you to launder when you go home.

Disposable diapers and pull-ups must be sent with all non-potty trained children.

MEALS AND SNACKS

All children will need to bring a lunch for each day.

- **Nursery:** bottles and baby food
- **2's, 3's, K-3 and K-4:** Lunch should consist of finger foods they can feed to themselves. They will also need at least 2 sippy cups. Remember: all items must be labeled with your child's name!

During the year, each class will have "special event" days. These could include McDonald's, pizza, picnic foods and treats. You will be notified in advance of these special event days.

BIRTHDAYS

If you would like to bring refreshments to celebrate your child's birthday, please make arrangements a week in advance with your child's teacher. We will only be able to give out store bought treats sent in their original packages. Mini-muffins, donuts, donut holes, Rice Krispy treats and cookies are preferred by the children and easy to serve. **Do not send cake or cupcakes!**

It is important that we be given a written statement of any food allergies your child might have.

BAD WEATHER POLICY

We try to remain open during bad weather, but there may be times when we experience late openings, early closings or forced all-day closings. When the center needs to close because of severe weather conditions, we will follow the GISD school closings. School closings are announced on WFAA Channel 8 television news stations. The staff will make every attempt to notify you at home if we have an unexpected closing. **Please make sure your work, home and cell phone numbers are up-to-date should we need to contact you.** No reimbursement will be made for bad weather days, as they are beyond our control.

LESSON PLANS

A basic outline of lesson plans for the week will be on display in each classroom. Ask the teacher where these are located. Monthly Information Sheets will be sent home during the first week of the month. This will include the topics taught during the month and any other important information. Feel free to ask the teacher about what is planned for the day.

PARENT COMMUNICATIONS

Parents are encouraged to talk to teachers before and after school about their child's progress and needs. If a meeting requires the undivided attention of the teacher, please schedule a parent conference.

BOOK FAIRS & FUNDRAISING

Once a year, Firewheel Christian Academy MDO and K-4 will participate in a book fair. This book club offers quality books for children at a reasonable price. For each dollar's worth of books you purchase, we receive bonus points to purchase books, tapes, videos, and manipulatives for the classrooms. You will receive your order forms in your child's folder; orders must be returned by the due date on the form.

We also collect Campbell's soup labels and Box Tops for Education to earn equipment and cash for our center. Simply place any donations of these items in the tray on the MDO office counter. Occasionally there may be fundraising events during the school year to raise money for special projects or to purchase equipment for the program. If you would be interested in helping with such events, please speak to the Administrator.

TOYS

We request that children **do not** bring toys, games, make-up, weapons, VHS/DVDs, etc. to school. The program provides an adequate selection of games, toys, art projects, films, records, and books. Items brought from home often create problems and may be lost or damaged.

PETS

The MDO program does not allow pets to be in the building. We have many children with allergies. It's best to leave pets in the car or at home. Classrooms will not have pets in their rooms due to the size of rooms and age of the children.

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES

If you feel Firewheel Christian Academy MDO and K-4 has not provided the care that TDFPS requires in their minimum standards you can report us at 1-800-252-5400. We strive to provide quality care at all times and if at anytime you have a problem please talk to the director about the issue. If you feel the issue was not resolved or that you can not talk to the staff feel free to call TDFPS and ask them for assistance. They will come out and visit the school and check for any standard violations. Your name will never be disclosed to the center. When the licensing representative visits they will address any issues with the director and make sure we are following each of the standards set forth by the state of Texas.

Firewheel Christian Academy MDO and K-4 does everything in our power to follow each rule set forth and abide by higher levels of standards set forth by Child Care Group and National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

The minimum standards and the current inspection reports can be found outside the director's office in the shadow box. Parents are welcome to review all minimum standards documents at anytime. If you would like to learn about specific regulations please don't hesitate to ask.

For more information on Texas Childcare, review the minimum standards or to see Firewheel Christian Academy MDO and K-4's reports please visit the website at <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us>. You can also learn more about childcare in general through www.naeyc.org.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse and neglect are against the law in Texas, and so is failure to report it. If we suspect a child has been abused or mistreated, we are required to report it to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or to a law enforcement agency. We are required to make a report **within 48 hours** of the time we suspect the child has been or may be abused or neglected.

What is Abuse? Abuse is mental, emotional, physical, or sexual injury to a child or failure to prevent such injury to a child.

What is Neglect? Neglect includes (1) failure to provide a child with food, clothing, shelter and/or medical care; and/or (2) leaving a child in a situation where the child is at risk of harm.

This report is confidential and is not subject to public release under the Open Records Act. The law provides for immunity from civil or criminal liabilities for innocent persons who report even unfounded suspicions, as long as the report is made in *good faith*.

STAFF BILL OF RIGHTS

The staff also has a Bill of Rights that we will abide for to make the program a safe place for your child.

- We have the right to follow Minimum Standards while providing care for the children.
- We have the right to call you and ask questions that will allow us to provide the highest level of care.
- We have the right to call CPS when we feel a child is in danger.
- We have the right to ask you to update your records at any time.
- We have the right to contact EMS if we feel your child is in need of immediate medical attention.

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Emergency drills are held periodically to acquaint your child with evacuation procedures. This might make quite an impression on your child the first time a fire drill is performed, but your child will soon become accustomed to it and know what to do in the event of an emergency. Fire drills are practiced monthly.

- **Fire**

In case we need to leave the center due to a fire, we will relocate to:

CVS
5702 Lavon Drive
972-495-5595

CVS is located on Lavon Drive/Hwy. 78 just north of our entrance. Staff will then contact parents to pick up their child.

- **Disaster Evacuation**

In case of a toxic spill, chemical release, or any other reason that we are required to evacuate, we will accompany the children to CVS. Staff will immediately contact parents or emergency contact people to pick up their child.